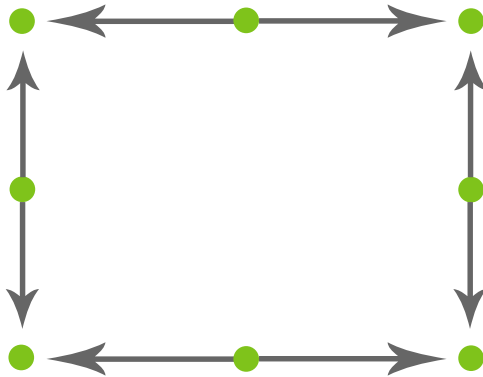


# BEST PRACTICES GUIDE: PARTNERSHIP BUILDING



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## CHAPTER ONE- An Overview of ARDD- LA

Introduces ARDD- LA and outlining their mission and objectives.

## CHAPTER TWO- Rationale and Purpose of Partnership Building

Presents a justification for producing this guide as a source on the subject matter for ARDD– LA and their partners and outlines the aims of it.

## CHAPTER THREE- What is Partnership for ARDD– LA?

Denotes the indications and significances of partnership for ARDD– LA in the context of working with others to support and aid marginalized communities and people.

## CHAPTER FOUR– MEL Standards

## CHAPTER FIVE - Types of Partnership

Lists the different forms of partnership and the criteria applied in classifying them.

## CHAPTER SIX– ARDD– LA Principles of Partnership

Pinpoints the standards that must be met in building partnerships and maintaining them.

## CHAPTER SEVEN– Selecting Partners

## CHAPTER EIGHT– Formalization of Partnership

Presents the different written and verbal documentation of a partnership.

**If we are together nothing is impossible.  
If we are divided all will fail.**

Winston Churchill

It is globally agreed on that the civil society has a responsibility of being part of a humanitarian task to create sustainable development. As crises hit more regions of the world and as world population grows, more and more pressure is put on the civil society organisations and big international organisations to act to eradicate sufferings, poverty, and injustice and create and strengthen a culture of human rights.

The civil society organisations strive to develop coherent policies that respond to economic, social, and political plights. Moreover, while enforcing rule of law, the civil society attempts to influence state policies in favor of the vulnerable and marginalized.

ARDD-LA aims at signaling a new era for institutions it works with in the local civil society through seeking sustainable development solutions for problems that have been traditionally combated with short-term visions and techniques. The solidarity and mutuality that partnership contributes to the work of ARDD- Legal Aid are a key part of the development process.

This guide will address the types and principles of partnership. It aims at tackling the importance and advantages, the challenges, and the strategies and mechanisms of local, cross-national, and regional network and reciprocal partnership relations building both horizontal and vertical.

ARDD- LA works to establish precise rules for building and strengthening professional relations and comprehensive partnerships with all partners. We are accountable to ourselves and to our partners for applying the principles in this guide. It is our duty to rationalize any deviation in the application of these principles and it is the duty of others to ensure liability.

Reviewing the guide collectively with partners of ARDD– LA in a participatory manner is a key step in establishing the knowledge frame and defining the foundations of our partnerships. Thus, contributing your inputs, views, and expertise for the development of this guide is much appreciated.

## AN OVERVIEW OF ARDD- LA

ARDD-Legal Aid (short for Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development-Legal Aid) is a rights-based regional nongovernmental organisation dedicated to fighting poverty and injustice through the promotion of human rights, democracy, and inclusive development in Jordan and across the Middle East. ARDD– LA is committed to the right to development in its all-encompassing meaning and to facilitating the realization of people's social, economic, cultural, and political rights.

### Vision

ARDD-Legal Aid's vision is to create a more equitable and stable world, free of oppression and injustice. In order to accomplish this, we empower the vulnerable and marginalized to access and enjoy their rights and act on their own behalf, mobilize the stakeholders to support and meet their obligations towards the marginalized, seek remedy for victims and holding violators accountable through litigation, advocating for accountable duty-bearers, and provide crucial policy support and guidance through research.

### Mission

Providing the local community and the refugee and migrant communities in Jordan with free legal services; creating and strengthening a culture of human rights and dignity across the region through human rights education; building the capacity of governments and citizens to become active agents in the reform and democratic process; focusing on human development in its main aspects of income, education, health, and employment opportunities; addressing people's and state's needs in educational reform; empowering refugees and migrants; gender justice; humanitarian response and relief.

