

## 1. Introduction

Friends-International started in August 1994 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in response to the lack of services for street children.

The first project was Mith Samlanh (“Friends” in Cambodian) a project for street children based in Phnom Penh.

Over the years, Mith Samlanh became a good practice project and a reference to working with street children and street youth across Cambodia and the region.

Since 1999, Friends-International branched out and started new projects in Cambodia and other countries in Asia.

Friends-International is always guided by strong principles, a clear strategy and aims to function as a social enterprise.

This Charter defines these principles, strategy and the operating processes.

## 2. Vision - Mission

<b>Vision</b>	Together, we protect marginalized urban children and youth and with them create innovative and exciting opportunities to build their futures.
<b>Mission</b>	<p>Friends-International is a social enterprise that works with and for marginalized urban children and youth and their families to build their futures by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>protecting</b> urban children and youth from all forms of abuse within the scope of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child;</li><li>• <b>reintegrating</b> marginalized urban children and youth so they become actively involved in the development of their society;</li><li>• <b>preventing</b> urban children and youth from engaging in risky behavior and /or dangerous situations that compromise their futures;</li><li>• <b>improving</b> the way organizations work by promoting innovative and effective approaches with the active participation of the children and youth;</li><li>• <b>influencing</b> all tiers of society to provide supportive environments and adopt positive behavior changes.</li></ul> <p>This is achieved by developing creative, innovative and holistic programs, building networks and establishing solid support services within organizations, communities and within all tiers of society.</p>

### 3. Logo and Tagline

### 4. Target Groups

The target group includes marginalized children and youth of both genders regardless of ethnic, religious, health, legal, political or social backgrounds.

#### 1- Primary: *Marginalized urban children and youth (0-24 years), including (but not restricted to):*

- Street living children / youth
- Street working children / youth
- Children and youth of street families
- Children / youth in slum and squatter areas
- Children who have dropped out of school
- Runaway children / youth
- Migrant/trafficked children / youth
- Children / youth affected by HIV/AIDS
- Drug using children / youth
- Children / youth in conflict with the law
- Youth unable to attain employment

#### 2- Secondary: *Their families and their communities*

#### 3- Tertiary: *Society as a whole*

Definitions used by Friends-International:

- Children: 0-18 years of age
- Youth: 15-24 years of age

(In addition: Adolescents: 10-19; early adolescence: 10-14; late adolescence: 15-19; young people: 12-24 years of age)

### 5. Guiding Principles

Friends-International integrates strong core principles in its philosophy of work which guides all projects. Friends-International is committed to respect principles on:

- Legal frameworks;

- General developmental philosophy and approaches;
- Best practice service provision to target groups;
- Statutory and non-for-profit management
- Strict financial management
- Quality of communication and funding policies
- Fund-raising
- Financial transparency

## 1- Legal framework:

Friends-International is committed to and bases its work on the ***International Convention on the Rights of the Child*** and the ***Universal Declaration of Human Rights***. It therefore ensures to every child and youth:

- The right to survival: medical care, shelter, clothing, food
- The right to protection: from all forms of abuse and neglect
- The right to development: access to education from various sources on a variety of topics, integration in the public educational system
- The right to participation: promotion of rights and responsibilities in the community

Friends-International is also working within the framework of the ***Education for All*** principles and of the ILO IPEC ***Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention***.

Friends-International is strictly non-political in its work and strictly non-religious and will not at any time promote or support any political party or religion above another. Friends-International will strive to respect the local culture at all times while respecting the beliefs and tradition of all its beneficiaries.

## 2- General developmental philosophy and approaches:

Friends-International aims at reintegrating children and youth into society, through family (direct family, indirect family or foster family), schooling, employment, culture and citizenship.

