



Change for
Children
— 40 YEARS · 1976-2016 —

A CHANGE FOR CHILDREN PUBLICATION

BUILDING BRIDGES

MAKING IT RIGHT

40

YEARS OF RIGHTS-BASED
DEVELOPMENT

THIS ISSUE:

- Nicaragua Water Project
- Proudly Supporting Rights Promotion
- Citizens of a Global Community

Please share this publication.

40 YEARS IMPROVING THE LIVES OF OVER 5 MILLION PEOPLE IN 20 COUNTRIES

Change for Children has been committed to a **rights-based development approach** to our work for over 40 years. We recognize that the people we serve in the developing world are citizens working tirelessly to realize their rights. They are the catalysts of progressive change, and they lead the movements for their rights to food, water, education, traditional lands. Our role is simply to accompany and support some of the world's most marginalized people on their journey.

Making it Right is the theme of our 40th Anniversary Celebration spanning 2016 and 2017. In the process of collecting stories from those touched by our projects, we heard a common message: "Change for Children helped us improve our lives by teaching us about our rights and working with us to help us achieve them."

We heard this when we spoke to women and children who now have access to clean water, young girls who now have access to education, indigenous farmers who are members of their local food movements advocating for their rights to grow food, and civil society actors who are advocating for policy changes and legal recognition around rights to water and a healthy environment at national, regional and international levels. These people explained to us that Change for Children helped them to understand that they have rights – and this was a **life-changing moment** for them.

We can't do it without you. This process of looking back while planning for the future has been very rewarding. Building on



Sharing project success stories with you this year has been a simply effortless pleasure. Because there are so many. Because of you. And we don't want to put our pencils down. Thank you donors, fundraisers, advocates, partners, volunteers, supporters, and friends for securing the content. You are generating good-news stories. You are changing the narrative. You are writing new chapters. You are changing the world.

– Nicole Farn, Communications Coordinator



the solid ground that Change for Children founders and elders laid for us, we have been able to touch the lives of millions, profoundly changing the lives of so many throughout our 40-year history. We have done this and will continue to do this because of YOU. Your support means so much. **You are responsible for those life-changing moments.** Thank you for helping us to 'Make it Right' for the past 40 years.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Swift
Executive Director, Change for Children.

Change for Children's Mission is to build civil society capacity in the global south and in Canada to promote health, human rights and create solutions to poverty through sustainable development.

Change for Children

10808-124 Street, 2nd Floor,
Edmonton, AB, T5M 0H3

Ph: 780.448.1505 / Fax: 780.448.1507

www.changeforchildren.org

Registered Charitable Organization No. 11884 9496 RR0001

Though not explicitly included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Right to Water has since been widely acknowledged as being fundamental to sustainable development. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly mentions water, environmental sanitation and hygiene. In 2010, the right to water and sanitation was formally recognized for the first time by a UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/64/292) acknowledging clean drinking water and sanitation as being essential to the realization of all human rights. WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT.

ENABLING THE EVERYDAY

It is not every day that one returns to communities in Nicaragua to witness water flowing freely where previously there was none. It is not every day, but it is today.

Today, Ramiro and Estrella, married 40 years, wish Change for Children a Happy 40th Anniversary in turn — a happy coincidence they declare — as they pump water at the community well in Los Balcones before leading us the short distance to their home where they have raised ten children. When we were here a year ago, Ramiro and Estrella had led us to a shallow hole, dry and abandoned.

Today, Candida introduces us to the water committee of Sagrada Familia. She squeezes my hand and proclaims that she will no longer filter dirty water through a t-shirt to quench the thirsts of her grandsons. This had been her plight when we met only one year ago.

Today, we return to Bethel where seamstress Maria disappears into her home and brings out one by one the new dresses she has sewn since the water well was drilled in her community — since we had seen her last. On that day, she had disappeared into her home to bring out the bucket she used to retrieve water from the hole in the ground where water from an upstream community's well was diverted for two hours, once every two days.

Today, Marie and Guadalupe, grown women with smiles so wide my own cheeks hurt in response, are the first to jump in the water spray and cool down when the new well is turned on in all its glory in Las Pilas, water flowing freely from the new holding tank at the service of the community of 1,300 people; the abundance a far cry from the dry stream bed that had made their situation dire.



Today, in Mina de Agua, with her hand clenched around mine and a firm grasp on my elbow, Maria pulls me into her home, dust swirling up from the floor with her every shuffle. In her kitchen, she beams as she motions to the spigot fixed to the block wall above the concrete wash basin. "Agua por favor?" A young girl passing by asks for water through the bars of the kitchen wall. With a twist of the spigot and a quick rinse of a dusty glass, it is Maria who obliges, but I can feel her pride.

It's not every day that one witnesses the impact that access to water has on the everyday in northwest Nicaragua. But it is obvious on this day that the impact on the everyday is felt profoundly in these communities.

