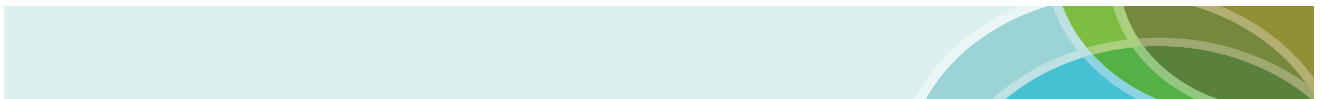


LA GONÂVE  
= HAITI =  
PARTNERS

La Gonave Haiti Partners, Inc.  
Manual of Best Practices  
and  
Guiding Principles



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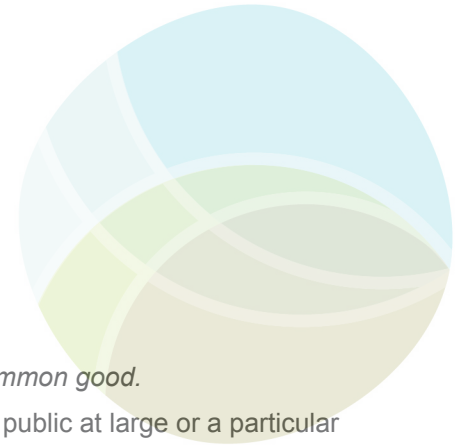
# PREFACE

**E**very person or group operates on the basis of fundamental principles, whether plainly stated or implicitly understood. An examination of organizations that are held in universal esteem reveals great commonality in these principles. These groups tend to share the same fundamental assumptions or beliefs.

*We believe that openly stating and adhering to this practice makes successful and sustainable operation possible. The following is an articulation of the more important of the shared fundamental principles and best practices held by La Gonâve Haiti Partners, Inc. (LGHP).*

*For the purposes of this document, “Partners” and “Partnership” will be taken to mean the US entity currently holding the 501C3. While we do partner with the Diocese of Haiti and we consider them our “partners” on la Gonâve, they have their own set of organizing documents that govern their work in Haiti and the priest in charge who works directly with us serves at the pleasure of the Bishop of Haiti.*

# I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES



## RESPONSIBILITY, SERVICE, PUBLIC GOOD

*Sustainable progress, peace, and justice require that LGHP contribute to the common good.*

- a. LGHP will conduct its activities for the sake of others, whether for the public at large or a particular segment of the public.
- b. Public money will not be misused for selfish purposes and all public and partnership assets are to be treated with utmost seriousness, as a matter of public trust.
- c. LGHP recognizes that its conduct and activities impact on the public's perception of other NGOs and that it shares responsibility for the public's trust of NGOs.
- d. LGHP will exhibit a responsible and caring attitude toward the environment in all of its activities.

## COOPERATION BEYOND BOUNDARIES

*Significant progress towards world peace and global well-being is fostered through interreligious, intercultural, and inter-racial work, and across artificial barriers of politics and ethnicity.*

- a. LGHP will work beyond borders of politics, religion, culture, race, and ethnicity within the limits of the organizing documents.
- b. LGHP will work with other organizations and individuals that share common values and objectives.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

*As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, are endowed with reason and conscience, and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."*

- a. LGHP will not violate any person's fundamental human rights.
- b. LGHP recognizes that all people are born free and equal in dignity.
- c. LGHP will be sensitive to the moral values, religion, customs, traditions, and culture of the communities where we serve.
- d. LGHP will respect the integrity of families and support the life of the family.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

*“Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18)*

- a. LGHP will respect the rights of religious freedom with the people we serve as well as other partners, both in and outside the partnership.

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*Best practice demands that we strive for openness and honesty internally and with donors and members of the public.*

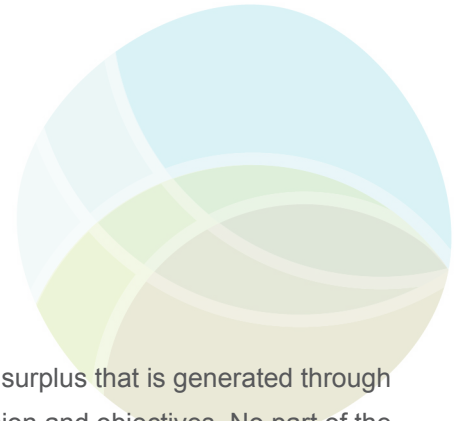
- a. LGHP will be transparent in all dealings with the government, both ours and others, the public, donors, partners, beneficiaries, and all other interested parties, except in the case of personnel matters and proprietary information.
- b. All of the information of the partnership, its basic financial information, governance structure, activities, and listing of officers and partnerships will be open and accessible to public scrutiny and LGHP will make every effort to inform the public about its work and the origin and use of all resources.
- c. LGHP will be accountable for its actions and decisions, not only to its funding agencies and the government, but also to the people it serves, its staff, donors, and partners, partner organizations, and the public at large.