### Values

Human rights; democracy; empowerment; advocacy; equality; justice; development.

## RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

ARDD– LA applies explicit principles in initiating and upholding relations with various and large number of partners that include but not limited to government, grass-roots organisations and beneficiaries.

This guide will outline exchange of ARDD– LA experience with its partners and introducing them to important concepts such as mutual accountability and transparency.

The objectives of the Best Practices Guide to Partnership Building include:

- \* Promoting increased mutual accountability, transparency and honesty to the partnership among stakeholders and between them and beneficiaries.
- \* Establishing new and strengthened partnerships among ARDD– LA partners and stakeholders.
- \* Reaching and involving more beneficiaries and community groups by ARDD– LA partners.
- \* Ensuring that the activities of ARDD– LA staff and partners are conducted in compliance with the standards and creed we adopt and are of exemplary quality.

We are all angels with one wing. We can only fly embracing one another.

Luciano De Crescenzo

### WHAT IS PARTNERSHIP FOR ARDD– LEGAL AID ?

A partnership is a relation of coordination and cooperation subsisting between two or more parties that have agreed to work together to advance their mutual interests.

Non-profit organisations and civil societies often partner with others to boost their mission and augment their influence. Through partnerships that create a reinforcing environment, NGOs can successfully ensure their sustainability and wide reach. The network of partnerships in the humanitarian work creates alliances for better advocacy and lobbying impact.

ARDD– LA is committed to building partnerships with different governmental and non-governmental components of society to amplify its ability to deliver more help to a broader base of beneficiaries.

Our partnership policy reflects our belief in the right to development and in that as both global citizens and states in a globalized world we are all stakeholders and both duty-bearers and right-holders in development. Therefore, we work with and through others collaboratively to achieve our common overarching goals for ending injustice. We realize the importance of the contribution brought by each party and its complementary role in the global effort towards development and realizing human rights.

Building an effective partnership entails applying accountability; therefore, it is important for our partnership relations to be governed by a set of key principles and to be held accountable for to self, partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

- \* Respect of differences and the importance of dialogue;
- \* Belief in core values of human rights, including human dignity and equality;
- \* Transparency and accountability;
- \* Commitment and dedication;
- \* Complementary work and intervention;
- \* Clear definition of labor and responsibilities.

## MEL STANDARDS

ARDD– LA standards of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning binds us to: rely on empirical data to inform and improve our work; involve partners– individuals, state and non-state institutions– we work with and/or we aim to empower in setting monitoring and evaluation systems; provide objective and transparent evaluation of our intervention to stakeholders from across the board –funding and non-funding partners from international organisations and donors, governments, local partners, and beneficiaries; and using reliable and international methods and standards of learning processes to ensure informed improvement in our programming.

ARDD– LA employs these standards to be able to accurately assess the positive impact of work and its sustainability, contributing to program quality enhancement and accountability.

If you do not seek out allies and helpers, then you will be isolated and weak.

Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"

## TYPES OF PARTNERSHIP

ARDD– LA seeks to forge diverse and truthful partnerships with governments and international state and non-state entities to deliver equity and justice to larger and more distant populations, work directly in communities, increase its regional knowledge, and provide crucial humanitarian aid in dire times of need. We also work with international, national, and local community-based NGOs; we partner with scholars and academic institutions, think tanks, media, etc.

As partner relations are becoming more heterogeneous, ARDD– LA categorizes partnerships under five main broad types. Partnerships do not fit exclusively under a single category, but might fall under more than one.

\* **Fixed-term partnerships** usually engages partners for a specific project within a defined timeframe to achieve common objectives.

Partnership with governmental actors represented in diplomatic missions in Jordan is a fixed-term partnership where partners provide necessary funding for a defined project whilst assuming the role of a monitor of the implementation process. The implementing organisation works to perform the tasks stated in the agreement.

Fixed– term partnership often overlaps with other types of partnership and cannot be regarded as a clear-cut autonomous classification. Drawing a partnering relation within a set timeframe can typically occur in relations with the private-sector or with certain service providers engaged to perform tasks pertinent to a defined project.

\* **Strategic partnerships** are forged with key-players that share a common set of values and work to achieve mutual objectives through a defined strategy. A strategic relation requires working together over time and coordinating roles to produce sustainable change.

Strategic partnerships are essential for the work of civil society organisations in view of the fact that joining forces brings added value that would not be possible to obtain independently. The value results from sharing efforts, views and resources.

