



## **COMMUNICATION ON Engagement (COE)**

### **HelpAge International**

February 2022

Period covered by this COE: January 2019 – January 2021

#### **Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive:**

##### **Statement of continued support for the UNGC**

I am pleased to confirm HelpAge International's continued support and commitment to the UN Global Compact and its ten principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

We are committed to the continuation of our membership of the UN Global Compact and hereby submit our Communication on Engagement. This report is a summary of key highlights that illustrate HelpAge's commitment to the UNGC and the actions taken to support the principles. We will ensure that we share this with our stakeholders and we welcome feedback on its contents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Justin Derbyshire".

Justin Derbyshire

Chief Executive

HelpAge International

## **Part II. Description of Actions:**

**Please use the box below to describe the actions your organization has taken in support of the Global Compact.**

HelpAge International is the secretariat of a global network of organisations promoting the rights of all older people to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives. We work in development and humanitarian contexts and engage with a range of stakeholders to deliver our mission which is to:

*'work with older women and men in low and middle-income countries for better services and policies, and for changes in the behaviours and attitudes of individuals and societies towards old age'*

We seek change across four areas: Income Security, Healthy Ageing, Inclusive Humanitarian Action and Society for All Ages.

Our organisational values, policies and ways of working are aligned with the UN Global Compact, as set out in our [Strategy 2030](#), and organisational code of conduct and documented in our [Annual Reports](#).

### **Human Rights**

HelpAge International is a rights-based organisation. All our work is underpinned by principles which prioritise and put rights at the centre of what we do. We work to address ageism and age discrimination and promote the rights of all older people regardless of their age, gender, disability or any other characteristic, across all four focus areas. We are committed to prioritising the promotion of gender equality in all our work and with our partners.

Like many other organisations, COVID-19 has shaped the way we work and what we are working on. Since March 2019, in partnership with our network members we have worked to respond to the ageist responses to the pandemic. We have led calls for a rights-based public health response, challenging the denial of access to scarce medical resources such as access to ventilators, and public health measures which restrict older people's movements. We tracked and condemned the widespread use of discriminatory age-based public health measures implemented by governments and health service providers which restrict older people's right to liberty and freedom of movement.

HelpAge International takes a rights-based approach through all its work and requires partners to similarly commit to minimum standards in key areas. These requirements are laid out in HelpAge's Partnership policy. In May 2020 we undertook an exercise to comprehensively revise and relaunch partnership management policy and processes (including our partner assessment tools) to ensure it is in line with best practice across a number of areas, particularly in areas such as safeguarding and duty of care. HelpAge continues to advocate for the adoption of an international legally binding instrument on the rights of older people. The existing international human rights framework shows significant gaps in the protection of the rights of older people. If adopted, a UN Convention would be an essential framework to hold businesses to account as duty bearers for any actions that impact on the rights of older people (just as the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities).

HelpAge also promotes the effective protection of older people's rights at the national level, by promoting the adoption of rights-based policies on ageing as well as

comprehensive equality laws that tackle ageism and age discrimination in all areas of life.

Across all areas of our programming, we work to tackle gender inequality, to better understand and address the barriers and the unique needs of older women and men and all other identities.

The HelpAge gender equality training toolkit looks at perceptions of gender and other identities, across the life-course and particularly in older age, and challenge unconscious bias; understand discrimination based on bias towards gender and other identities, particularly with regard to older people; understand why gender analysis is important in all development and humanitarian interventions; and learn how to carry out a gender analysis. This is available to all our partners who are encouraged to use this to better understand and address gender inequality in their work.

Also laid out in our partnership policy is the due diligence process which is conducted for any new partner or supplier and helps us to be sure that we have a clear understanding of the approach, values and governance of the partner.

## **Environment**

HelpAge recognises that we have a role to play in reducing the impact we have on the environment through our programmes and how we operate.

Our organisational policy on Environment and Climate change covers the following areas:

- Four policy outcomes to be delivered.
- The promotion of environmentally sound practices with Affiliates and partners; analysis of the environmental sustainability of all our operations to ensure that our organisation is resilient to the impacts of environmental hazards.
- Programmes – how our project design and outcomes manage any potential detrimental effect on the environment and where possible improves it.
- Organisational commitment – how we will ensure the environmental sustainability of our operations through assessment, monitoring, training and practice change to reduce our organisation's environmental impact
- Guidance and tools to ensure programmes and partners are environmentally responsible and taking steps to review and reduce their environmental impact.

HelpAge is committed to playing a greater role in this area of work, both through our own actions and those that we work with. It is a priority area for improvement over the next 2 years, which we will report on in January 2023.

## **Anti-Corruption**

HelpAge is committed to preventing corruption in all areas of operation. We work to prevent corruption through a) robust policies and processes creating work environment that minimise chances for corruption, b) following best practices in the sector in setting up policies and c) raising awareness in the organisation and with all external partners and d) Anti-money laundering screening is conducted for all new suppliers and our partners.

HelpAge's organisational policies and guidance in this area include:

- Anti-fraud and Bribery policy
- Finance Manual/Policy

- Procurement Policy
- An International sanction screening policy that guides how we reduce our risk exposure to corruption. This applies to our engagement with suppliers of goods and services, contractors and consultants, employees and partners (NGOs and private sector firms)
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Partnership Management Policy
- Ethical Resource Development Policy
- Complaints mechanisms are in place at project level and displayed at project locations and office premises. A process is in place to follow up complaints by all stakeholders on any issue.
- Commitment to the Sphere Humanitarian Standards

When working with partners, we undertake an assessment before they are contracted to deliver work and are fully re-assessed every 3 years. The partner assessment process covers a number of areas including; governance, people management, safeguarding, operations, capacity in emergencies, programming quality, general structure and policies, planning and budgeting, accounting systems, financial reporting, internal controls, grant and contract management and staffing and financial capacities.

As part of the assessment, key individuals of the partner are screened against sanctions lists using the FINSCAN software which they must clear before they are sub-contracted to perform work.

HelpAge's partner funding contract for sub-contracting requires partners to conduct its operations and the delivery of the Project in compliance with both applicable anti-corruption laws and anti-bribery/ anti-corruption policies of HelpAge and the relevant Donor (as applicable). Partners are also required to ensure that it is not dealing with any third party which is the target of sanctions which would cause it or HelpAge to be in breach of Sanctions.

HelpAge requires that all partner audits incorporate elements to strengthen the overall management capacity of implementing partners across numerous areas of risk (including financial). If the partner is assessed as 'high risk' an independent external audit is required if the spend in a fiscal year goes above a set threshold.

When in receipt of funds from a donor or commercial entity, an assessment against HelpAge's ethical Resource Development Policy is undertaken.

### **Part III. Measurement of Outcomes**

HelpAge is committed to be open and transparent in how it works and who it works with and in the measurement and reporting of results. We share updates on all our outcomes through our Annual Reports – [Annual report](#) | [About us](#) | [HelpAge International](#)