

ACCOUNTABILITY LAB GLOBAL

Document 16: Duty of Care, Safety and Security Policy

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Part of	The AL Global policy set, Documents 00 to 20. Document 00, the Alignment, Roles and Ownership Register, is the control document for the set.

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1. AL's duty of care

AL asks people to document corruption, question officials and report what powerful institutions would rather keep quiet. That is the work. It carries risk that ordinary workplace health and safety language does not describe.

AL's duty of care is owed to:

- AL Global employees, **including employees of Model A fiscally sponsored projects**, who are AL's employees
- Board members, fellows, interns and volunteers
- Consultants and contractors while engaged on AL work
- Community monitors, citizen reporters and programme participants, whose exposure often comes directly from taking part in AL's work
- Visitors and event participants whose travel AL sponsors

Model C clients and Network Labs owe their own duty of care to their own people. AL's obligations to them run through their agreements and, for Network Labs, through the Network Council rather than by direction.

2. The principles this policy rests on

The principle underneath this policy. No piece of work, no funder, no deadline and no report justifies exposing someone to serious harm. Where risk cannot be managed to an acceptable level, AL does not do the work, or does it differently. Anyone at AL may say a piece of work is too dangerous, and saying so will never be held against them.

The right to decline. Any staff member, fellow, consultant, monitor or participant may decline a task, a location or a trip on safety grounds without giving detailed reasons and without consequence. This applies with particular force where the risk arises from who a person is: their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, nationality or known political associations. Risk is not distributed evenly across a team, and the person facing it is usually the best judge.

3. Risk assessment before work begins

3.1 Country risk assessment

Maintained by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations for every country where AL works or travels. Reviewed at least annually and immediately on a material change: an election, a crackdown, a coup, a conflict, a change in the legal status of AL's work, or an incident affecting AL or a comparable organisation.

Each assessment covers: the political and security situation; the legal position of AL's work and of civil society generally; specific risks to staff by profile, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and nationality; digital surveillance and device risk; medical facilities and evacuation options; reliable local contacts; and what AL will and will not do there.

3.2 Activity and programme risk assessment

Before a new programme, event, fellowship cohort or field activity, the responsible manager completes a risk assessment covering the physical, security, digital, legal and psychological risks to everyone involved, including community monitors and participants who are not AL staff.

The Global Safeguarding Lead reviews assessments for anything involving fellows, community monitors, or work in a high risk political environment. This is the same assessment required by the Safeguarding and PSEAH Policy; **complete it once, not twice.**

3.3 Travel risk assessment

Required for all international travel and for domestic travel to areas identified as elevated risk. Covers itinerary, accommodation, transport, local contacts, communication plan, check-in schedule, medical arrangements and evacuation options.

Approval of travel to high risk locations sits with the Co-CEOs jointly, with the reasoning recorded.

4. Before someone travels or deploys

- **Insurance is in place before departure. No exceptions.** Nobody travels outside their country of origin on AL business or AL-sponsored travel without cover in effect. This applies to staff, consultants, fellows and to conference or study mission participants whose travel AL funds.
- **Cover includes** medical treatment, medical evacuation and repatriation. The Director of Finance maintains the current provider details and confirms what is covered; a copy is retained in the personnel or participant file.
- **Briefing.** Everyone travelling receives the country risk assessment and a briefing proportionate to the risk.
- **Emergency contacts and next of kin** recorded and current.
- **Medical and accessibility needs** collected confidentially and accommodated.
- **Digital preparation.** Device and account precautions per the Information, Data and Digital Security Policy, including what to carry, what to leave behind, and what to do if a device is seized at a border.
- **Check-in schedule agreed** before departure, with a named person receiving the check-ins and an agreed action if a check-in is missed.

5. In an emergency

5.1 The emergency line

AL Global maintains a 24-hour emergency line, **+1 202 557 4963**, reachable by call or WhatsApp. **The number is confirmed current.**

It is for life-threatening emergencies only. Routine problems go to line managers in working hours.

Coverage. The line is held by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations. **The other two Co-CEOs are the alternates.** All three are reachable on WhatsApp, which means a caller who cannot reach the primary holder can reach an alternate on the same platform.

Anyone who cannot reach the line within a few minutes should contact any Co-CEO directly on WhatsApp and keep trying until someone answers. Nobody should wait politely in a genuine emergency. Contact details for all three are in Annex A, which every member of staff, fellow and travelling participant is given as part of their pre-travel briefing.

5.2 What happens on a call

- The person carrying the phone takes the details: who, where, what has happened, what is needed now, and how to reach the caller.

- They verify the information as far as possible, unless the call is from a Country Director or project lead.
- They contact a Co-CEO immediately.
- They ensure the caller is called back and not left waiting.
- Within 24 hours they complete an incident report, which is filed and logged.

Any Co-CEO may act. Nobody waits for a specific person in an emergency.

5.3 Immediate priorities, in order

- **Life and safety.** Get people to safety. Call emergency services or the evacuation provider.
- **Account for everyone.** Establish who is affected and who is unaccounted for.
- **Communicate.** Tell those affected and their emergency contacts what is known and what is being done. Do not speculate.
- **Escalate.** Co-CEOs, then the Board Chair where the incident is serious.
- **Preserve.** Secure records and evidence once people are safe.
- **Report.** Incident report, and any donor, regulator or insurer notification required.

5.4 Arrest, detention or intimidation of staff or monitors

This needs its own route because the ordinary emergency response can make it worse.