Every single day.

NICARAGUA WATER PROJECT

The Nicaragua Water Project encourages capacity-building and technology transfer to help communities provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

2004 CFCA receives funding from the Canadian Government (CIDA) for the Nicaragua Water Project (Local Partner: Centro Humboldt).

2005 CFC launches Water as a Human Right campaign.

2007 Members of Community Water and Sanitation Committees in Nicaragua raise their voices and Nicaragua National Water Law recognizing water as a public resource is passed.

2011 The Frank Flaman Foundation announces commitment to sponsor the purchase of a well drilling machine. The machine has been in operation since 2012.

2012 The project wins the United Nations Equator Prize for advancing innovative solutions for resilient communities.

2016 The Water project has brought clean water to over 100,000 people!



UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the UDHR includes 30 Articles that set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..."
– Excerpt from the preamble of the UDHR

Fundamental rights include:

- The right to life
- Freedom of expression
- The right to play
- The right to Education
- Food and shelter for all
- A Fair and Free World



"To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

– Nelson Mandela

PROUDLY SUPPORTING RIGHTS PROMOTION



THE RIGHT TO WATER (UNCRC ARTICLE 24)

NICARAGUA WATER PROJECT CHINANDEGA, NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua's northwest region, people often rely on rivers that frequently dry up or on old and contaminated well sites for their drinking water. Access to clean drinking water dramatically reduces the prevalence of diseases contracted by water contamination, and reduces the amount of time that women and children spend each day seeking water instead of on activities such as school, work, and time with family. This project has achieved the awesome task of providing potable water systems and clean water to over 100,000 people to date while promoting access to water as a human right.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION (UDHR ARTICLE 26, UNCRC ARTICLE 28)

GIRLS' EDUCATION BOSAWAS, NICARAGUA

Nearly 51% of the rural population of Nicaragua is illiterate. In the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve, girls are less likely to be allowed to leave their household responsibilities to travel long distances to attend school. Girls are underrepresented in primary and secondary school, yet become responsible for the health, hygiene, nutrition, education and personal development of their households. This project funds secondary schools in communities currently without in order to provide girls with the opportunity to learn. Scholarships for girls' education will also open doors to post-secondary education.



THE RIGHT TO FOOD (UDHR ARTICLE 25)

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COMITANCILLO, GUATEMALA

The effects of globalization and climate change are taking a serious toll on the world's most vulnerable populations. Indigenous, subsistence farmers in Comitancillo who use traditional agricultural techniques to grow corn and beans are rarely able to provide more than what is needed to feed their families. The Community Food Security project benefits five schools (800 students) as well as 250 farming families (2,000 people) who receive improved seeds, tools and training to improve agriculture and by extension nutrition in this region.



THE RIGHT TO HEALTH (UDHR ARTICLE 25, UNCRC ARTICLE 24)

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH COMITANCILLO, GUATEMALA

Phase Two of the maternal and child health pilot project focuses on proper nutrition for infants in the first 19 months of life. Health promoters in the Guatemala highlands disseminate information to new and expectant mothers through home visits, community workshops, and the distribution of plants and seeds to diversify diets.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH NDAWANA, SOUTH AFRICA

Severe staff shortages, long distances, and lack of transport contribute to more than 25% of children being born at home without qualified medical assistance. This project provides home-based access to care for children under 5 focusing on breastfeeding, malnutrition prevention, immunization coverage and prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV.



ECOSTOVES BOSAWAS, NICARAGUA

The traditional indoor open-fire cook stoves used in Central America result in high levels of indoor air pollution leading to severe respiratory problems. They are inefficient and require a great deal of fuel, leading to deforestation. Women and children suffer most as they spend the most time in the smoke-filled kitchen and collecting wood. Fuel efficient eco-stoves remove toxic smoke from homes and give the people of the Bosawas Biosphere reserve, currently facing health challenges and climate challenges, more breathing room.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

The UNCRC asserts children as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity. It is the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history.

Guiding Principles of the Rights of the Child.

- non-discrimination
- right to life, survival, and development
- doing what is in the best interest of the child
- meaningfully engaging children and youth



**"None of the
UN Sustainable
Development Goals
can be achieved
without realizing the
rights and potential
of the world's girls."**

– United Nations
Population Fund

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT - A RIGHT? WRONG.

Canada joined the international consensus on the Right to Water in 2012. Canada's explanation of position includes that "Water and sanitation services should be physically and economically accessible on an equal and non-discriminatory basis" (A/CONF.216/12). However, Canada fails to live up to this ideal within our own borders. While the rights to freedom of expression, equal protection from discrimination and the right to life, liberty and security of the person that Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms grants us as Canadians are indeed significant and deeply valued, the charter does not grant us the right to a healthy environment. And while most Canadians benefit from the processes of sophisticated water treatment facilities when we turn on our taps, many isolated communities, such as First Nations reservations, lack safe drinking water. A charter right to a healthy environment: to clean air, safe water, fertile soil, and nutritious food, would allow isolated populations to challenge the status quo, to assert their right to environmental justice, to be able to turn on taps and drink the water that comes out.



