

# Terms of Reference – SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUP, BRITISH COUNCIL

## 1. BACKGROUND

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this **cultural relations**.

We are on the ground in six continents and over 100 countries. Each year we work with millions of people, connecting them with the United Kingdom, sharing our cultures and the UK's most attractive assets: English, the Arts, Education and our ways of living and organising society. We have over 80 years' experience of doing this.

In our work in **Society**, we work with partners to create opportunities for young people, citizens and institutions to contribute to and benefit from a more inclusive, open and prosperous world.

We deliver at local, national and global levels on issues of cohesion, justice, civil society and social development. We reach leaders and influencers, sharing tools and ideas to generate systemic change. And we reach young people, women and girls, and the most marginalised in fragile and conflict affected states, giving them knowledge and skills to engage and effect change within their communities.

We have a strong track record of implementing change through an approach that combines extensive local knowledge and global expertise. Working closely with policy makers, stakeholders and professionals, we deliver effective and sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, we work with people of all nationalities, faiths and cultures, building coalitions, generating dialogue and helping to develop the knowledge and capabilities for positive social change. By taking a holistic approach, building stronger links among governments, the private sector and civil society, we are making a lasting contribution globally to supporting societies where economies are robust, legal systems are respected, and citizens can meaningfully participate.

We achieve that aim by delivering results in FOUR areas:

- access to justice, security and conflict resolution
- girls' and women's empowerment
- civil society and governance
- social enterprise

We work through THREE business models:

- client contracts
- partnerships
- paid services

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE ADVISORY GROUP**

The Society Advisory Group will draw on the experience, knowledge and skills of its members to:

- gain a deep understanding of the British Council and the British Council's strategy for work in Society
- identify and comment on opportunities and trends relevant to the four areas of work
- act as a critical friend, advising the British Council Society team on ways it can deliver more impact and more benefit for more people worldwide and in the UK, through new collaborations and innovative working models
- advise the British Council Society team on ways in which it can better evaluate impact in ways that are effective and efficient
- help connect the British Council with relevant individuals and organisations
- act as advocates in the UK for the British Council's work in Society
- participate as appropriate in British Council and partner activities

## **3. SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND KNOWLEDGE WE SEEK**

Members are invited by the British Council to join the group as individuals rather than as representatives of an organisation, in order to achieve a complementary range of experience and knowledge across the group. Areas of particular interest include:

- corporate strategy in complex global organisations
- working across mixed funding models
- the Sustainable Development Goals
- social innovation
- social investment and the social economy
- girls' and women's empowerment
- participation and inclusion
- civil society strengthening
- access to justice
- rule of law
- working in conflict-affected/post-conflict areas
- digital engagement
- marketing and communications
- monitoring and evaluation

#### **4. STRUCTURE**

- Director Education and Society is SRO for the Group
- Members attend meetings in a purely advisory capacity, and will have no financial or legal responsibilities.
- The Chair and Secretary will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the group and will review the arrangements annually.
- The Head of Youth and Sport acts as Secretary and will be the key British Council contact for members.
- Members will not seek to gain any commercial advantage through their position.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of a meeting, any member should declare any private interest which he or she has in an item to be discussed.

#### **5. MEETINGS**

- The Society Advisory Group will meet three times a year. Members' views may also be sought via email or pre-arranged phonecalls.

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<sup>1</sup> The British Council adheres to all applicable legal requirements in our trading activities. We ensure operational and financial separation between State funded activity and revenue generating activity through robust accounting firewalls and appropriate organisational structures. We endeavour to conduct all our trading activities in a fair and transparent manner to prevent negative impact upon competition.