- Report to a Co-CEO immediately.
- **Take local legal advice before AL does anything public.** A statement, a social media post or a call to an embassy can escalate the risk to the detained person. The judgment belongs to people who know the context, working with the family where possible.
- Follow the wishes of the person and their family wherever it is safe to do so.
- The Co-CEOs decide, with the Board Chair, whether and when to go public, and the reasoning is recorded.
- The Safety and Security Fund is available for legal costs, relocation and family support. See section 7.

The same applies to community monitors and citizen reporters, who are often more exposed than staff and have less institutional protection. AL's duty of care to them is real, and their exposure usually comes directly from participating in AL's work.

6. Office and workplace safety

Each office, including fiscally sponsored project offices, maintains:

- Fire safety equipment, marked exits and an evacuation plan practised at least annually
- A first aid kit and at least one trained first aider where practical
- A current list of local emergency numbers and the nearest reliable medical facility
- Physical access controls proportionate to the risk
- Named responsibility for premises safety

Home and remote working. AL staff work from anywhere. Managers ensure people working from home have a safe and workable setup, that their location is known for duty of care purposes, and that lone working is considered where relevant.

Equipment and ergonomics. AL provides equipment reasonably needed to work safely, including adjustments for disability or health conditions. Requests are decided within 10 working days per the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

7. Safety and Security Fund

AL maintains a standing fund of **\$15,000** for immediate safety and security needs.

Replenishment

Growth target

Contribution

After every \$1,000 used, from unrestricted funds, approved by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations and reported to the Finance Committee at each of its meetings. Where the fund falls below half its standing balance, replenishment is immediate and the Finance Committee Chair is told at once

10% a year

1% of general operating grants, deposited where cash flow allows. Where AL cannot fund both this contribution and the Operating Reserve target under Document 14, the Operating Reserve takes priority and the contribution is deferred. Replenishment after use is not deferred, because a depleted safety fund is a safety matter rather than a funding one

Replenishment

After every \$1,000 used, from unrestricted funds, approved by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations and reported to the Finance Committee at each of its meetings. Where the fund falls below half its standing balance, replenishment is immediate and the Finance Committee Chair is told at once

Held in

A money market account or an equivalent instrument, available at no more than one working day's notice. Held in accordance with Document 14, the Reserves and Investment Policy. Because the fund must be available at short notice it is not exposed to market risk

Release decided by

Two Co-CEOs and the relevant Country Director or project lead

Uses include: emergency relocation, legal representation for someone arrested or threatened, secure accommodation, urgent travel out of a location, medical costs not covered by insurance, digital security measures, and support to a family where a staff member or monitor is detained.

Nobody waits for a committee. Where a delay would increase risk, any Co-CEO may authorise release alone. The other Co-CEOs are told as soon as practicable and ratify the decision within five working days, and the release is reported to the Finance Committee at its next meeting. **The safety decision is never held up for the ratification.**

Release is also recorded in Financial Management Manual Annex A, which is the only delegated financial authority scheme in force.

The standing balance is reviewed by the Board annually, alongside the list of uses above and the incidents of the previous year. The fund is deliberately small and one serious incident could consume it. The review is where the Board decides whether that is the right size, rather than inheriting the figure.

8. Mental health and wellbeing

Accountability work is corrosive in ways that are easy to ignore. Staff and monitors deal with intimidation, with communities that have been failed, and with the knowledge that their work makes them a target. Fiscally sponsored project staff carry the same load with less connection to AL's own support structures.

AL commits to:

- Treating psychological safety as part of the duty of care, not a benefit
- Funding counselling and psychological support for anyone affected by an incident, and making it available without requiring a diagnosis or an explanation
- Managing workload and time off actively, including after high-intensity periods
- Debriefing after significant incidents, and offering support to people who were not directly involved but were affected
- Training managers to recognise strain and to respond to it
- Not treating requests for support as a performance concern

AL is not a clinical service. Where someone needs professional help, AL's job is to fund it and to make space for it, not to provide it.

9. Incident reporting

Every incident and every near miss is reported, using the AL Incident Report Form, within 24 hours where anyone was harmed or at risk and within 5 working days otherwise.

Reportable incidents include: injury or illness at work or on AL travel; assault, threat or intimidation; arrest or detention; theft or robbery; surveillance or device seizure; road traffic incidents; evacuation or relocation; and any near miss that could have resulted in any of the above.

Near misses matter as much as incidents. They are the cheapest warning AL will get.

Reports go to the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations, who maintains the incident log. Safeguarding matters additionally follow the Safeguarding and PSEAH Policy and are logged in the safeguarding register. Concerns about AL's own conduct follow the Speak Up Policy.

Reporting an incident is never held against the person reporting it, including where their own decision contributed to it. An organisation that blames people for incidents stops hearing about them.

10. Oversight and learning

- The Co-CEOs report at least twice yearly to the Governance Committee on incidents, near misses, patterns, country risk changes, Safety and Security Fund use and balance, and outstanding actions.
- The Governance Committee reports to the Board.
- **After any significant incident, AL asks what the risk register said, whether the controls worked, and what changes.** The answer is recorded and the change is tracked to completion.
- Country risk assessments reviewed annually and on trigger.

- This policy reviewed annually.

Annex A: Emergency contacts

Maintained by the Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations. Updated as the rota changes. Changing this annex does not require Board re-approval of the policy.

Role	Name	Contact	Date updated
Emergency line, primary holder		+1 202 557 4963	
Emergency line, alternate holder			
Co-CEO, Innovation and Operations			
Co-CEO, Programs and Learning			
Co-CEO, Networks and Partnerships			
Board Chair			
Global Safeguarding Lead			
Medical and evacuation provider			
Insurance broker			