



# Partnership Policy

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# Partnership Policy

## Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable

Help a Child believes in the power of partnership, ever since the start of our organization in 1968. We are convinced that together we are stronger and that we require each other's support to bring lasting change in the lives of children and their families.

We believe that partnerships thrive when each partner's strengths are utilized. Partners may contribute specific expertise, contextual knowledge, or financial resources to implement activities. The ultimate goal of a partnership is to cultivate stronger organizations that ensure the efficiency and sustainability of our achievements.

This policy outlines how Help a Child intends to establish its relationship with strategic 'implementing' partners.

## 1. Different types of partners

Help a Child distinguishes three types of partners:

- **Strategic partners** implement community and child-focused projects in development and disaster response settings. We expect these partners to be committed to Help a Child's biblical norms and values, as outlined in paragraph 3.
- **Consortium partners** are partners that work together with Help a Child in a certain proposal or project. Together Help a Child and consortium member(s) apply for funds or receive funds. The consortium is led by one of the consortium members. These partners are not covered by this partnership policy. While we expect consortium partners to respect our biblical norms and values, we do not require explicit commitments from them.
- **Third parties** are specialized technical expertise that complements the work of the strategic partners. These partners are not covered by this partnership policy. While we expect third parties to respect our biblical norms and values, we do not require explicit commitments from them.



## 2. Help a Child's Country vision

Having a Help a Child presence in a country is not a goal in itself. We want to be in a country as long as our presence has an added value. Our role as in-country fundraiser will only be played temporarily until international donors do entrust their funds directly to national NGOs. Similarly, there may come a time that our investments in a specific country do not contribute enough anymore to reaching our mission to provide a future for children in need, their family and their entire community compared to making these investments in another country that has greater needs. In other words: our involvement in a specific country can come to an end, implying an end of the partnership with partners in that respective country. Help a Child withdraws from a country when our added value is no longer substantial, this is determined by the Management Team of Help a Child on the basis of country entry and exit criteria. At that time, the strategic partner ideally must be capacitated well enough to continue without the support of Help a Child.

Please note that Help a Child will not end a partnership because a partner has developed a too strong capacity.

## 3. Help a Child's vision on strategic partnership

Help a Child seeks strategic, long-term partnerships with strategic partners to implement projects that make impact on vulnerable children. Help a Child respects the mandates, obligations, and autonomy of the strategic partners, acknowledging their constraints and commitments. Mutual accountability and transparency between Help a Child and strategic partners are vital quality aspects for strategic partnerships. Help a Child strives not to undermine the capacity of the partner.

Capacity strengthening of strategic partners remains a key priority for Help a Child. Rather than exclusively partnering with already strong and capable organizations, Help a Child also invests in motivated and relevant strategic partners, even when their capacities are still developing. In the situation where a strategic partner has partnerships with organizations other than Help a Child, Help a Child will strive for synergies in the capacity strengthening approach and align for example capacity assessments and audit with these other partners.

Just as we see a life cycle in a project with specific phases, we also see a life cycle in our presence in a country and our interaction with strategic partners. This is explained in this document as the partnership journey.

As a country develops and as a partner organization develops, we see a shifting role for ourselves both in implementation of programs and capacity strengthening needs. Help a Child implements projects itself only in fragile countries where donors expect INGOs to have their own track record and visibility. Help a Child wants to build more towards partner implementation when the situation allows, mostly in low- and middle-income countries. See picture below.



## Partnership phases



As a country develops and as a partner organization develops, we see a shifting role for ourselves both in implementation of programs and capacity strengthening needs.