The spirit of Friends-International is to commit and ensure that:

- All projects are ***child-centred*** and child-focused;
- All decisions are taken for the ***best interest of the children and youth***;
- Work is carried out with and for marginalized urban children and youth in full ***respect of their gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, origin, health, legal, political and social backgrounds***;
- Services are designed so as to feed a ***virtuous development cycle*** and break the vicious poverty cycle;

- All projects build **sustainable futures** for the children, youth, families, communities and societies;
- Children/youth, teams and the organization are effectively **protected from abuse**;
- All services are designed in the spirit of **cooperation** and to avoid duplications and will not replace or go against Government policies and services;
- All **actions are positive** in nature: Friends-International strives to break the stereotypic images of victimized children and “pity charity” and instead promote images of empowerment, hope, and transformation;
- Networks developed for specific programs retain **transparency, integrity and accountability**.

### 3- Best Practice in Service Provision:

Friends-International is committed to provide **best practice** services in service delivery by ensuring:

#### Programming for Effective Social Reintegration:

- Programs provide for an effective social reintegration of children/youth in a perspective of sustainable development and never support or promote the streets based / marginalized life style
- Families structures or independent living are always preferred options for the reintegration of children/youth, while institutions are always used as a last resort only;

#### Programming for and with the Children / Youth:

- Best interest of the child is at the core of programming;
- Friends-International guarantees that all children/youth are treated fairly, **without any type of discrimination** of gender, race, religion, physicality, health, origin, political, legal or social background;
- Projects are designed to always be **accessible** and readily available to children/youth, families and communities;
- Projects are designed, implemented and evaluated with **full participation** of the children/youth, and more generally with full participation of the projects' beneficiaries;
- Children/youth have **freedom** to make decisions about their own lives;
- Projects must allow children/youth to express their **creativity** and not condone restrictions that could hinder their creative development;
- Friends-International provides children/youth the skills and knowledge allowing them to **protect themselves** from the risks that threaten them (HIV/AIDS, drugs, reproductive health issues, and all kinds of abuse...) and to **lead a positive and**

**productive life** (education, vocational training);

- Projects must **prevent the alienation** of the children/youth by providing culturally sensitive and integrative services.

#### **Programming to respond to all the Needs of Children / Youth:**

- Programs provide a **holistic service** to the children/youth either directly or in collaboration with partner services;
- Programs encourage collaboration and **networking** rather than creating new services which may cause overlap and redundancy;
- All programs and staff are directed by the principle set forth in the Friends-International **Child Protection Policy**, all staff receives specific child protection training, in each program one staff is chosen as Child Protection Officer and all children are informed of their rights and how to report any type of abuse. directly or in collaboration with partner services;

#### **Programming with Clear Objectives and Outcomes:**

- Services are established within a **clear strategy** and are result-focused (and avoid activities that are merely cosmetics);
- Services are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis;
- Projects are **flexible** and always adapting to the changing needs of the children/youth and their environment;
- Projects are **innovative and creative** so as to explore the various possible responses to the needs of the children/youth;
- Services respond to existing needs but do not replace the **role of the Governments** (local and/or national) and its responsibility to promote human development and to protect children and youth of their country. Friends-International projects are designed to ensure maximum Government involvement (where appropriate) as a means of promoting Government responsibly towards the delivery / monitoring of programs for children and youth.

#### **Programming for Effective Networking:**

- Projects are established with a good understanding and in **coordination** with existing services;
- Services are cooperating with existing services to ensure **holistic service provision** to children and youth;
- Friends-International works to **develop the developmental best practice approach** with all its partners.

## **4- Statutory and non-for-profit management**

### **Running of statutory instances**

Friends-International has clear Statutes and internal rules, which include:

- A Board (Friends-International Board)
- Clear roles and responsibilities for all committees of the Board
- A general assembly holding meeting once a year

### **Not-for-profit management**

Friends-International is committed to respect the following principles:

- Members of the Board are not paid;
- No profits are to be distributed either directly or indirectly to Board members;
- No property and assets are to be attributed to the members of the organization or their families;
- No agreement can be made between organizations, the directors or middle persons, which could put in jeopardy the non-for-profit management.

## **5- Strict financial management**

Friends-International is committed to using financial management systems that allow for the optimal use of the funds it receives. It therefore strives to:

- establish procedures and monitoring systems that ensure the relevance and the efficiency of the management of all its structures;
- select services providers and sellers in total objectivity and forbids any link with service providers and sellers that could put into question the objectivity of its management;
- forbid to pay any type of salary / remuneration / fee to service providers that fall out of official contractual agreement;
- allocate the funds received in accordance with the agreements signed with the donors;
- control the good use of funds provided to partner organizations and sign a written agreement between itself and the beneficiary organization.