Partnering with local authorities and government is essentially a strategic partnership advancing to a set of joint strategic goals. It is crucial for advocacy efforts to target states and decision-makers to adjust policies to accommodate the need to provide all people with equal economic opportunities and access to basic social services, especially the marginalized and the targeted groups. Strategic partnership with local authorities also give state actors policy and implementation support to assist them in satisfying their development obligations.

Strategic partnership also applies to relations with the media. The media can act as an ally to the civil society organisations when it serves as a tool for delivering and spreading their social and humanitarian message. In addition, media serves as a broadcaster and a source of information. Thus, building strategic relations with media partners is one of the most influential strategic partnerships to engage in.

**\*Partnerships with other NGOs** to achieve specific goals in spite the fact that the core values and long-term goals of partners can vary and differ.

ARDD– LA partners with two different categories of NGOs: large international NGOs and grassroots NGOs. INGOs are influential donors who collaborate with ARDD– LA to relieve sufferings and poverty and undertake community development. The role of INGOs, CARE International and Oxfam as examples, often exceeds funding and monitoring to dynamic involvement in the application of the project.

This partnership applies as well to relations of cooperation and coordination with partner grassroots NGOs and development associations in communities where projects are implemented. It is undisputed that grassroots NGOs have a comparative advantage over governments and donors in establishing a broader sustainable reach to beneficiaries. Their work range and size brings them in close contact with the beneficiaries of service-delivery projects.

ARDD– LA engages grassroots NGOs in implementation to reach defined project objectives in a cooperative partnership. ARDD– LA also maintains

stable coordinative relations with community-based NGOs through involving them in the reciprocal process of sharing knowledge and experience and keeping one another informed on each other's activities.

\* **Corporate partnerships** grants ARDD– LA access to new resources to achieve its mission, it also increases community involvement for corporates. Collaboration with the private sector assumes the form of a paid offering of service or corporate philanthropy where we appeal to the corporate social responsibility to engage stakeholders from the private sector.

Lobbying the private sector is crucial in conveying our concerns and voices to governments, due to the economic and political weight the private sector has which affects state policies.

A true partnership between a corporate and an NGO should not be limited to the financial aspect. Rather, a true partnership is about creating and sharing a joint base of distinct views, expertise and resources to work towards common goals.

\* **Partnerships with beneficiaries** are imperative partnering relations between ARDD– LA and groups and individuals targeted with change and development.

The authentic involvement of beneficiaries in the program and in assessing their needs will also ensure the programs' success in addressing and responding to beneficiaries' dynamic and changing needs and true priorities, as opposed to a ready set of needs, enhancing the effectiveness of the program. Making beneficiaries partners in change will allow for the transfer of relevant knowledge to beneficiaries and broadening their skill base and experience, empowering them to carry on the activities even after the end of the programs

Participation invites the concept of empowering as the partnership between NGOs and beneficiaries catalyzes a process in which targeted communities develop greater awareness and ownership for the projects implemented for them and in their area of residence, ensuring acceptance and no rejection for new ideas.

When partnering with beneficiaries, civil society organisations build a social capital to utilize in projecting development and change. Partnership with beneficiaries is a recognition of the importance of indigenous resources that might be consolidated for development.

It is important thus to regard beneficiaries as agents of change.

To be successful, you have to be able to relate to people; they have to be satisfied with your personality to be able to do business with you and to build a relationship with mutual trust.

George Ross

## ARDD– LA PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

The partnership relations that we forge with others are regulated by a set of key principles that we are held accountable for to ourselves and hopefully to other .

### \* Respect differences and the importance of dialogue

Dialogue starts as early as the project planning stage, when we invite our partners to share their views and state their capacities in brainstorming sessions that we build on and on our learnings later.

Our staff know the importance of lending an ear to partners. They show genuine interest in the matters that partners raise and incite them to raise them, inquiries, and concerns.

When a need occurs to introduce a new idea to the project we call for our partners' point of view and feedback. Moreover, we plan meetings to discuss any newly present social or political issue in our community to develop a better idea on the situation and create support groups if needed. We also provide partners with feedback on their performance and advice them through dialogue. The partnership should be reviewed on regular basis and contributions of partners assessed as stated in the agreement.

### \* Belief in core values of human rights

Partnerships may occur at certain contexts with partners who do not share the exact same set of core values and long-term objectives. However, it is necessary for partnerships to be feasible in order to achieve common objectives. That is where the need arises for reaching a consensus on core beliefs and values of human rights, including human dignity and equality. Developing a joint stand on key matters is thus very important.