### 4. New partner identification

Because of the sensitive nature of working in a challenging environment, the identification of potential strategic partners is of great importance. We have established a set of criteria that we expect partners to meet for partnership with Help a Child:

- A Christian identity and work from Biblical values;
- A mission and motivation to support marginalized children (especially young children), their families and communities;
- A clear match with Help a Child's guiding principles (see picture below);
- The proven ability as an organization to implement high quality projects of similar scope, size, and geography, or the potential to develop to this level;
- The ability to implement Help a Child's Theory of Change (ToC) or crucial parts of it to deliver integrated programs that target marginalized children, families and communities;
- The commitment and/or ability to adhere to the compliance standards for quality as mentioned under the Core Humanitarian Standards, including the Help a Child Integrity & Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment policy.
- The ability to link and work together with external stakeholders;
- An in-country registration as a Non-Governmental Organization;
- A clear governance structure of the organization and internal controls;
- The strategic partner sees added value in the cooperation with Help a Child.



Figure 1: Help a Child's guiding principles

## Partnership expectations

A broad definition of partnership is that 'two or more actors combine their efforts and resources to accomplish goals together'. It is important to clarify what it means to partner with Help a Child. This question can be answered on three levels:

- Identity and guiding principles
- Quality & Compliance
- Complementary mission, vision and strategies

### IDENTITY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### Our mission

Help a Child provides a future for children in need, their family, and their entire community.

#### Our vision

As a Christian non-profit organization, Help a Child wants every child – regardless of their social, political, religious, ethnic, or economic background – to have a life in dignity, with love and with a promising future.

## Our guiding principles

### *Sustainable impact*

Help a Child creates sustainable impact for children. We want to support children living in poverty and crises to have a better future. We achieve this by empowering our target groups, enabling them to independently enhance their living conditions and increase their resilience and coping mechanisms to deal with the crises they face.

### *Empower people*

As a Christian organization, we believe that every human being and every child is uniquely created in the image of God. All our efforts need to result in people who have the strength and perspective to improve their own situation and the confidence to develop within their own context.

### *Holistic care*

Help a Child understands that poverty and crisis are multidimensional, therefore we believe in holistic approaches. Providing children with a better future is a comprehensive goal, encompassing multiple domains. We support children to be Healthy & Strong, Educated for Life, Social & Emotionally Developed and living with Hope & Dignity. As an organization, we focus on what we do best and cooperate with other actors to achieve the rest.

### *Engage our constituency*

Our reason to exist is children in need, our right to exist is our constituency. To engage people in the Netherlands in our work is crucial in a world in which we are connected as brothers and sisters. As an organization we feel the obligation, due to our shared values of compassion and love, to create awareness and to function as a bridge between the families in the Netherlands and families in need worldwide.

### *Our motivation*

We believe that the motivation with which we do our work makes a difference. As Help a Child colleagues we are inspired to love, called to justice, moved to mercy, invited to reconciliation, motivated to stewardship and dependent on God. These Christian principles inspire us to give our best in all circumstances.

Help a Child prefers to work with partners who recognize and embrace this identity and these guiding principles. We feel it makes a difference if you work together based on shared values.

## **QUALITY & COMPLIANCE**

We expect strategic partners to deliver quality work and that they comply with international standards such as the core humanitarian standard (CHS) [Home | CHS 2024](#). As much as possible we support partners to strengthen their organizational capacity as well as the capacity to deliver quality projects.

