



Partnership Principles

Introduction

These principles form one part of a broader partnership framework which aims to ensure that across CBM, we have a shared understanding of what partnership and partnering mean, and the key role it plays in CBM's programmatic and advocacy work. A shared approach to partnership ensures consistent programme standards, helps manage risk, enhances our global capacity in a cohesive way, and contributes to greater impact.

For potential partners considering engaging with CBM, these Partnership Principles outline both what CBM looks for in a partner and aspires to live out. You can use them to understand whether this kind of partnership is a journey you would like to travel with us.



Cover: Organisation of people with disabilities (OPD) group meeting - India (© CBM/argum/Einberger). Above: Asisa (left) with her walking frame being accompanied home from school - Tanzania.

About CBM

CBM is an international development and humanitarian organisation committed to improving the quality of life of people living with or at risk of disabilities in the poorest communities of the world. CBM envisions an inclusive world in which all people with disabilities enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential and we acknowledge that this can best be achieved through collaboration and cooperative efforts with other development and humanitarian actors.

Embedded throughout all of CBM's working principles and approaches is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)¹ which seeks transformative changes and social development in many areas of society leading to the inclusion of people with disabilities. Core to our work is responding to the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)², the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction³ and the Humanitarian Disability Charter⁴ which call for a more comprehensive, human rights-based approach to development and humanitarian action.

Working with and enabling partner organisations is central to CBM's vision to develop appropriate, high quality and sustainable programmes and services. Partners at all levels not only complement each other's expertise, they provide each other with contextual understanding, and open the path to relevant local and international programmatic and advocacy networks and alliances. In partnership, we unite efforts, promote ownership and share accountability.

In close co-operation with our partners, CBM works to reduce structural, environmental, legal, social and attitudinal barriers which hinder people with and without different types of disabilities from full and effective participation and inclusion in society on an equal basis with others. Reducing these barriers makes it easier for people to exercise their rights to access quality services such as health, education or employment. CBM acknowledges that inclusion of people with disabilities can only be achieved if their voices are central to the decision-making process about how their capacities are best drawn upon and their needs best met.

1. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>
2. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>
3. <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>
4. <http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/>



Kasandra, who has Down Syndrome, receives early learning support by CBM-partner ASOPIEDAD in Nicaragua (© CBM/Harms).

Who are CBM partners?