These principles are defined in detail in the Friends-International Finance Standards of Procedures.

### **Commercial activities:**

All commercial activities carried out by Friends-International will remain in coherence with its objectives and be made clearly known to all its donors. All profits will be solely used for the running of the Friends-International projects.

A clear business accounting system is established and reporting is provided along with the organization's overall financial report.

A specific Charter regulates the Friends-International income generating activities (Friends Social Business Charter).

### **Working with subsidiaries**

Working through subsidiaries or similar organizations (commercial or not) must be decided by the Board and the Board must be regularly informed of the evolution of the work and ensure an effective supervision.

Strict management also applies to the subsidiaries. The financial report must mention the links between the organization and its subsidiaries.

### **Financial management**

Friends-International will not systematically seek important surplus. However, Friends-International will ensure that it has enough reserves allowing it to respect its commitments.

The Board is responsible for all financial investment, loans, guarantees and deposits and must be regularly informed of their terms of management and the risks incurred.

## **6- Quality of communication and funding policies**

### **Rules for communication**

In order to allow donors to give in full confidence, Friends-International is committed to provide to the public and the donors in particular, regular, honest, precise and objective information. Friends-International will ensure that the information tells about the general direction of the organization and its commitments, the choice of its action, the origin and the use of its funding, the name of the directors and its organization.

### **All information will respect the following:**

- be clear that it is a Friends-International information in order to prevent any confusion with other organization;
- remain in the scope of its objectives and philosophy;
- ensure that there will be no inexact information, no ambiguity, exaggeration, omission that could mislead the public and donors;
- use only precise, verified information that is representative of existing conditions to the best of its knowledge;
- respect the dignity of the people represented in the information;
- respect the rules of protection of children with a clear media guideline;

- clearly promote the donor to the project being presented;
- use the Friends-International visuals (logos, color codes, etc.) in accordance with the Friends-International graphic standards.

## **7- Fund raising**

Friends-International is committed to establish fund raising systems that respect the children, families and all beneficiaries and will not victimized children or promote “pity charity”, but instead promote images of empowerment, hope, and transformation.

Friends-International is committed to establish fund raising systems that respect the donors and the people that support it.

Friends-International is committed to respect the legal dispositions and rules for the protection of personal information and calls for donations from the general public.

Moreover, the organisation is committed to decreasing dependency on donors through generating an income through its social enterprises which will subsequently be invested into the organisations programs.

## **8- Financial transparency**

Friends-International is committed to:

- Establish an annual account reports and supporting documents in accordance with financial practices;
- Ensure a yearly financial audit with a reputable auditing company that will certify all accounts and provide a specific report;
- Provide the annual report, specific reports and the report from the auditor to all donors, either automatically or upon request;
- Provide all financial information upon request to any person / organization that request such information.

## **9- Human Resources Management**

Friends-International is committed to:

- Establish a contract (including Terms of References) in line with country Labor Law of qthe country of operation for every staff or volunteer;
- Have every staff or volunteer understand and sign the Code of Conduct in line with the Friends-International Child Protection Policy;
- Have every staff trained and understand the Child Protection Policy;
- Discuss the Terms of References with every staff or volunteer (and possibly

updated) on regular basis;

- Develop an Individual Training Plan for every staff;
- Carry out regular evaluations of every staff and volunteer based on Terms of References;
- Share the yearly reporting of the organisation with all staff members in the appropriate language;
- Ensure that every volunteer works within the “FI Volunteering Conditions”.