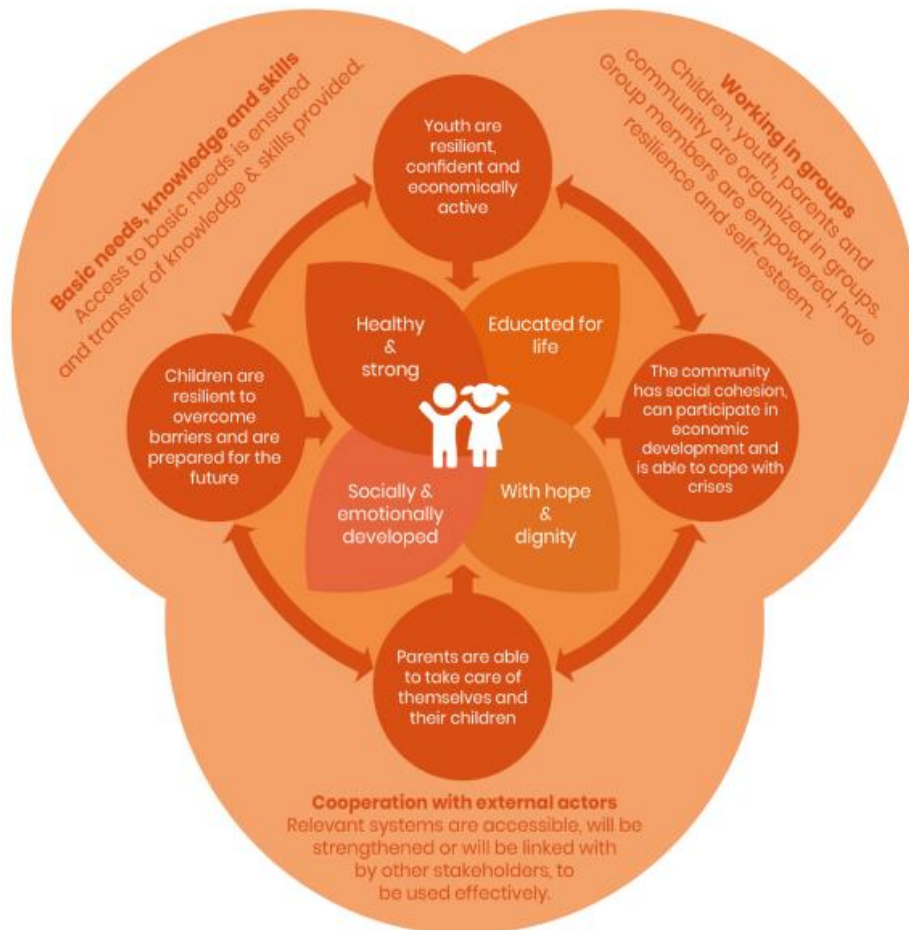
## **COMPLEMENTARY MISSION, VISION AND STRATEGIES**

Help a Child's vision is for every child – regardless of their social, political, religious, ethnic or economic background – to have a life in dignity, with love and with a promising future. Our



mission is for Help a Child provides a future for children in need, their family and their entire community.

We have translated this mission and vision into a Theory of Change (ToC) that describes the way we want to achieve this mission. We expect strategic partners to subscribe to this theory of change as they design their programs and projects.





## 5. What Help a Child commits to in a partnership

**Role of Help a Child towards strategic partners:** Help a Child believes that strategic partners will fulfill our role over the long term. By default, Help a Child withdraws from a country when our added value is no longer substantial. This is determined by the Management Team of Help a Child on the basis of country entry and exit criteria. Ideally, at the time of the country exit the partner is capacitated well enough to continue his work in that country without Help a Child. Help a Child enhances its value by strengthening the capacity of strategic partners and accessing institutional funding streams that may not be readily available to these partners acting alone.

More about Help a Child's roles towards strategic partners is explained in paragraph 5.

**Mutual relationship and reciprocity:** Help a Child seeks strategic, long-term partnerships with strategic partners. Help a Child understands from past experiences that there is valuable learning to be gained from the technical expertise and contextual knowledge of partner organizations, recognizing that capacity development is a two-way process. Therefore, Help a Child invests in international Communities of Practice that include partner representatives.

Help a Child respects the mandates, obligations, and autonomy of the strategic partners, acknowledging their constraints and commitments. Mutual accountability and transparency between Help a Child and strategic partners are vital quality aspects for these partnerships. Help a Child strives not to undermine the capacity of the partner.

**Partner capacity strengthening:** Capacity strengthening of strategic partners remains a key priority for Help a Child. Rather than exclusively partnering with already strong and capable organizations, Help a Child also invests in motivated and relevant strategic partners, even when their capacities are still developing. In the situation where a strategic partner has partnerships with organizations other than Help a Child, Help a Child will strive for synergies in the capacity strengthening approach and align for example capacity assessments and audit with these other partners.

