

AIN Code of Conduct

AIN members are international non-governmental, non-profit, non political party-affiliated organizations working in Nepal to advance the public good, including human rights, gender equality, sustainable peace and development, environmental protection, and humanitarian response. The AIN Code of Conduct is formed by AIN's Mission Statement, Guiding Principles and Partnership Guidelines:

Mission:

A strong, proactive, and accountable forum for INGOs in Nepal for mutual learning and collective dialogue that takes positions on critical issues, coordinates activities, advocates in the interest of the poor and marginalized, safeguards the interest of its members, and achieves the above by promoting poverty reduction, sustainable development, human rights, and good governance among its members and their partners.

Guiding Principles (or Code of Conduct):

AIN is guided by internationally defined principles and standards of human rights.

AIN will implement its programs without discrimination regarding gender, race, caste, ethnic origin, geographical location, disability or religion, whilst acknowledging that adhering to these principles may sometimes involve affirmative action.

AIN recognizes Nepalese citizens as its key stakeholders. For the functional purpose of promoting pro-poor sustainable development, AIN will have a strong relationship and build alliances with Nepalese NGOs, the Government of Nepal, local government bodies, the Social Welfare Council, donors (bi-laterals and multi-laterals), political parties, the media, the corporate sector and other civil society networks.

In our cooperation with local partners, AIN members are guided by the following specific principles:

- **Common purpose** of our organizations is working for poverty reduction, sustainable development, and protection and promotion of human rights.
- **Commitment to equity and diversity** of people both within our organizations and among those we work with, in terms of age, caste, class, ethnicity, gender and religion.
- **Grounded in civil society**, we honestly aim to represent and respect the interests of the members of civil society we work with and they actively participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of our programs.
- **Accountability** to stakeholders for the effectiveness and efficiency with which we use the resources we mobilize, and they are able to openly express their rights, choices and concerns. All our financial transactions are accurately accounted for by effective financial systems with proper signatories. Annual external audits with an explicit summary management letter are mandatory. The annual report is disseminated and communicated to the stakeholders and made available on request every year. There are clear and adequate written financial policies in place, including for purchases, and the sale of assets.

- **Transparency** to stakeholders about who we are, and how we raise and use our resources, maintain records and make decisions that affect all rights holders involved in our work.
- **Performance oriented** to achieve the best results possible based on targets and achievements agreed with those we work for/with and those we mobilize resources from.
- **Mutual learning and sharing** with implementing and funding partners to ensure benefits are maximized for the sustainability of communities and organizations.
- **Longer term partnerships** to assist communities and organizations develop their capabilities to improve the implementation and sustainability of their programs.
- **Coordination between donors, projects and local implementers** to ensure support provided to partners is well-coordinated and used efficiently so that resources are not duplicated, wasted or misdirected.
- **Legal compliance** with the legal framework of Nepal, including the appropriate taxation, labor and audit laws. We register our organizations with the government, especially where there are financial transactions.
- **Selection and funding of local partners** is based on transparent mechanisms and criteria, including procedure to address conflict of interest.
- **Written contractual agreements** formalize all partnerships and clarify the rights and obligations of each partner. Agreements are drawn up with partners in a language understood by all. The agreements specify the minimum standards, the objectives of the partnership, the agreed indicators and targets of performance, and the resources to be mobilized.
- **Human resources** are managed so that there are clear roles and responsibilities for personnel, including volunteers, and all personnel are issued a letter of contract/appointment. Recruitment procedures for a diverse and inclusive group of employees are based on competitiveness, qualification, suitability, and demonstrated non political partisan working ethics.
- **Conflict prevention** by avoiding use of any language that suggests discrimination or incites violence in any way, or that may adversely affect the goodwill among Dalits, oppressed caste/ethnic indigenous groups, backward regions, Madhesis; including gender, linguistic, religious and political or other groups.
- **Non-political party partisan** by non-involvement in elections and party-political campaigns and by only providing platforms to political parties through our programs on an equal opportunities basis; for example their involvement in inauguration ceremonies, training, and workshops. Involve or engage political leaders only when programs are geared to empower voters or to enable them to make informed choices. Encourage and support programs that guarantee equitable representation of poor, vulnerable and socially excluded groups in elections and political processes.

21 Aug 2008