



ICA:UK: Criteria for Selection and Development of Partners in Africa

With our experience of partnership working over the past ten years and the priorities and focus set out in the new ICA:UK strategy, we have set new criteria in order to:

- a) Establish a “bottom line” of which organisations we work with in terms of eligibility and capacity
- b) Provide clarity and guidance for the partnership

We base our work and our partnerships on...

Our **mission** is to enable people to bring about change in pursuit of a just and sustainable world for all.

The **Values** we hold in carrying out our mission are:

- **A culture of participation** by promoting and practising approaches so that people can participate effectively in problem-solving, planning, decision-making and working together
- **Shared responsibility** by fostering individual and collective responsibility, trust and honesty to create a sense of belonging in pursuit of a more just world
- **Constant learning** by asking questions of ourselves and others to promote our ongoing development
- **Wholeness** by respecting the diversity and uniqueness of individuals and communities, encompassing mind, body and spirit
- **Making a difference** by making a contribution as part of our individual life journeys, and enabling others to do the same
- **A global perspective** by maintaining a global and historical perspective to provide a context for our actions at the local, national and international levels.

Our **vision for our work in Africa** is to see Africans, particularly those vulnerable to poverty due to HIV/AIDS, benefitting from being part of a growing culture of participation supported by effective development interventions delivered by sovereign local organisations (i.e. organisations demonstrating “autonomous self-reliance, of local ownership, of decision-making from a stance of consciousness and free-choice, not subject to the will and whims of those outside who may seek to control or exploit”¹).

¹<http://www.cdra.org.za/articles/Sovereign%20Organisation%20by%20Doug%20Reeler.doc>

Basic Criteria

As a fundamental requirement, any organisation wanting to work in partnership with ICA:UK must have:

1. A recognisable system of governance, appropriate to the country and context within which the partner is working. This will normally be set out in the governing document (e.g. Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association, etc.).
2. Proper registration with the appropriate governing bodies in their own countries and fulfilling their obligations under that registration.
3. Vision, mission (purpose) and values that are compatible with ICA:UK (see box above)
4. Evidence of a basic capacity to deliver programmes and provide accountability

Currently there are only two ways in which new partners might be engaged:

1. By application through an existing ICA:UK partner
2. By ICA:UK approaching an African organisation to propose partnership in the strategic interests of a planned programme.

In situations where we are approached by very new organisations who do not yet meet these minimum criteria or by individuals with an intention of setting up an organisation, these criteria will be shared and appropriate signposting for assistance provided.

Signs of Sovereignty

In addition to the Basic Criteria, we would want to get a stronger sense of the extent to which any potential partner shares our vision for themselves and their constituents. We would therefore want to see a prevailing attitude and approach of the organisation which has either allowed or which will allow the emergence of the following (based in a belief that these characteristics will help an organisation develop towards sovereignty and effective programmes):

- a) A clear mission and values, with current approach and activities geared towards them
- b) A strong connection with the organisation's constituents (markets) and a clear link between organisational priorities and programmes with constituents' (markets') own issues and demands
- c) A clear identity which distinguishes the organisation from others and establishes its relevance to its constituents (markets) and context
- d) An ability to learn and adapt in the light of experience and changing environment
- e) The confidence to collaborate, enter partnerships, funding or contractual relationships without fear of being "taken over" or having its agenda diverted
- f) A readiness to develop the necessary organisational structure, systems and people to promote, develop and support all the above and to provide high quality effectiveness and efficiency.

Application of these Criteria

The first set of "Basic Criteria" have to be met, otherwise there will be no substantive engagement (at least not until the criteria have been fulfilled).

The second set of criteria (the “Signs of Sovereignty”) are more flexible and would be used as a basis for dialogue, partly to check that we have a shared vision (following on from Basic Criteria 3) and partly as indicators as to where future capacity development work needs to be directed. A more detailed capacity assessment might well be needed subsequently.

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