## 6. Help a Child's roles in a partnership

In the partnership with strategic partner organizations, Help a Child fulfills four roles:

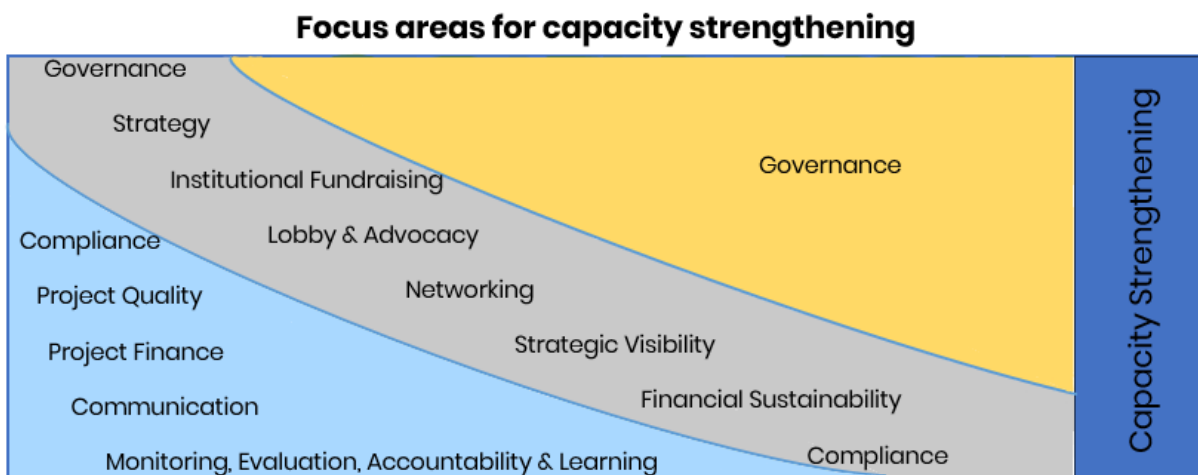
1. **Stewardship of resources:** Our primary responsibility is to safeguard the resources entrusted to us by our constituency. They provide us with funds to support children and families in need, and it is imperative that we utilize these resources effectively and efficiently to create a meaningful impact. Key characteristics of this role are:
  - Utilizing our own funding to retain autonomy and make independent decisions regarding our initiatives and directions. To facilitate this, we coordinate our efforts in country.

- Engaging in long-term, multi-year programs where Help a Child and the strategic partner organization collaborate closely. We aim to establish an equitable partnership built on reciprocity.
  - Ensuring that program design and implementation align with our Theory of Change. This requires a thorough understanding of our philosophy, way of working, and quality standards, as well as opportunities for capacity strengthening.
  - Ensuring support in compliance of strategic partners to external and Help a Child donors standards.
2. **In-country fundraising:** The second role we play is that of an in-country fundraiser. This involves raising funds from donors available in country who do not yet provide grants to national organizations. We leverage our private funding as a multiplier to secure additional resources, thereby extending our reach to more children and families in need and increasing our impact. We undertake this role temporarily, filling the gap until international donors are willing to engage directly with national organizations. In doing so, we indirectly provide strategic partners with access to funds beyond their immediate reach. To effectively fulfill this role, certain additional criteria must be met:
- To be an appealing partner for donors and potential consortium members, we must maintain a visible presence, such as establishing physical offices and actively participating in networks.
  - To be attractive to donors and consortium members, we must offer clear added value. We achieve this by managing the implementation of the Early Child Development and Child Protection components of the program, as well as directly implementing programs alongside partner organizations in disaster response contexts. In the positioning towards donors, Help a Child always tries to connect to its strategic partners.
  - We take on the applicant role towards donors, while our strategic partners serve as consortium partners. Ideally, these consortium partners are the same strategic partners we collaborate with in self-funded programs, although this isn't always feasible. At times, it may be necessary to involve different technical partners to ensure success.
  - Help a Child explicitly avoids competing with strategic partners for institutional funding. Our aim is to have a temporary presence and, during our stay in a country, to co-draft proposals with strategic partners as much as possible. This approach helps these partners develop a robust track record and capacity to access institutional funding independently in the long run.
3. **Expertise:** The third role we assume is that of providing specific expertise and value in Help a Child's core areas of expertise to the projects of strategic partners. These expertise areas include Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Child Protection.
4. **Capacity strengthening:** The fourth role we undertake is that of capacity strengthening for strategic partners. Help a Child can play a significant role in supporting strategic partners to meet the high standards and compliance requirements of institutional donors. Help a Child therefore puts efforts in strengthening the capacity of its strategic