## TRUTHFULNESS AND LEGALITY

*Best practices require that the partnership be honest and truthful in its dealings with its donors, project beneficiaries, staff, membership, partner organizations, government, and the public in general, and should respect the laws of any jurisdiction in which it is active.*

- a. LGHP will give out accurate information, whether regarding itself and its projects, or regarding any individual, organization, project, or legislation it opposes or is discussing.
- b. LGHP will fulfill its obligations under the laws of the United States of America, as well as the laws of Haiti, or any country in which it works. LGHP will strongly oppose, and be unwilling to participate in, corruption, bribery, and other financial improprieties or illegalities. This obligation includes laws of incorporation, fundraising legislation, equal employment opportunity principles, health and safety standards, privacy rules, and trademark and copyright legislation.
- c. LGHP will maintain a policy for volunteers (or any anticipated staff) to confidentially bring evidence to the governing body of misconduct of anyone associated with this partnership.
- d. LGHP will take prompt corrective action whenever wrongdoing is discovered among its staff, governing body, volunteers, contractors, and partners.

## II. INTEGRITY



### NONPROFIT

- a. LGHP is organized and operated as a not-for-profit organization. Any surplus that is generated through its operations is to be utilized solely to help the partnership fulfill its mission and objectives. No part of the net earnings of the partnership is to inure to the benefit of the directors, officers, members or employees of the organization, or to any other private persons, except that the partnership's governing body may provide.
- b. The partnership will not operate for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business, unrelated to its mission and stated objectives.
- c. The partnership's governing instrument will prevent the organization from distributing profits or assets for the benefit of individuals both during operation or when and if the partnership should disband or cease to operate.

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL

- a. LGHP is not to be part of, or controlled by, government or an intergovernmental agency.
- b. The partnership shall maintain independence and not be rigidly aligned or affiliated with any political party, although it may share a common political or legislative cause within the limit of its mission, stated objectives and legal structure.
- c. The partnership will not seek to implement the policy of any government, unless it coincides with the mission of the partnership and the partnership's own independent policy.

### ORGANIZED

- a. The partnership shall maintain an up to date organizing document, a governing board, officers, and regular meetings and activities.
- b. The organizing documents (such as bylaws, or a memorandum of understanding) shall clearly define the mission, objectives, governance structure, membership rights and obligations, if any, and rules of procedure. These documents and organizing principles apply whether or not the partnership is legally recognized by any government.

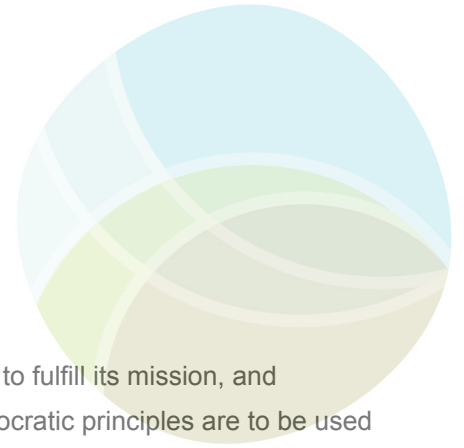
## INDEPENDENT AND SELF-GOVERNING

- a. LGHP is independent. Its policies, vision, and activities shall not be determined by any for-profit corporation, donor, government, government official, political party, or other NGO.
- b. LGHP governs itself autonomously, according to the governance structure it has selected and is equipped to control its own activities.

## VOLUNTARY

- a. The partnership was formed by private initiative, resulting from the voluntary actions of individuals who have chosen to pursue shared interests and concerns. The retaining of voluntary values and principles shall remain a primary force in its way of operation.
- b. In order to achieve its mission and objectives, the partnership requires meaningful contributions from its partners and volunteers, as well as the beneficiaries of its services and programs.
- c. The governing body, board of directors and any committee chair are to serve in a voluntary capacity, for no pay.