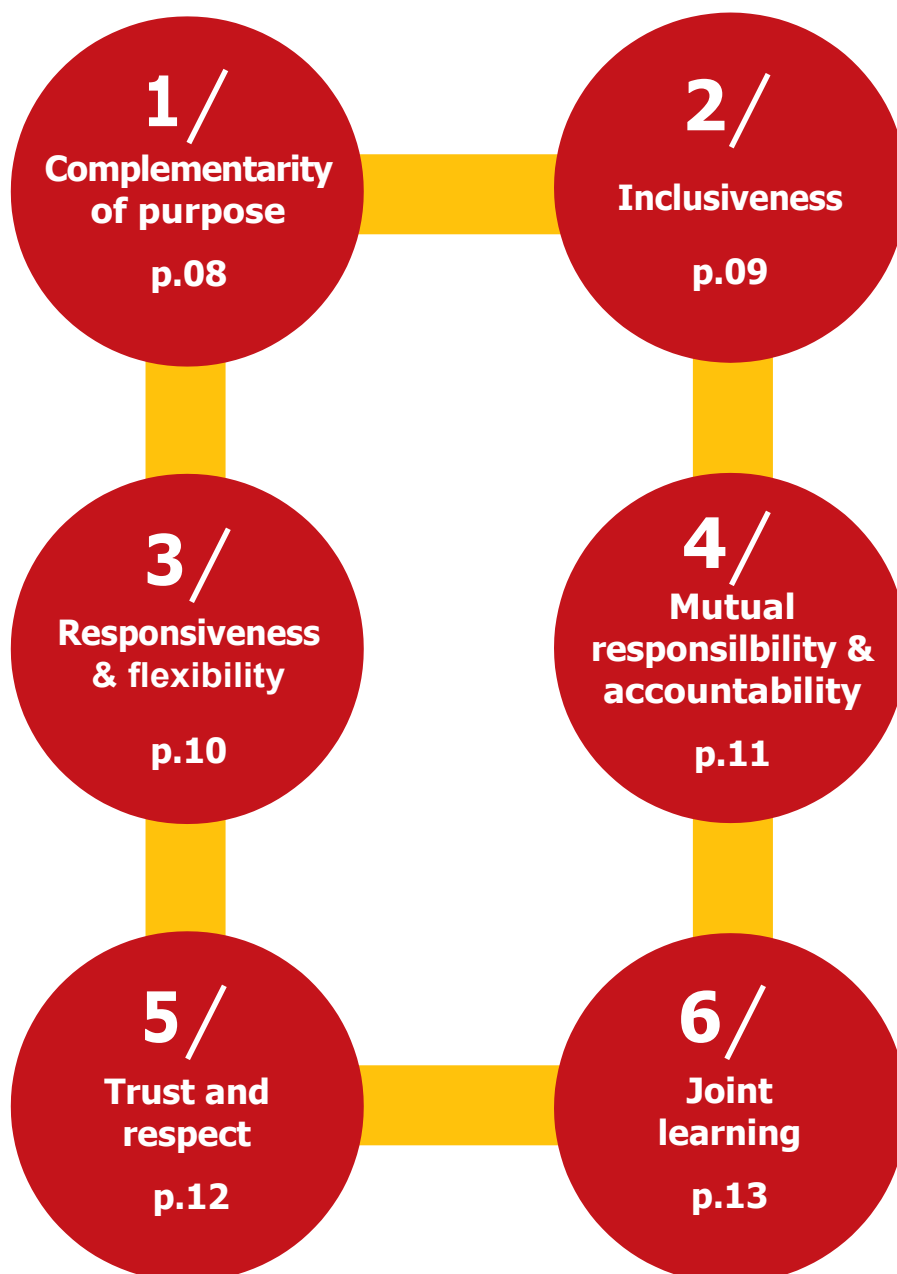
CBM works through a range of local, national, regional and international partners to pursue its vision of a more inclusive world. Partnerships may be developed bilaterally with civil society or governmental organisations, regional bodies, multilateral or academic institutions, and consortiums of other sector actors. Partnership comes about through referral, invitation or application, and may take the form of financial resourcing, capacity building, joint advocacy, research or co-creation, and collaboration on a range of national or global initiatives.

CBM is a faith-based organisation but this does not restrict our choice of partners. We are driven to respond where the need is greatest, and we actively seek out a range of partners who offer reach and effectiveness, and who can increase our impact. In CBM's programme countries, CBM seeks, where at all possible, to work with local partners rather than implementing directly. These are local or regional organisations (organisations of people with disabilities, civil society, community-based and faith-based organisations), local/national governments, or international NGOs. CBM also partners with regional and international institutions and networks to achieve programmatic and advocacy aims.



Man in a CBM teeshirt hands over a piece of paper to another man.

Partnership Principles



1

Complementarity of purpose

CBM seeks to work with partners who share our vision and who complement our advocacy and programmatic goals. We believe that diversity can help to respond to a variety of complex challenges and strengthen problem-solving, and so we unite efforts with a range of local, national and international organisations. Effective partnership promotes shared ownership and responsibility at every level which increases reach and ultimately improves sustainability and impact.

Organisations working together to achieve a shared aim encourages mutual capacity development and learning, as together we seek to both complement and build each other's expertise. Local partners offer geographical and contextual understanding, appropriate technical expertise, and easy access to the community, all of which help ensure relevant and sustainable programmes. They are also the vital connection to local programmatic and advocacy networks and alliances. Academic partners help ensure that our work is based on evidence. Strategic partners and regional or international networks enhance our capacity to more extensively influence and lobby for more inclusive policies, practices and attitudes.

Effective partnership includes recognising that power imbalances often exist, and we seek to both demonstrate and to encourage in our partners, the attitudes and styles of working that are willing to challenge this dynamic, as well as to be ready to cede power where appropriate.