partners in different areas, as explained in paragraph 2. The specific approach to capacity strengthening varies depending on the context and the strengths of each strategic partner. In instances where a partner is already receiving capacity strengthening support from other organizations, we collaborate with these partners to ensure a cohesive approach to capacity strengthening.

The areas for capacity strengthening differ per phase of development of a partner. First basic elements as compliance, project quality and communication are important to increase (bleu area), after that the focus shifts to more fundraising, networking and visibility, and finally its important to focus on the governance of the organization. So important to note that every partner has different capacity strengthening needs, based on their stage of development as an organization.



## 7. The role of the partner

The role of the strategic partner organization is first of all to implement high quality projects of large scope, size, and geography, in line with the Help a Child mission, vision and Theory of Change.

This means that the strategic partner is a locally registered NGO that implements projects with the children and communities and is able to work closely with external stakeholders, and Help a Child, to ensure the funds entrusted to Help a Child make highest impact possible, in line with the compliance of the back donors.

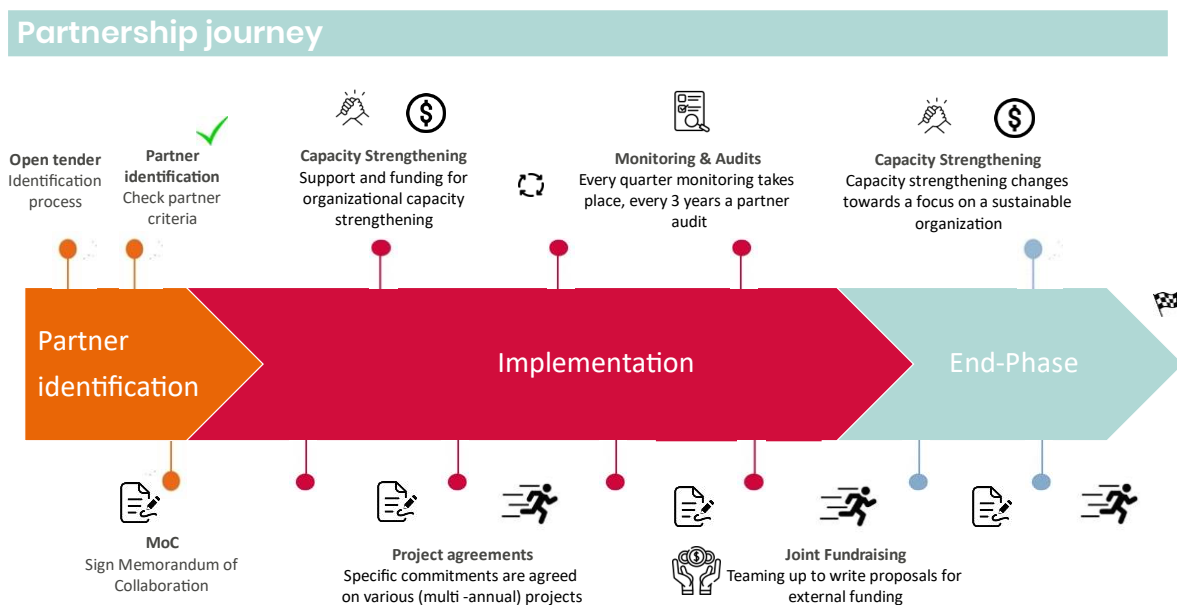
The strategic partner is an organization that is eager to learn and improve, and committed to use the support of Help a Child in capacity strengthening in such way the organization develops to an NGO that can continue the work on impacting children by itself when Help a Child potentially phases out in the country. This means it adheres to all the criteria mentioned in chapter 2 on long-term vision for partnership.