### \* Transparency and accountability

A great responsibility lies on the shoulders of individuals, organisations, and stakeholders involved in our line of work. Therefore, all partners are fully aware that they are held accountable to themselves, to donors and beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Standards and measures to ensure accountability include:

1. Building the capacities of ARDD-Legal Aid and its local partners in monitoring and evaluation;
2. Developing and designing a monitoring framework with partners in a participatory manner; Implement monitoring system and framework to track output, outcome, and impact;
3. Conducting regular evaluation and publication of results and learnings and making them available to all stakeholders;
4. Implementing the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership standards to ensure enhancement of program quality and efficiency;
5. Conducting regular evaluation of our local and regional partners' work and regular independent external evaluation of our programs;
6. Allocating a certain amount of our program budgets for monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities and observing the above measures;
7. Ensuring the setting of MEL systems and plans for each program, including log frames, results chains and specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timebound indicators, and methods of data collections and indicator measuring.

\* Commitment and dedication

Besides project-based partnerships, ARDD– LA seeks commencing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to guarantee stakeholders' commitment to humanitarian work and dedication to mission.

We aim to make sustainable change and enhance impacts. Thus, we are committed to both our partners, through capacity-building and linking them to other organisations, and to beneficiaries by delivering what we have promised.

\* Complementary work and intervention

ARDD– LA partners with others to achieve common objectives of creating development in its all-encompassing meaning and to facilitate the realization of people's social, economic, cultural, and political rights. Upon establishing a partnership, each party agrees to contribute with knowledge, expertise, and resources to ensure successful interventions. The capabilities and contributions of each party is clearly defined for itself and for the other party. Capacity-building can be in linking the partner to other organisations or sharing information through training sessions or bulletins.

\* Clear definition of labor and responsibilities.

Building a good partnership entails establishing trust and credibility regulated by pinpointing the role of each partner. ARDD– LA maintains open communication channels with partners enabling them to declare their capacities and the needed timeframe for implementation. While it is desirable for partners to take part in the decision-making process, the partners' agreement on their different individual roles will regulate the partnership.

You need to surround yourself with quality human beings that are intelligent and have a vision.

Vince McMahon

## SELECTING ORGANISATION PARTNERS

A set of objective criteria should be taken into account upon selecting a partner, the most important being the value of the partnership with this particular partner, its compliance with the organisation's programme strategy, and prospective capacity-building.

The organisation seeking partners must consider its history of partnership in the targeted geographical setting and working on programmes or projects with themes similar to the potential partner and compliance of its values with those of the partner. It is equally necessary to estimate roughly the required funding needed to implement desired projects with the potential partner, and to assess the partnership's capacity to fulfill the financial requirements if present and the other expertise and resources that can be offered to the partner.

Since our work is beneficiary-oriented, it is crucial for us to know about the ties that the prospective partners maintain with local communities and how they involve individuals from the community and targeted beneficiaries in the different stages of intervention. Moreover, the partner has to be gender-sensitive in its work.

ARDD– LA also seeks clear answers on the financial and managerial systems of the partner including compliance with laws and legal requirements, the effectiveness of administrative systems, financial policies and management, assets and liabilities, funds recording and monitoring system, and the partner's skills bases. The organisation must ask questions about the partner having a clear governance structure that prevents conflicts of interest and enables it to fulfill tasks in a professional manner.

To ensure proper application of the criteria and to guarantee objectivity and honesty, conclusions and remarks must be recorded in forms to facilitate the partnership assessment. Annex (1) of this Guide includes the form that ARDD- LA fills upon selecting a partner.

## FORMALIZATION OF PARTNERSHIP

Formalization of partnerships assist in presenting a clear idea about the objectives that partners are teaming together to achieve, the intervention plan and the approach for carrying it out. Moreover, it helps to prevent problems in situations that might occur before they do.

\* **Partnership Agreements** are legally binding contracts that the partnering sides sign to achieve common objectives. Parties involved agree to concur shared responsibilities, risks, resources, and results. The agreement details the budget and action plan.

Partnership agreements articulate the obligations of each party and lead to improving services and strengthening ties between partners.

\* **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is a non-binding agreement which serves to convey a common wish to work together to achieve common objectives.

MoUs are signed with partners to increase profile and credibility of humanitarian initiatives, improve communication between partnering organisations, and boost efforts that partners may put in the joint work. Moreover, MoUs help facilitate approaching local authorities for grassroots partners.