## **6. Standards of Practice/Procedures**

In order to ensure that all projects are run in accordance with the Guiding Principles, Friends-International design Standards of Procedures (SoP) and Standards of Practice that clearly define policies, strategies and philosophies behind core projects:

- Friends-International develops and supports the implementation of General Management Standards of Procedures (SoPs):
  - The Friends-International Child protection policy and procedures
  - The Friends International Accounting / Finance SoPs
  - The Friends International Human Resources SoPs
  - The Friends-International Communication SoPs
  - The Friends-International Reporting SoPs
  - The Friends-International Monitoring SoPs
  - The Friends-International Evaluation SoPs
- Friends-International develops and supports the systematic implementation of Standards of Practice (SoPs) for service delivery:
  - Case Management SoPs
  - Non Formal Education SoPs
  - Vocational Training SoPs
  - Life skills Education SoPs
  - General Medical Care SoPs
  - HIV/AIDS treatment and support SoPs
  - Support to drug users (prevention, harm reduction, detoxification, rehabilitation) SoPs
  - Family support for income generation (including Home Based Production) SoPs
  - Outreach SoPs
  - Drop In Centers SoPs

- Residential centers SoPs
- Social reintegration (family, foster care, public school, employment, citizenship) SoPs
- ChildSafe SoPs

## **7. Programs:**

Current Friends-International Programs include (but are not limited to):

### **1- Friends Programs:**

Establish best practice projects and provide the highest standards of services to marginalized urban children and youth, their families and their communities and provide effective working models for strategic partners.

### **2- CYTI Network:**

Develop a worldwide network of organizations that provide the highest standard of direct services to marginalized urban children and youth, their families and their communities.

### **3- ChildSafe Network:**

Involve members from all tiers of society and the international community to protect urban children and youth from all forms of abuse.

### **4- Friends Social Businesses:**

Develop social business initiative that ensures Friends-International's financial sustainability and reduce donor-dependency.

### **5- Monitoring, Evaluation, Training, Research and Observation:**

Support all Friends-International programs to be responsive and targeted best practice models through regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and action research.

### **6- Communications / Social Marketing:**

Support all Friends-International programs to use effective marketing tools to improve their work with their target groups and to build positive and supportive environments for marginalized urban children and youth.

### **7- Finance & Administration:**

Support all Friends-International programs to run efficiently and in full transparency through efficient administrative and financial support.

## **8- Human Resources:**

Support all Friends-International programs to implement human resource management in accordance with the law, with the greatest respect of persons and with the best results for the organization.

## **9- Coordination:**

Ensure that all Friends-International programs are implemented as best practices in a sustainable developmental approach and that they collaborate and share information efficiently.

## **8- Structure**

### **- Board:**

Friends-International is guided by the Friends-International Board. This Board comprises of all Presidents of the Friends-International Support Offices (FISO) as well as specialists nominated by the Presidents of Friends-International Support Offices the Executive Director and voted in by the Board. The Board meets once a year to approve budgets, activities, reports and strategic plans. The Board nominates and terminates the Friends-International Executive Director. The roles and responsibilities of the FI Board are defined in the Statutes (See Annex)

### **- Management / Strategic:**

Friends-International is directed by the Friends-International Executive Director. The FI Executive Director designs the strategic plan (logframes) for the organization and, upon approval by the Board, ensures its effective implementation.

S/he is supported by the International Coordinators in the definition of the overall programs, their implementation on an international level and for the implementation at country level.

They are supported by a team of specialists (METRO team) on specific aspects of the implementation.

### **- Implementation:**

The various programs are implemented at national / regional levels by Country / Regional Directors. The Country / Regional Directors ensure the effective and efficient implementation of all programs in accordance with the Country / Regional logframe. S/he, in collaboration with the Executive Director and International Coordinators, design the country / regional logframe for each program and, as required, hires a Program Manager to run the activities.

### **- Decision Making:**

All decisions are based on objectives set in logframes that are the strategic tool for implementation and reporting. All policies and strategies are translated through the FI Global Logframe and the Program Global Logframes. All Logframes are updated and circulated to be the guides to the work of the organization.

Logframes/ Person in charge	FI Executive Director	International Program Coordinators	Country / Regional Directors	Country / Regional Program Managers	Team	METRO Team
FI Global	design	consulted	informed	informed	informed	informed
Program Global	design	design	informed	informed	informed	consulted
National / Regional Global	design	design	design	informed	informed	consulted
National / Regional Program	consulted	design	design	design	informed	consulted
Implementation	informed	consulted	design	design	design	consulted