The partnership identification criteria in chapter 3 summarize the key criteria of the strategic partner.

## 8. Partnership Journey

To make sure that our partners can sustain the work after we have left, it is important that we invest in both capacity building and financial sustainability of our partners. We want to develop a partnership journey that allows us to make the most of our time of working together and that results in equipped partners that are ready to take on the full responsibility after we have left.

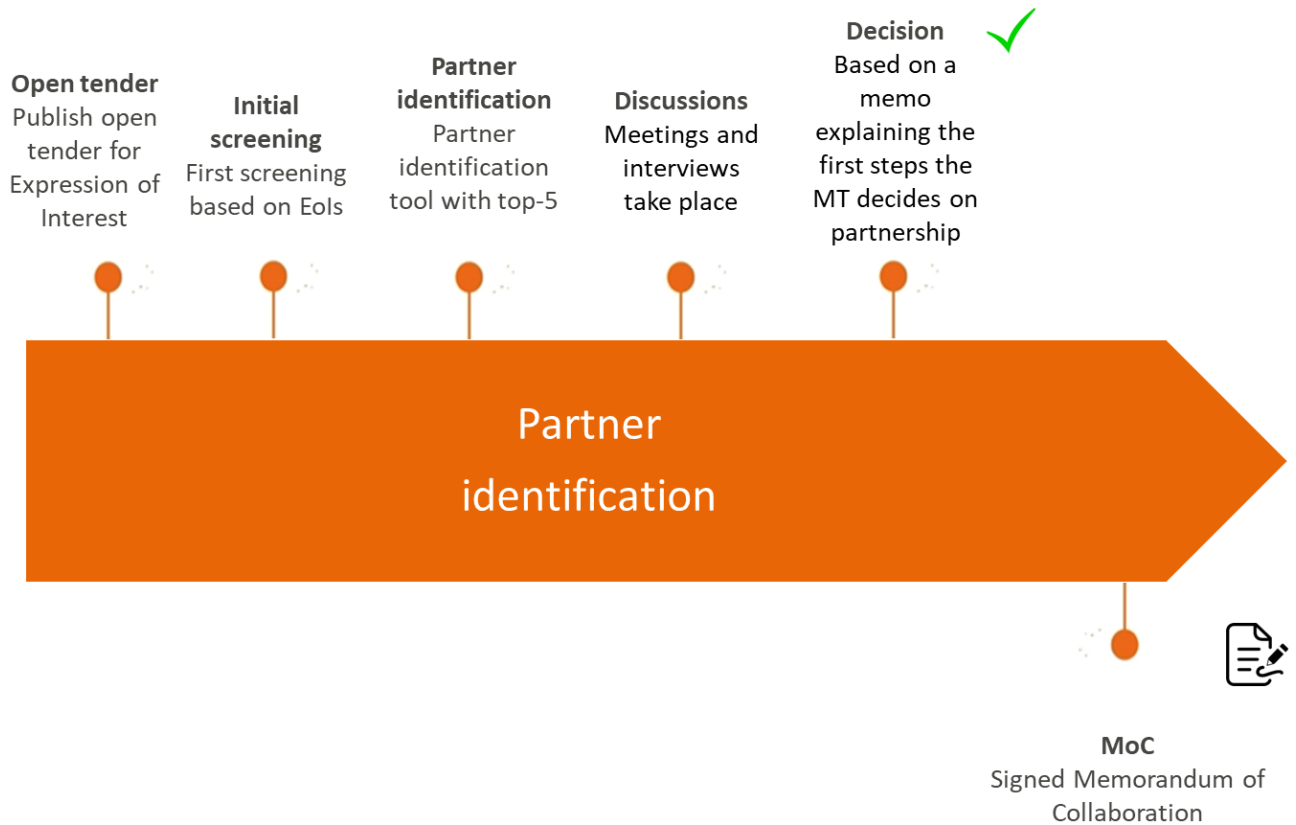
Help a Child and the strategic partner organization walk hand in hand for a certain period of time, from the start of a new partnership up to the moment we say goodbye to each other. This whole period is called the partnership journey. This partnership journey has a tailor-made pace as each partnership is unique and there is not a specific blue-print what a partnership should exactly look like. In this chapter the partnership journey is explained, from start to end. In the partnership journey we roughly distinguish three phases; partner identification, implementation and an end phase. Each phase will be separately discussed and explained here;



