RISE FIELD GUIDES / 03

THE AI CONSTITUTION

WORKBOOK FOR NGOs

A readiness test, risk guide and 30-day plan for governing AI.



Dr. Tony Bader

YOUR NGO ALREADY USES AI. WHO SETS THE RULES?

RISE ACADEMY

START HERE

Start with one real AI use.

Work through an AI use your NGO already has or is considering. Bring someone who knows how the work is done and someone who can decide whether the use goes ahead.

03-04 Spot AI use and its risks

05 Take the readiness test

06-07 Define commitments and rules

08-09 Classify risk and assign roles

10-11 Review a use and draft your rules

12 Plan the first 30 days

13 Find support and references



BRING A DECISION

Pick a case your team can act on. Use it to test which rules people need, who should own the decision and what evidence to keep.

NGO or team

Session date

Type in the shaded fields and save a copy, or print the pages for a team session.

01 / DIAGNOSE

AI is already in the work.

Staff can start using AI before leadership sees a proposal. A routine task can quickly raise questions about privacy, fairness or accountability.

01 / PROGRAMMES

Summarising case notes

A colleague pastes notes about people receiving support into a public chatbot to create a summary.

02 / COMMUNICATIONS

Generating campaign art

A generated image reinforces a stereotype about the people the campaign is meant to support.

03 / PEOPLE & HR

Shortlisting applicants

AI ranks candidates for a role, and the hiring team cannot explain the order.

04 / FUNDRAISING

Drafting a donor proposal

A colleague includes confidential partner information in an AI prompt while drafting a proposal.

Which AI use will you take through this workbook?

01 / DIAGNOSE

Why the stakes are higher for NGOs

NGOs often handle sensitive information and work with people who have limited power to refuse a process or challenge an outcome.

01

People at risk

Children, refugees, survivors, patients and activists may face serious consequences if their information is exposed.

02

Unequal power

People who rely on services may have little choice about taking part in the process used to deliver them.

03

Mission and rights

A biased result or a decision people cannot challenge can undermine the rights your NGO works to protect.

04

Donor obligations

An unmanaged tool can raise questions about privacy, procurement and compliance with donor requirements.

05

Trust and reputation

Communities and partners judge your NGO by how it makes decisions as well as by the services it delivers.

06

High impact decisions

Errors in aid, protection, health, education or advocacy can harm people who rely on those services.

Who could be affected?

What makes this use sensitive?

01 / DIAGNOSE

The 60-second governance test

Tick a box only if you can point to evidence. Count each tick as one point.

01	☐	We know which AI tools staff and contractors use.
02	☐	We classify each use by risk before it goes live.
03	☐	Staff know what data must stay out of public AI tools.
04	☐	A named person or group owns AI governance.
05	☐	A qualified person reviews outputs that could significantly affect people.
06	☐	People can question or appeal decisions influenced by AI.
07	☐	We check vendors for privacy, security, bias and data use.
08	☐	We check public AI content for accuracy and dignity.
09	☐	We record and act on incidents and near misses.
10	☐	We train staff, monitor AI use and update the rules.

YOUR SCORE / 10

Score

Choose one gap to work on first.

0-3

EXPOSED

AI use is ahead of governance. Start by making it visible.

4-7

PARTIAL

Some controls exist. Decide which gap needs attention first.

8-10

FOUNDATION IN PLACE

Test the controls on a real case and keep a record.

02 / DEFINE

What an AI constitution does

THE PURPOSE

An AI constitution turns your mission and values into rules for how your NGO selects, buys, builds and uses AI.

FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS

01 **Principles**
The values every AI use must respect.

02 **Boundaries**
The uses and data practices your NGO rules out.

03 **Decision rights**
Who can approve, pause, review or stop a use.

04 **Processes**
How a use is proposed, approved, monitored and retired.

05 **Evidence**
The records that show what was decided, by whom and why.

Draft these five items on page 11.

02 / DEFINE

Eight commitments to put in writing

Give each commitment an owner, a procedure and a record that shows how it was followed.

01

Mission first

Use AI only where it serves the NGO's mission.

02

Human dignity

Treat people as individuals when using scores or predictions.

03

Do no harm

Assess foreseeable harm before a use begins and while it continues.