2

Inclusiveness

CBM and its partners are committed to a rights-based approach that seeks to work alongside people with and without disabilities to claim their right to improved access and control over resources, services and decision-making. We seek to address needs identified by people with disabilities themselves (and, where appropriate, their families or caregivers), to ensure that we build on the capacities of individuals and break down the barriers that prevent their full participation. This means ensuring involvement of people with disabilities is fundamental at all stages of the project cycle.

While recognising the importance of donor priorities, we promote community-based solutions as the basis for programmatic direction.

We also recognise how important it is for both CBM and our partners to adapt processes, services and infrastructure within our own organisations and at community level to be more inclusive and equitable, and to respect and advance the equal rights and dignity of all who are excluded or marginalised.

3

Responsiveness & flexibility

We are keen to demonstrate and support forward thinking and dynamic leadership that encourages collaborative development both within their own organisation and with the community. We seek partners who bring innovative and sustainable approaches to both programming and resource mobilisation. Partners and CBM alike need to respond flexibly to the changing local and national contexts where we work and to the cultural differences and varying donor requirements of our diverse parts.

Basing our decision-making on evidence, we seek to build solution-focused and sustainable programmatic approaches from the start, and to develop mutually agreed phase-out strategies where relevant. We recognise that change takes time and partnership should be long enough to assess impact, while being regularly reviewed to avoid creating dependency. Partners may have multiple donors so we aim for compliance and reporting requirements to be proportionate, minimising conflicting demands and multiple processes. Not all partners are the same and it is important to adapt processes accordingly, avoiding over-administrative and one-size-fits-all approaches.

4

Mutual responsibility & accountability

We are accountable to people living with and at risk of disabilities, to local and national authorities, to the donors who entrust their resources to us, and to each other. We seek to ensure ownership of actions at all levels to reflect this accountability, as well as demonstrating professionalism, good governance, due diligence and efficient use of resources. We will always discuss and mutually agree roles and responsibilities, and clarify expectations, changes of strategic approach, and systems and compliance requirements with our partners, with emphasis on early consultation and sharing of information.

We recognise that we can always improve and aim to create an environment which encourages partners and their stakeholders to give feedback and to clearly communicate their expectations and hopes. Providing feedback mechanisms for decision making, complaints and conflict resolution - including mechanisms for reporting serious incidents anonymously - is an important way to encourage this.

5

Trust and respect

We strive to build equitable partnerships based on mutual respect. We strive for equity and mutual respect between members, irrespective of size and power, aiming to transform the relationship from 'donor-recipient' (recognising that CBM can be either of these) to 'partners in development', and encouraging our partners to engage reflexively with issues of power.

Partners nurture trust through demonstrating transparency, and practicing active listening, and through open and timely communication at all levels. This will increase if we practice participatory approaches, deliver on our promises, and are willing to speak openly and honestly. CBM recognises that our actions can impact on our partners and communities in a range of ways, and will seek to ensure our actions do not adversely affect the capacity of local actors.

Being respectful of and sensitive to culture and contexts, we must adapt approaches to fit with local perspectives, customs, and laws where appropriate. It is vital to respect mandates, obligations and independence and recognise each other's constraints and commitments. We will seek opportunities to share partners' achievements and always communicate respectfully about our partners and the communities we work with.



Joint learning

Partnership involves mutual capacity building and shared learning, as together we seek to both complement and build each other's expertise and knowledge. We seek a collaborative approach, drawing upon each other's strengths, skills, resources, and contextual insights and experience. Sharing and learning from successes and challenges enables us to build on or adapt our shared venture. By recognising our mistakes, we can jointly work to improve areas of weakness.

We will work with partners in our programme countries to interpret global dynamics and the development agenda that may have an impact on their work. We will also seek to act as a catalyst for joint learning and networking between partners, facilitating opportunities for exposure and knowledge transfer. On a global level, we will seek out opportunities to share expertise and learning, and to influence policy and practice in order to increase impact.



Huseni (sitting in wheelchair) in his classroom with his school mates - Tanzania (© CBM/argum/Einberger).

For an inclusive world in which all people with disabilities enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential.

CBM is an international Christian development organisation, committed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world.

[cbm.org/strategy](https://www.cbm.org/strategy)

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