



ENN and private funding

This is a statement based on a paper written in October 2006 and updated in the light of discussions by the ENN Board of Trustees that have taken place over the past year.

The Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) has established itself as a major voice in the field of emergency nutrition, and particularly infant and child nutrition. One of its chief strengths is that it is seen as an independent of any of the big operational NGO or UN interests, or bilateral donors, so that it provides a neutral space where ideas can be discussed freely and where evidence is the strongest currency of debate. Therefore it is particularly important that its funding policy does nothing to undermine this independence either in reality or in the eyes of the sector. This policy is designed with that in mind.

1. For the present time the baseline policy for ENN is that our chief funding should be sectoral funding from our core NGO and multilateral constituents within the humanitarian sector, and project grants from major bilateral and multilateral donors. The largest possible number of organisations within this group should be encouraged to provide support to ENN, as this provides the best guarantee of the organisations real and perceived independence. This also has the benefit of creating buy-in from those who we would want to influence.
2. Private funding from commercial organisations can be sought actively but with caution, so that ENN is seen as fully independent of any commercial or other vested interests. Private funding of any sort should not be seen as the major funding base for the organisation even if it comes from diverse sources, so that the organisation is never reliant on commercial funds for its well-being. Where opportunities arise through outside approaches or individual contacts, small donations under £10,000 per year could be accepted where there is no realistic chance of interference or of undermining organisational credibility. In any case of doubt particular cases should be discussed with the board.
3. Where officers or trustees feel that exceptions should be made to the above rules either because of a particular funding purpose, or because an association with a commercial organisation could be seen as positive or particularly appropriate for ENN in other ways, this can be discussed with the board. Commercial organisations with strong social aims and publishers, especially those based in Oxford, and will perhaps constitute some of these exceptions.
4. There is a particular class of organisations that are commercial companies producing products especially associated with feeding programmes. They can be seen as both ENN stakeholders and as vested interests from different perspectives, and these have been discussed at length. Currently, ENN policy is not to accept financial donations from such organisations (but to welcome their input into Field Exchange and other activities). However the special role within the humanitarian sector of these companies is recognised and this policy will be kept under review.
5. There are many other organisations which we might approach for funding including not for profit companies and grant giving charities and trusts. ENN can seek funding from such sources but must still exercise caution so that there is no possibility of any actual or perceived conflict of interest with our mandate. This might occur when a body has a particular political or religious orientation, or is a not-for-profit foundation established by a commercial organisation.

Dr. Bruce Laurence, ENN Trustee
Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health
Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust, Newholme Hospital, Baslow Road Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AD, UK

February 2008