# III. GOVERNANCE



## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- a. The partnership will establish a plan of governance that best allows it to fulfill its mission, and reflects the core values and cultural standards of the organization. Democratic principles are to be used where appropriate and applicable.
- b. The LGHP governance structure - including rules relating to the conducting of business by the board and, if applicable, an executive committee that acts between board meetings, and the procedures for electing and appointing officers and their roles - will be clearly specified in the organizing documents and available to all interested parties.
- c. The partnership board will consist of members who are not closely family related. Family relationships are accepted between two members at most.
- d. An indirectly or directly compensated person should not serve as a member of the board.
- e. Term limits are established for membership on the governing board as stated in the bylaws.
- f. Procedures for the Nominating Committee will be followed as stated in the bylaws.
- g. The partnership will strive to have broad representation, reflecting the diversity of the partnership's constituencies.
- h. Each member of the board will be presented with the bylaws and be familiar with these laws.
- i. Members of the board are not to receive compensation for their board service.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

- a. The board will establish the direction of the partnership by creating or adopting the mission statement, reviewing it periodically for accuracy and validity.
- b. The board will determine the partnership's programs, in consultation with the Diocese of Haiti and the parish priest, the larger partnership, and in response to the needs of the recipients.
- c. The board will strive to ensure the partnership has the proper resources to fulfill its mission.
- d. The board will review the quarterly and yearly financial statements and will be responsible for approving annual budgets, as well as tracking the proper execution of any grants the partnership receives.
- e. The board will actively participate in long-term and short-term strategic planning processes, including defining goals and objectives and the success of the partnership towards its stated mission.
- f. The board will assure that the partnership is operating in compliance with its organizing documents and its code of best practices and principles.
- g. Members of the board will serve as ambassadors for the partnership, articulating its mission, accomplishments and goals to the public, and garnering support for the organization.



## CONDUCT OF THE BOARD

- a. The board, and any subset of the board or committee which is authorized to conduct the affairs of the organization between meetings of the partnership, will meet as frequently as is necessary to fully and adequately conduct the business of the partnership and to comply with the bylaws.
- b. Minutes of these meetings will be available to all partners, as well as the public, and will be archived for future reference.
- c. The board will be responsible for its own conduct and will establish job descriptions for its officers and committees.
- d. In serving on the board, directors will put partnership goals before personal goals, and put the best interests of the partnership and its recipients ahead of individual desires.
- e. No board member shall participate in a decision directly impacting that individual, such as re-election or remuneration, etc.
- f. Each board member will disclose all potential and actual conflicts of interest.

## IV. MISSION & ACTIVITIES



### MISSION

- a. The partnership shall maintain a formally and succinctly written mission statement that has been approved by the governing body. It shall be reviewed every 2-3 years to determine if it is still relevant.
- b. During each review period the governing body will evaluate whether or not the mission is being fulfilled and whether or not there is desire to address new needs which might require changing the mission statement.
- c. Each member of the governing board shall fully understand and support the mission of the partnership.

### ACTIVITIES

- a. Activities of the partnership and its partners shall be consistent with the mission of the partnership. The focus will be directed toward making sure that its goals are met.
- b. The programs of the partnership will effectively and efficiently work toward achieving its stated mission.
- c. LGHP will regularly seek feedback on its activities from the project beneficiaries, as well as other stakeholders.
- d. The activities of the partnership will be critically examined periodically to determine their relevancy to the mission, their efficiency and effectiveness, the value of continuing the programs or revising them, and the need for new programs.
- e. LGHP will carry out its activities with professionalism, centered on the concept of serving others, and in consultation with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.
- f. The partnership will strive to spend at least 80% of its total expenditures on program activities. If it should fall below that number the board should review and provide reasons that the goal was not met.
- g. The partnership and individual partners will not negotiate salaries or hire program personnel in Haiti outside the auspices of the Priest in Charge and the Diocese of Haiti.

## V. HUMAN RESOURCES



*LGHP strives to remain an all volunteer organization and limits the expenses that are incurred by hiring staff. Below are the guiding principles for if and when that becomes a necessity. The following principles apply to all volunteers as well.*

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND STAFF

- a. LGHP will seek capable and responsible employees and volunteers (collectively, “staff”), who are committed to the mission of the partnership.
- b. The partnership will provide proper training and orientation for new staff, and provide them with suitable working conditions.
- c. LGHP will provide written policies for any paid employees.
- d. All staff will be treated with fairness and equity, and as individuals with rights to be honored and defended. Their rights to freedom of association, conscience and expression must be respected and protected.
- e. All staff will be provided with the partnership’s Principles and Best Practices.
- f. Staff will be encouraged and guided in maintaining the highest standards of professional and personal conduct, and in taking personal and professional responsibility for their actions and decisions.
- g. The partnership and its partners will treat the confidentiality of each member, staff, or volunteer with respect and maintain privacy of such information to protect any individual concerned.
- h. The partnership has a policy against any board member, partner, staff, or volunteer receiving material gifts for their services while representing the partnership.
- i. The partnership has a policy against any board member, partner, staff, or volunteer giving a material gift that is not vetted by the partnership’s governing board to any of the recipients of the programing or to the priest in charge. The partnership encourages discretion with any gifting that happens between two individuals outside the direction of the partnership.
- j. All members of the partnership and its staff and volunteers are expected to put the goals of the partnership ahead of individual desires and personal relationships within the partnership and with its recipients as groups or individuals.

