



Together Project Factsheet

Overview

In January 2017, in partnership with a group of founding members, and supported by CEOs across our community, InterAction launched the Together Project. This endeavor represents a hub of advocacy and solidarity for U.S.-based NGOs that provide vital development and humanitarian relief around the world, and confront discrimination or targeted prejudicial regulations in the U.S. due to their operating principles or religious faith. The Together Project enables us to share information and develop strategies in response to shrinking civil society space experienced by these NGOs. InterAction will actively represent organizations vulnerable to direct attacks, or indirect impacts of laws, regulations, or policies that have a chilling effect on their ability to function. These impediments are, in part, caused by of an unforgiving regulatory environment and an inaccurate risk perception and risk calculation on the part of the financial services sector. Exacerbating this circumstance is the growing volume of hate speech within U.S. public discourse. The Together Project will bring attention to these issues, educate relevant policy-makers and officials, convene and facilitate conversations to explore and identify solutions, connect NGOs with each other, and build solidarity.

Together Project Working Group

Launched in October 2017, the Together Project Working Group aims to strengthen collective capacity, raise awareness on common issues impacting U.S.-based NGOs operating internationally, share best practices, and develop strategies to combat shrinking civil society space. Structured through five workstreams, InterAction members will work collaboratively on these key issues:

1. **De-risking:** Financial access issues including bank account refusals or closures, delayed or frozen transfers, and increased due diligence requirements
2. **Material Support:** Classification of material support and associated sanctions, regulations and designations
3. **Safety and Security:** Addressing insurance, and the safety of property and personnel
4. **Positive Public Image:** Creating positive message branding, effective use of social media and challenging misinformation
5. **Interfaith Connections:** Sharing and strengthening technical and operational functions, and effective partnership building

Project Purpose



Mission

To actively support and represent our members, particularly the organizations that are most vulnerable to direct attacks, or indirect impacts of laws, regulations, or policies that have a chilling effect on their ability to function.



Goals

1. Define and articulate a solid understanding of the legal, regulatory, and civil rights issues facing member organizations.
2. Advocate for the preservation of civil society space, addressing discriminatory policies and inaccurate risk perceptions facing humanitarian and development organizations through engagement with:
 - Relevant policy-makers
 - Bank and financial sector leaders
 - Relevant government and regulatory officials.
3. Strengthen collective capacity, raise awareness and share best practices through the development of a broad secular and faith-based coalition of members.
4. Garner public and private funding to support the achievement of Together Project outcomes.



"The Together Project exists because we are one community of NGOs trying to serve humanity: Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, other faiths, secular, liberal and conservative. An attack on one member is an attack on us all, and we will all push back."

Sam Worthington, InterAction CEO

Accomplishments and Activities



Expert Briefings and Hearings

- Expert Briefing: Designation Process & U.S. Policy (March 21)
- Expert Briefing: Banking Regulations & Financial Access for Non-Profits (March 29)
- Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee hearing with testimony from InterAction CEO Sam Worthington - remarks included the impact of de-risking on organizations (May 3)
- Expert Briefing: Challenges Facing NGOs Operating Internationally (August 1)



Leadership Meetings

- U.S. Dept. of Treasury Charities Outreach Meeting (April 12 and September 8)
- Muslim Humanitarian and Development Organizations in and around Conflict Zones Stakeholder Meeting at the UN (May 22-23)
- Together Project Advocacy Team Capitol Hill Week (June 26-30)
- Government Accountability Office Meeting on the Impact of De-risking on U.S. Humanitarian Assistance (August 24)
- Foreign Assistance Advocacy Capitol Hill Day (September 13)



Partnerships and Outreach

- Law Centers/Law Firms: TrustLaw, Venable LLP and Morrison & Foerster LLP
- Organizations: World Bank, Charity & Security Network, Solidarity Center and CARE
- Media: Article published by The Economist (July 8)



"We are honored to have such great friends and allies in InterAction and peer NGOs and we will continue to stand with all of you to advocate on our shared missions and priorities."

Together Project Member



Founding Organizations



American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa strives to alleviate the suffering from hunger, illiteracy, diseases, and poverty in the Horn of Africa, as well as help the east African community in Minnesota.



Helping Hand for Relief and Development is committed to serve humanity by integrating resources for people in need. They strive to provide immediate response in disasters, and effective programs in places of suffering, for the pleasure of God.



United Muslim Relief integrates their global partners' services to provide comprehensive Muslim relief and development aid to underserved communities around the world. UMR accomplishes this humanitarian mission by blending advocacy, youth mobilization, disaster response, aid delivery, and empowerment through education.



ZAKAT
FOUNDATION
of AMERICA

Zakat Foundation fosters charitable giving to alleviate the immediate needs of poor communities and to establish long term development projects that ensure individual and community growth.



Islamic Relief - USA strives to alleviate suffering, hunger, illiteracy, and diseases worldwide regardless of color, race, religion, or creed, and to provide aid in a compassionate and dignified manner. Islamic Relief USA aims to provide rapid relief in the event of human and natural disasters and to establish sustainable local development projects allowing communities to better help themselves.