\* **Implicit Agreements** occur when the organisation contacts and communicates with local authorities. The acknowledgment of the organisation by local authorities and integrating it into governmental strategies implies an unstated agreement between the two parties.

This implicit agreement guarantees acquiring official approvals in a legal manner to ensure the compliance of different parties with state laws and regulations.

\* **Delivery** of service to the beneficiary is the formalization of partnership between ARDD– LA and beneficiary communities and individuals. However, the partnership might start well before that, in which case talking to

beneficiaries and involving them in preparing for and implementing programmes are considered a formalization of the partnership. However, the formalization of partnership with the beneficiary is determined by the offered service. In the case of offering legal representation in court proceedings, a service offered by ARDD- LA in addition to the provision of legal information and advice, a power of attorney and other legal documents are required to be signed by the beneficiary to define the relation between the beneficiary and the representing attorney .

## ENDING A PARTNERSHIP

The procedures followed for ending a partnership often depends on the type of the built partnership and contract in the first place. A partnership might be terminated for a number of reasons varying from failure of the partner to comply with its obligations or a change in the partner's situation that would critically affect the essence of the agreement, to successfully fulfilling the objectives and tasks of the agreement and the expiration of the fixed- term contract agreement. The latter is the most common termination reason.

If a partner wishes to terminate the agreement, a prior notice will have to be given, while applying the termination clause. In other cases that do not require a legal notice, making an announcement of cancelation is deemed adequate.

When the project subject of the partnership is completed successfully, a letter shall be formalized to announce the end of the project and to state that partners do not have any further responsibilities or claims.

Upon the termination, the organisation shall ensure the safely return of any assets or equipments, logos...etc. that have been handed to the partner for the purpose of the successful completion of the partnership's objectives.

Helped are those who create anything at all, for they shall relive the thrill of their own conception and realize a partnership in the creation of the Universe that keeps them responsible and cheerful.

Alice Walker

## Annex (1)

### Profiling Potential Partners Form

This form has to be filled with information relevant to the potential partner prior to commencing the partnership.

Please fill the form accurately after collecting the necessary information about the potential partner through research and/or meetings. Ask the potential partner for any additional information you need to know.

Partner	
Project	
<b>Assessment of a Potential Partner</b>	
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	
<p>1- What is the mission of the partner?</p> <p>2- What are the core values and beliefs of the partner? What is the theme of projects/ programmes completed successfully by the partner?</p> <p>3- Has the partner completed similar projects successfully before?</p> <p>4- What is the knowledge that the partner gained from previous projects and applied?</p> <p>5- Is the partner's approach oriented to long-term development, humanitarian response, and/or advocacy?</p> <p>6- What are the organisations that the partner ally with?</p> <p>7- Does the partner have a clear governance structure? Does it prevent conflicts of interest?</p> <p>8- Does the partner have clear principles, vision, purpose, and governance? Do they comply with ARDD- LA's ways of working?</p>	

## Involvement of Targeted Individuals and Communities

- 1- Is the partner representatives of communities in which it works?
- 2- Does the partner involve men and women members of the community and beneficiaries in the different stages of the project?
- 3- How does the partner involve the disenfranchised and the minorities?
- 4- Does the partner have access to beneficiaries and is credible with them?
- 5- What is the partner's stand on gender and diversity matters generally and in the communities they work in?

## Management, Finance and Skills

- 1- How is the partner organisation managed?
- 2- Does the partner organisation comply with constitutional and legal requirement of the country?
- 3- Does the partner organisation have an efficient administrative system? Does it include financial policies?
- 4- Does the partner have a sound financial management to meet accounting standards and manage resources for programme implementation?
- 5- What assets and liabilities does the partner have?
- 6- How does the partner monitor and record donor funds?
- 7- What is the partner's funding base?
- 8- What is the partner's skills base?

## Assessing Capacity for Successfully Completing Project

- 1- Does the partner have required organisational and individual skills and capacities to achieve project outcomes?
- 2- Are managements and control systems of the partner adequate for the project involved?
- 3- What is the track record of the partner in assessing and managing risk?
- 4- What is the track record of the partner in completing projects within set timeframe and budget?
- 5- What is the track record of the partner in presenting financial reports on time?

Comments on the partner's specific needs in capacity-building:

Form filled by

\_\_\_\_\_  
(ARDD- LA staff)

Date

\_\_\_\_\_