

Donor Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Donor Engagement Policy is to **establish Women Deliver’s standards and framework for assessing and engaging with donors who provide the essential resources needed to achieve the organization’s mission**. The policy aims to ensure all donor partnerships respect and advance human rights — as defined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR) — and uphold Women Deliver’s mission while contributing to systemic change in gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for girls, women, and gender-diverse people. Women Deliver only engages with donors whose values and actions align with human dignity, equity, and ethical responsibility, as defined by the [Principles of Feminist Philanthropy](#).

This policy also outlines Women Deliver’s underlying commitment to fundamentally shifting the narratives around philanthropy — moving from a story of patriarchal and colonial power dynamics to one that centers partnership and collaboration and frames grants and material support as reparations owed to feminist activists, organizations, and girls, women, and gender-diverse people writ large.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all partnerships involving financial or in-kind support from governments, the private sector, foundations, family offices, and individual donors. It encompasses all types of official engagements with donors, whether ongoing or newly proposed, including corporate sponsorships, major individual donations (of \$5K or more), institutional grants, technical assistance, pro bono support, and cause-related marketing. The policy also outlines the rubric against which Women Deliver will assess donor partnerships to ensure they align with human rights principles and Women Deliver’s mission.

3. References

In drafting this policy, Women Deliver explicitly drew on the following four sources to inform its definitions, principles, and the rubric against which all partnerships will be assessed. These sources form the basis for donor partnerships with Women Deliver and are referenced throughout this policy. Women Deliver encourages current and prospective donor partners to become familiar with the following:

- a. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR)
- b. [Human Rights-Based Approach](#) (HRBA)
- c. [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (GPBHR)
- d. [Principles of Feminist Philanthropy](#) (PFP)

4. Definitions

Women Deliver defines the terms below as follows:

- **Human Rights Principles:** Based on the UDHR and the international human rights legal framework, human rights principles refer to the universal, inalienable, interdependent, and indivisible rights and freedoms inherent to all individuals, which Women Deliver promotes, inter alia, through partnerships aligned with these principles.
- **Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA):** A human rights-based approach analyzes inequalities that lie at the heart of development problems and redresses discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power. These efforts are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding State obligations established by international law. Women Deliver regards its donor partnerships as critical to the redress and redistribution of power and seeks partners who actively adhere to the HRBA.
- **Girl or woman:** Anyone who has lived experience as a girl or woman or identifies as a girl or woman. They are experts in their own lives.
- **Bodily autonomy:** The principle that every girl, woman, and gender-diverse person has full control over their body and their life. Women Deliver believes bodily autonomy is a human right and the foundation upon which gender equality can be achieved.
- **Ignored and marginalized voices:** Those with first-hand experiences or who are closest to the challenges faced by girls and women worldwide — including young people, feminist advocates, and coalition leaders from the global majority.
- **Non-Discrimination:** The principle that all individuals are entitled to equal protection and opportunity, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion, inter alia. Women Deliver applies this principle to ensure donors do not directly engage in or support discriminatory practices that undermine an individual's universal human rights.
- **Ethical and Ecological Responsibility:** Refers to a donor's obligation to operate responsibly, minimizing harm to workers, communities, and the environment, and upholding the rights to health, safety, and fair treatment.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** In this context, transparency involves the clear, honest disclosure of a donor's financial and operational practices, including the origins and impact of their contributions. Accountability seeks to align donor values with their actions, while Women Deliver, as a grantee, engages in honest conversations, ensuring that donors are held to Women Deliver's standards (as defined by this policy).
- **Positive Social Impact:** Impact that supports human rights, advances gender equality, promotes climate action, and enhances the well-being of marginalized communities, advancing the public good over private interests. Women Deliver favors donor partnerships that recognize the interconnectedness of social impact causes, understanding the compounding effects of multiple crises, such as famine, chronic poverty, conflict, climate degradation.

5. Principles

The principles outlined below establish the criteria by which donor partnerships with Women Deliver will be assessed. Each potential donor will be evaluated holistically against these principles, ensuring alignment with Women Deliver's mission and commitment to human rights. Partnerships will only be pursued with donors who uphold these action-oriented principles in their practices and values.

1. **Protecting Autonomy and Independence:** Donors must respect Women Deliver's autonomy in its mission and operations. Partnerships will be assessed based on the extent to which donors commit

to non-interference in programming, strategy, and decision-making, safeguarding the organization's freedom of thought and expression.

2. **Upholding Non-Discrimination and Inclusivity:** Donors are required to demonstrate a clear and active commitment to bodily autonomy, gender equality, racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, disability justice, and the inclusion of Indigenous voices. A key evaluation criterion will be whether partnerships promote equity and prohibit discrimination in all aspects of business and public engagement.
3. **Adhering to Ethical and Ecological Responsibility:** Women Deliver will assess donors based on their ethical use of funds and alignment with key values, including gender equality, SRHR, and climate action. Donors' leadership in dismantling patriarchal and colonial power structures, advancing human rights, and addressing workers' rights abuses will also be evaluated. Priority will be given to donors actively contributing to systemic change and ecological sustainability.
4. **Ensuring Transparency and Accountability:** Donors must engage in open and transparent practices, including the disclosure of funding sources and the long-term impact of their financial contributions. Partnerships will be evaluated based on a donor's willingness to participate in accountability mechanisms to ensure funds align with Women Deliver's mission and human rights principles.
5. **Promoting Collective Benefit:** Donor partnerships must prioritize systemic changes that elevate marginalized voices and communities. Women Deliver will assess each donor's commitment to advancing structural equity, fostering universal well-being, and avoiding contributions that prioritize private gain over the public good.
6. **Commitment to Periodic Evaluation:** Donors must agree to ongoing reviews and reflective exercises with Women Deliver to ensure alignment with organizational principles. Partnerships will be assessed on their flexibility and willingness to adapt and improve over time based on mutual learning and evolving priorities.
7. **Practicing Feminist Philanthropy:** Donors will be evaluated on their alignment with feminist philanthropic principles, as articulated by the Sisterhood of Urgent Action Funds. This includes a commitment to transforming power structures within philanthropy to boldly and equitably resource social movements, promoting systemic change over incremental action.

6. Policy Statement

Women Deliver will:

- Engage only with donors whose values, mission, and practices align with the human rights principles — as defined by the UDHR — of universality, inalienability, indivisibility, interdependence, equality, and non-discrimination.
- Engage only with donors who practice ethical responsibility and who center accountability to the marginalized groups they work with and support.
- Prioritize donor partnerships that advance positive social impact and collective benefit, and contribute to long-term, systemic change.
- Structure donor relationships to ensure transparency and accountability, with regular, clear communication on how donations support Women Deliver's mission and gender equality writ large.
- Conduct regular evaluations of donor partnerships to ensure alignment with human rights principles and organizational values.
- Enable stakeholder feedback channels, particularly among feminist and social justice organizations, to promote information sharing, raise concerns regarding donor engagements, foster inclusive decision-making, and ensure shared accountability across movements and philanthropists.

7. Decision-Making and Approval Process

Donor engagements and prospective partnerships are reviewed by an appointed Review Group, comprising Women Deliver staff from across the organization, led by the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization team. A recommendation is made by this group to the President/CEO, who reviews and provides a final decision. A detailed donor profile, desk review, and risk assessment are conducted for each donor, in accordance with the principles and statement above. The President/CEO may consult the Board of Directors in high-stakes cases or potentially controversial partnerships, with a particular focus on the potential to influence donor practices positively.

***Approved by the Women Deliver Board of Directors
January 28, 2025***