04

Privacy and security

Collect only the data you need and protect it by design.

05

Fairness and inclusion

Test who could be excluded or harmed and why.

06

Human accountability

Name the person responsible for the outcome.

07

Transparency

Explain AI's role and give people a way to challenge outcomes.

08

Learning and proportion

Review what you learn and apply stronger controls where risk is higher.

EXAMPLE / PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Name an owner, write a data handling rule and keep an approval record.

02 / DEFINE

Decide what can go ahead

Use these three tiers to decide when staff can proceed, when they need approval and when they should stop.

	EXAMPLES	MINIMUM CONTROLS
01 / GREEN **Routine support**	Brainstorming with public material, reformatting public information or translating a draft with human review.	Use an approved tool. Keep sensitive data out. Check accuracy and supervise as usual.
02 / AMBER **Review before use**	Survey analysis, donor reports, public advocacy content or help assessing applicants and grants.	Record the purpose. Check the data and vendor, test the use and name a reviewer. Get approval.
03 / RED **Stop by default**	Automated decisions about aid, protection, hiring or eligibility, covert manipulation, or unapproved use of sensitive case data.	An exception requires lawful, necessary and proportionate use, independent review and explicit authorisation.

Could you explain this use to the person affected, your board and a journalist? Record your decision on page 10.

02 / DEFINE

Who makes the call?

Give each decision to a named role. In a small NGO, one person may cover several roles.

01 **Board**
Sets how much risk the NGO is willing to take and protects the mission.

02 **Leadership**
Owns the constitution and approves exceptions.

03 **AI governance group**
Reviews proposed uses, keeps the AI register and monitors incidents.

04 **Teams**
Identify AI uses, follow controls, review outputs and report concerns.

05 **Specialists**
Review privacy, security, legal, procurement and safeguarding issues.

AI governance lead

Who can pause or stop a use?

03 / APPLY

Review one AI use

Use this checkpoint before a new use goes live. Apply the risk rules on page 08.

Use case

Risk tier

01 / What problem are we solving?

02 / Whose data or rights are involved?

03 / What could go wrong, and for whom?

04 / Who reviews the output and owns the outcome?

05 / What evidence will we keep?

Decision: approve, pause or stop

Decision owner

Decision date

Record the decision in your AI register.

03 / APPLY

Draft your AI constitution

Use one working sentence per item. Ask the team to test the draft against the case on page 10.

01 / Principles: Which value must this use respect?

02 / Boundaries: What use or data practice will we rule out?

03 / Decision rights: Who can approve, pause or stop a use?

04 / Processes: How will people propose and review a use?

05 / Evidence: Which record will we keep, and who will keep it?

Draft owner

Next review date

03 / APPLY

Put it to work in 30 days

Use four weeks to move from an inventory to a constitution your team has tested.

WEEK 01

Discover

List tools, vendors, data flows and current uses, including tools staff use without approval.

DELIVERABLE

AI register and risk map

WEEK 02

Decide

Agree on principles, red lines, roles, approval thresholds and when to escalate a decision.

DELIVERABLE

Draft constitution and risk tiers

WEEK 03

Build

Create templates for intake, impact, vendor checks, incidents, disclosures and recordkeeping.

DELIVERABLE

Governance toolkit

WEEK 04

Activate

Test on real cases, train by role, brief the board and set review dates.

DELIVERABLE

Adoption and a 90-day plan

First action and owner

90-day review date

Revisit the rules when tools, laws, risks, programmes or priorities change.

SUPPORT & REFERENCES

Bring one real case to the table.

Work with Tony Bader to map how your NGO uses AI, agree on rules for sensitive uses and build a plan your teams can follow.

AI governance readiness session

- Leadership and board workshop
- AI use and risk mapping
- Tailored principles and red lines
- Roles, approvals and practical templates
- Training, simulations and an implementation roadmap

GET IN TOUCH

badertony.com

REFERENCE FOUNDATIONS

NIST / AI Risk Management Framework →

OECD / AI Principles →

UNESCO / Recommendation on the Ethics of AI →

EU / AI Act →

For general information only. Adapt the workbook to local law, donor requirements, sector standards and your operating context.

