



## ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

### 6 PURSUE EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND SOLIDARITY

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship.



A member of **ChildFund Alliance**



Photo: Philip Maher/CCFC's

## Strengthening local communities: Christian Children's Fund of Canada

Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) is a Canadian-based registered charity and child-centred international development organization.

## CHALLENGE

CCFC works side-by-side with partners in developing countries, emphasizing child and community development. CCFC has pursued its mission by working in partnership with local NGOs. Traditionally, CCFC has invested in the sectors of Education, Health and Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Sustainable Livelihoods Development (SLD). While developing its 1st six-year strategic plan in 2006, CCFC realized that these sectoral programs helped generate key development outcomes and results, but a lack of deliberate investment in the partners/ catalysts involved left the community short of some tangible long-term assets. This led CCFC to develop a fifth important sector of focus called Strengthening Community Organizations.



## RESPONSE



Working with local NGOs, CCFC addresses child-related issues. CCFC's country offices help identify potential partner organizations and evaluate them in terms of shared values, integrity, accountability and capacity to address community needs, as well as their strengths and areas for improvements. CCFC partners with organizations who are committed to finding solutions to problems affecting children. And if they are already thriving, but just lack resources, CCFC has found that they often have the potential to grow.

CCFC also wants to ensure that it doesn't replicate existing efforts on the ground, over-saturating an area that already receives substantial support from other INGOs. To target cooperation efforts where they are most needed, it does poverty mapping (to assess areas of greatest need) and intervention mapping (to identify who is already there and what they are doing), as well as exploring clustering opportunities (to see whether CCFC can consolidate its efforts instead of spreading itself too thin).

# LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

In recent years, CCFC has refocused its efforts to include Strengthening Community Organizations, allowing CCFC's local partners to get needed training and financial support, and ultimately build better organizations. In order to further strengthen this and utilize limited resources effectively, CCFC felt the need to take a further step. In April 2012, CCFC refocused its priorities on three areas: Strengthening Community Organizations, Education (including early childhood education), and Health and Nutrition. While these sectors are recognized as the primary focus, other sectors — like WASH and SLD — would continue but with reduced resource allocation.



CCFC now dedicates resources to strengthen and professionalize the work of its partners. Training provides skills to develop, manage and enhance programs; generate clear goals, targets and work plans; identify deliverables; establish indicators to measure performance; and identify any gaps. They are learning about human resource management, strategic planning, networking and profiling their organizations, advocacy and lobbying, leadership and to some level fundraising tactics.

In addition, partner offices are supported to be equipped with the latest technological tools. This has helped with staff retention, creating more of a career path for individuals to take on greater degrees of responsibilities. CCFC's Country Offices and its local partners collaborated in generating more partnerships with donors such as UNICEF, The World Food Program, CIDA and various Foundations — to cite a few.

CCFC also offers incentives to improve skills and capacity by rewarding the best performers (in terms of both program delivery and institutional development) with increased scope of work that leads to income growth. It then works with those doing less well to identify gaps and address them on time, recognizing the external environment can pose significant challenges to deliver programs and generate sustainable outcomes.

## NEXT STEPS



CCFC will continue to evaluate this pillar of its work to ensure that partners are getting the tools and resources they need to ensure the implementation of their programs — and enhance the capacity of the organizations themselves. This visionary planning helps to build local capacity, while ensuring long-term sustainability of CCFC's program efforts.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

"A day in the life of....a CCFC partner in Ethiopia"

[http://www.ccfcanda.ca/PDF/ChildVoice\\_WINTER\\_2010\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.ccfcanda.ca/PDF/ChildVoice_WINTER_2010_WEB.pdf)

Go here for more examples of how Canadian civil society is improving its development practice: <http://www.ccic.ca/IP-case-studies.php>