### Phase 1: Partner identification

In this first phase of the partnership journey, Help a Child and the strategic partner will get acquainted with each other through various steps of identification. First, Help a Child will launch an open tender requesting for new partnership opportunities by sharing publicly an expression of Interest (Eoi), Help a Child will not start a new partnership without an open, unbiased and honest process of partner identification. Initial screening will follow based on the partnership criteria explained in paragraph 3, resulting to shortlisting of partners. In-depth discussions will be held with these shortlisted organizations and all candidates are assessed

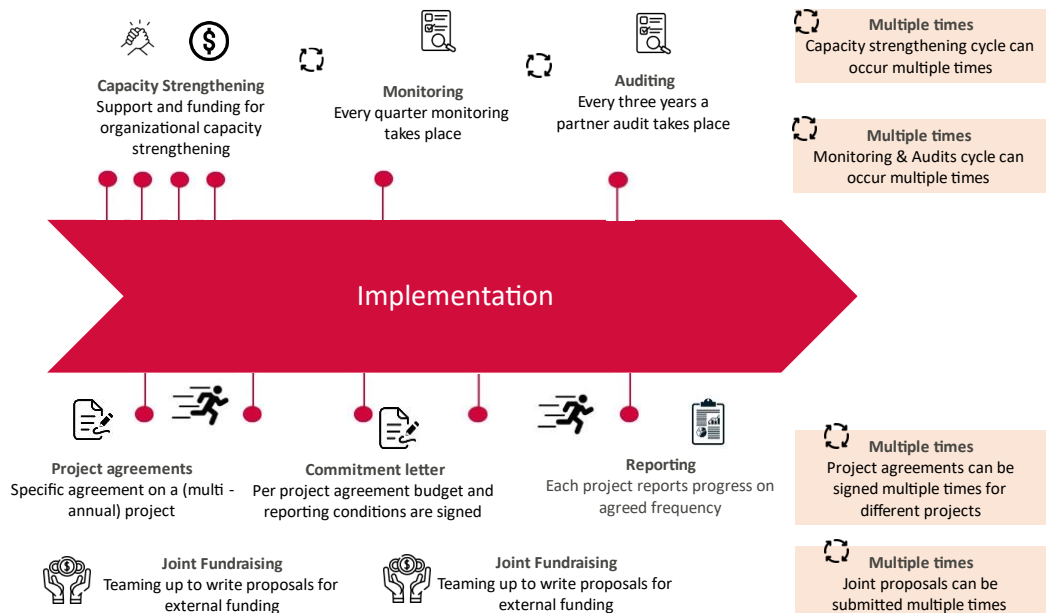
with the identification tools available. Based on the outcome of these discussions and mutual intent to formalize a strategic partnership, the Help a Child country team will write a memo to the Help a Child Management Team to propose a new strategic partner. The Help a Child Management Team will make the final decision. After approval, a MoC can be signed by Help a Child and the new strategic partner, marking the official start of a new phase; the implementation phase.