## VI. PUBLIC TRUST

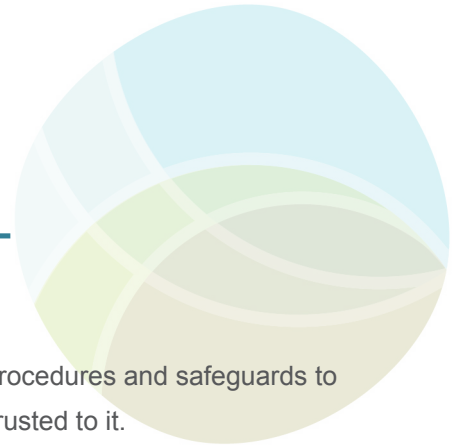
### PUBLIC INFORMATION ON THE PARTNERSHIP

- a. Information provided about the partnership to donors, partners, recipients, staff and the general public shall be accurate and timely.
- b. At least annually, the partnership will prepare and make available to the public information on its programs and services, and provide public access to appropriate records of those programs and services.
- c. The LGHP will annually prepare and make available to the public basic financial information on the partnership, including the source of its funding; the use of those funds; the percentage of the funds used for service and programs, administration activities, and fundraising; and any compensation provided to the governing body. The partnership will also provide public access to appropriate financial records.
- d. The partnership will make available the names of its governing body, publicize any changes in its governing board, and provide access to appropriate minutes of meetings of its governing board.
- e. The partnership will make available, in a timely and accurate manner, information on any partnerships or other joint ventures into which it has entered.
- f. The partnership will maintain the confidentiality of personal information on the board, volunteers, and constituents, unless the individuals waive this right, or disclosure is required by law.
- g. The partnership will describe itself in terms of its own merits, not in deprecation of other NGOs. Communications regarding other NGOs will not be made with the purpose of creating a self-benefit at the expense of the other.
- h. Communications about partnership programs and its recipients, its US partners, and partners in Haiti will always portray them with dignity and respect. Photography will always be with the consent of the subject and will be reproduced in the highest quality and in a context that is fair and represents the dignity of the subject.
- i. Photographs taken of partnership programs, partners and the recipients of its programs will not be sold or used for any commercial use without express permission of the board.
- j. The partnership will provide a communications channel for the public should they wish to make inquiries regarding the LGHP and its activities.
- k. The partnership will assign at least one person to assure that they are complying with national and local laws regarding disclosure of information to the public.
- l. The partnership will present information in a fair and unbiased manner. Where a possible bias is unavoidable or inherent, it is to be disclosed.
- m. Each partner church/entity may share information about their partner community, programs, and trips, in their own internal publications, i.e. newsletters, bulletins, or fundraising material, but should do so under the above mentioned guidelines with regard to respect, dignity, confidentiality, and consent.

## PUBLIC ADVOCACY

- a. Information that the partnership chooses to disseminate to the media, policy makers or the public must be accurate and presented in the proper context. This includes information presented by the partnership with respect to any legislation, policy, individual, organization, or project it opposes, supports, or is discussing. Forward-looking projections are to be presented clearly as such, and not as fact.
- b. The partnership will have clear guidelines and an approval process for issuing verbal and written statements.
- c. The partnership will present information in a fair and unbiased manner.
- d. Any statements by the partnership will reflect its actual authority and will not improperly assume the authority of the community or people it serves.

