



## **ALIGN-T1D Meaningful Community Engagement Principles**

### *Executive Summary*

ALIGN-T1D is a multi-stakeholder, global initiative bringing together philanthropy, industry, technical partners, governments, and the type 1 diabetes (T1D) community to advance equitable access to integrated T1D care in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This document sets out the Alliance's Meaningful Community Engagement Principles — a practical, evergreen reference for how ALIGN-T1D partners work with people with lived experience, community-based organizations, and community representatives across governance, country engagement, grantmaking, implementation, advocacy, and learning.

The Principles build on the World Health Organization's 2023 Framework for Meaningful Engagement of People Living with Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health and Neurological Conditions, adapting that global guidance for a multi-stakeholder partnership model. They are evidence-informed — drawing on community-philanthropy literature and frameworks such as Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation — grounded in lived experience, and shaped by field practice across philanthropic and global health partnerships. The Principles are designed to address common barriers to meaningful engagement (financial and logistical constraints, limited engagement capacity, unequal power dynamics, and weak pathways for community input to influence decisions) while supporting nationally defined priorities and avoiding parallel structures.

The document is intended as a shared reference for ALIGN-T1D partners and the Secretariat (Breakthrough T1D) at key moments of collaboration: designing country-level approaches and concept notes, developing or responding to Requests for Proposals, embedding engagement in funded grants, convening partners and communities, onboarding new alliance members, preparing for Strategy Steering Group and advisory discussions, and reflecting on whether participation is equitable and meaningful.

### **Six Guiding Principles**

At the heart of the document are six principles, each accompanied by concrete enabling actions and illustrative practices:

1. **Commit to Long-Term Partnerships** — engage people with lived experience early, build continuity beyond individual funding cycles, align with national health priorities, and adapt plans to local context.
2. **Offer Responsive and Strategic Funding** — budget for stipends, travel, lodging, translation, accessibility, childcare, and connectivity so participation is not blocked by resource gaps; provide flexible support to community-based organizations.
3. **Communicate with Clarity and Consistency** — set clear expectations, roles, timelines, and decision-making processes; acknowledge conflicts of interest; close the loop on how community input influenced decisions.
4. **Support Capacity Strengthening and Inclusive Participation** — provide briefings and plain-language materials in advance, use structured facilitation methods (nominal group technique, Delphi, round-robin), pair newer participants with peer mentors, and remain attentive to power dynamics.
5. **Co-Create Goals, Metrics, and Reporting Frameworks** — engage people with lived experience in defining priorities, indicators, and success measures across strategy, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; document how community participation shaped decisions.
6. **Actively Seek and Respond to Feedback** — create safe and accessible (including anonymous) channels for input, establish clear processes for raising concerns including safeguarding issues, and share transparently how feedback was acted upon.

## Why It Matters

Together, the Principles signal ALIGN-T1D's commitment to community engagement that is sustained rather than transactional, resourced rather than expected, transparent rather than opaque, and accountable to the communities whose lives are most affected by T1D. They are intended to evolve through ongoing learning across the alliance and to support country- and community-defined priorities at every stage of the partnership.