## Phase 2: Implementation phase

The signed MoC underlines all principles for our collaboration, but does not commit yet to any projects to be implemented. A project agreement will be signed for every project. These projects often cover multiple years and specify the conditions of the project to be implemented. The commitment letter is an annual letter confirming the exact amount of funding and the exact list of compliance and reporting conditions. Besides the implementation of projects by the strategic partner, there are three other forms of collaboration:

1. Monitoring & Auditing of the partner by Help a Child; Help a Child has a Monitoring & Audit policy available for strategic partners, see annexes. This means we'll work together to assess the compliance of the partner towards sector specific quality criteria like the Core Humanitarian Standard and Help a Child policies and procedures, and detect any gaps and strengths in the partner organization. This process can be input for the capacity strengthening trajectory.
2. Capacity Strengthening trajectory; the process in which Help a Child and the strategic partner determine how the capacity of the partner organization can be strengthened.
3. Joint Fundraising; in this case Help a Child and the strategic form a consortium to acquire funding from external donors together. These consortia can also consist of other NGOs joining us.



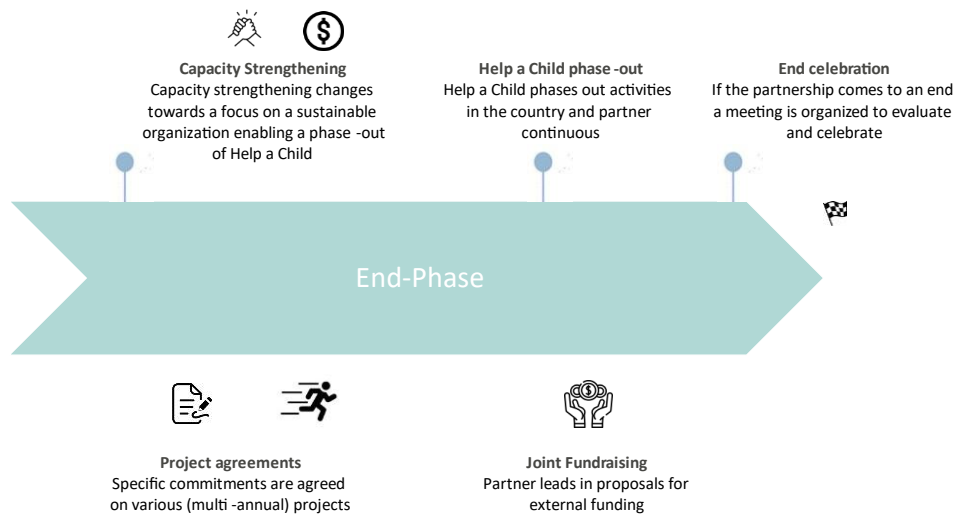
Its possible the partnership remains active when there are no active project agreements.

### Phase 3: End phase

The implementation phase can take a very long period of time, but depending on the context, the strategy of both Help a Child and the strategic partner, the situation in the country, or the availability of funding might be a moment where the partnership might end. When a project agreement ends it can also be a natural moment to evaluate the partnership, as it will not be automatically extended.

Help a Child withdraws from a country when our added value is no longer substantial this is determined by the Management Team of Help a Child on the basis of country entry and exit criteria. Ideally, at the time of the country exit the partner is capacitated well enough to continue his work in that country without Help a Child.

If a partnership ends in proper terms the partnership is closed with a partnership celebration event as an official goodbye and thanks.



## ANNEXES

There is a lot of detailed information available that further guides the relationship between Help a Child and its partner organizations. The main documents are listed here and can be found on our partner portal: [Partnership – Partner Portal Help a Child](#).

- Monitoring & Audits policy [Monitoring and Audit Policy – Partner Portal Help a Child](#)
- Template for a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC)
- Template for a Project agreement
- Partner identification tool (to be developed in 2025)
- Partner capacity strengthening assessment tool (to be developed in 2025)

All partners need to adhere to Help a Child's Integrity & PSEAH policy in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), as mentioned in the Memorandum of Collaboration. This Integrity & PSEAH policy can be found here: [Integrity Policy – Partner Portal Help a Child](#)