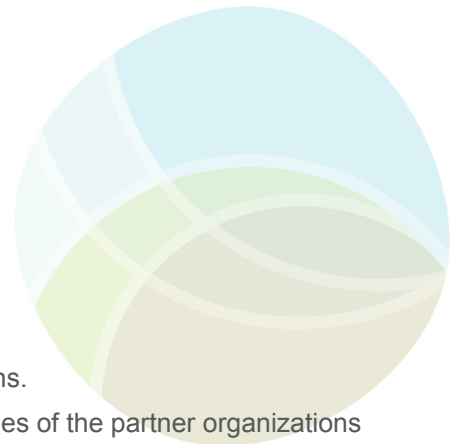
## VII. FINANCIAL & LEGAL



### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. The board of LGHP holds ultimate responsibility for proper financial procedures and safeguards to assure that the partnership is an unquestioned steward of the funds entrusted to it.
- b. The board is responsible for understanding the organization's financial statement and reporting requirements.
- c. The partnership's annual budget will be approved by the board before it is released to the public.
- d. The treasurer will prepare internal financial reports for the board at least once a quarter and those reports will be made available to all partners upon request.
- e. The board will bear ultimate responsibility for adherence to the budget and any or all significant variations between budgeted expenses and actual expenditures, or budgeted revenues and actual revenues, are to be identified and explained to the board.
- f. Financial documents are to be made available to any donor upon request.
- g. The annual report will be prepared and made available to the public at least once a year.
- h. The partnership will adhere to established financial policies covering the receipt and disbursement of financial resources, investment of assets, purchasing practices, and internal control procedures.
- i. Funds and support for all partnership programs should be channeled through the designated routing to ensure that all funds are accounted for and distributed according to the rules of the Diocese of Haiti or other partner organizations, and to establish a transparent source of all funding.
- j. The board will ensure that there is an organized system in place to track grant expenditures and receipts, as well as the internal funding of programs and will monitor the receipt of regular and meaningful reports from our Haitian partners.
- k. No check or wire will be issued without an invoice or detailed report on the intended use of funds. Each wire must be acknowledged by both the priest receiving the funds and the office of the Diocese of Haiti before the next wire can be issued. Each partner donating funds, as well as the chair of the board, will receive a confirmation that the funds have been wired.
- l. The partnership's annual tax return will be prepared by an independent and qualified accountant which will serve as a safeguard for the accuracy of the financial reporting.
- m. The financial records and statements will be kept on a cash basis and in line with generally accepted accounting practices, abiding by all appropriate laws and regulations.

## VIII. FUNDRAISING



### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a. The board will be active in the fundraising efforts, including solicitations.
- b. The partnership will solicit funding with respect for the rules and policies of the partner organizations and their internal list of donors, i.e. partner churches who have restrictions that are governed by the church. No donors will be approached without the express permission of the donor or the partner church who connects the donor to the partnership.
- c. The board will ensure that all solicitations and promotional materials are accurate, and that they clearly and truthfully present the partnership, its mission, and its programs, and that they meet the requirements of confidentiality and respect stated in other sections of this document.
- d. All donors will receive accurate and timely acknowledgment of their gifts.
- e. The board will ensure that all contributions are used as promised or implied in fundraising appeals or as has been stipulated by the donor. If for some reason the donor no longer exists the board will determine an appropriate use for the gift in line with the original intent of the donor.
- f. The partnership may alter the conditions of a gift or grant only by obtaining explicit consent from the donor. If for some unforeseen reason the gift cannot be applied in the intended manner the donor must be notified of the issue and take part in the resolution of the matter.
- g. When the partnership accepts a grant, it is entering into a contract to carry out the program in an agreed-upon manner, and has an ethical and a legal obligation to honor that commitment.
- h. The partnership will ensure efficient and effective use of all grants and charitable contributions.
- i. The board or any partner will not exploit any relationship with a donor or prospective donor for personal benefit.
- j. Privileged or confidential information regarding the donor or donation must not be disclosed to unauthorized parties and all donors have the right to remain anonymous and/or not have their name disclosed for fundraising outside the partnership.

# IX. PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATION & NETWORKING

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a. The partnership will collaborate with other entities only if the relationship is transparent and consistent with the stated mission of the partnership.
- b. The partnership will collaborate on the basis of shared values, common ground, and for the good of society.
- c. The partnership will collaborate only on the basis of equitable and genuine mutual benefit to each organization and with full transparency and a two-way flow of information, ideas, and experiences.
- d. The partnership holds a high value on working with government and internal government bodies to ensure that our Haitian recipients stay connected to their government and its process. The partnership will seek to dialogue and cooperate with these agencies when appropriate and mutually beneficial and when it could increase the effectiveness in dealing with issues and priorities as stated in our mission.
- e. The partnership will not change its policies or non-partisan nature in order to curry political favor.
- f. The partnership will not enter into any collaboration with another nonprofit, for-profit, or governmental organization if motivated by financial reasons that are independent of achieving its mission objectives.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**T**his document is solely the statement of the governing principles and best practices of the La Gonâve Haiti Partners, Inc. as adopted and revised by its board of directors.

The general outline and some language was adopted from the World Association of Non-Governmental Organization (WANGO) document and represents contributions from numerous individuals, representing non-profit organizations from throughout the world as well as academia and the government sector.