"Governments and communities around the world have vowed to implement the right to water. Yet two and a half billion people still do not have access to basic sanitation. The drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities in Canada are a national shame."

– Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, former senior advisor on water to the president of the UN General Assembly, water activist

"Canada recognizes the human right of everyone to safe drinking water and basic sanitation as essential to the right to an adequate standard of living" – (A/CONF.216/12)

RAISING CITIZENS OF A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

We are thrilled to be invited to talk to local students about the rights of the child and about the common needs of children around the world, to help them discover the shared ground among all people. We stand before classrooms filled with eager third-graders and assert that we are all connected.

We show pictures of school construction projects that make learning and playing possible for children in Guatemala. We share stories of health projects that allow children in Africa to visit doctors and receive treatments. We fumble with beakers of blue-tinted water to demonstrate water projects and the needs of children in Nicaragua.

They love hearing the stories and learning how other children live, but at the end of it all, at the end of our virtual trip around the globe, the single most popular question is consistently, "So...how did you turn that water blue?" Because the rest of it — the idea that kids everywhere should get to eat, sleep, learn, and play all while feeling safe — they get it. Innately. And they believe it without reservation. They don't yet wonder if they can change the world. They already know they will.



Interested in a school presentation, program, or activity? Contact us for learning resources for your child, classroom, or school.

FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT

Sitting with Miguel and his family inside the mud walls of a traditional Mapuche ruka in Araucania, Chile, we pass around mate tea, listen to stories of childhood from his grandfather (words shifting from Mapuche to Spanish and back again), and learn to play the kultrun (a traditional drum). Between lyrics, Miguel translates for us a song that celebrates the Mapuche connection to the land, one of the main principles of a people whose very name translates to Land People. The Mapuche's struggle to preserve the indigenous land to which they are connected threatens their language, their traditions, and their culture. Miguel's family, it is clear, is resolute in keeping traditions alive.



In rural areas, we meet more people who are fighting for the right to practice one's own culture – people like Daniella Lopez in the small Mapuche indigenous community of Kuramahuida. The only female community leader in this zone, she is young, she is courageous, and despite the challenges presented by the dominant culture and the government, Daniella is challenging status quos, defying biases, and leading her community in their fight for land rights in an effort to preserve the Mapuche language, traditions, and culture — to realize the right to preserve the Mapuche way.

Q & A WITH CANDIDA ESCALANTE



In 2003, we introduced the Change for Children community to Candida, a resident of Santa Teresa, Nicaragua and the leader of her community water committee. A water well in Santa Teresa in 2004 changed the lives of women and children most profoundly and she started a women's baseball league with their newly gained leisure time. Candida represented the Nicaragua Water Project in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil — leaving home for the first time — to accept the UN Equator Prize in 2012. We recently caught up with Candida in her village of Santa Teresa.

Q: How has the Nicaragua Water Project changed your life?

A: The water project helped me to claim my rightful place as a community leader here. Once I understood that we all had a right to clean water and a duty to realize it, not only for ourselves but for our children and for future generations, we all began to work together to make it a reality. We formed a water committee, we got legal recognition for our committee and community title for the land on which the well and the tank were built and we lobbied the local municipality to cost share for the project with Change for Children.

Q: With the water well so close to your home, how has your life been different?

A: We as women and girls have more time — more time for work, more time for play, more time to help our kids with their homework, more time to care for our elders — because we are not spending so much time walking miles every day looking for water.

Q: How has clean water changed the community of Santa Teresa?

A: Clean water — exactly. The water we were getting from local lakes and rivers was not clean. Our kids were getting sick. They would miss school and parents would miss work. Now that we have a water well and we have access to clean water, we are healthy. And we can dedicate our time to realizing our other rights.

THE RIGHT TO PLAY AND TO FREEDOM

Through creative activities, project partner FUNARTE ensures that Nicaragua's youth are aware of their human rights and involved in building a society that respects them. Through muralism, leadership training, and arts-based rights education, FUNARTE empowers some of Nicaragua's most at-risk youth.

Change for children is once again partnering with FUNARTE, this time to bring creativity to classrooms in the Bosawas biosphere reserve. Teacher workshops will encourage educators to use art to help create gender-inclusive and culturally-inclusive environments where students can freely express themselves in all aspects of the curriculum.



Save the Date for the 2017

Annual Development Dinner

September 22, 2017



10808-124 Street, 2nd Floor
Edmonton, AB, Canada
T5M-0H3



Get Social this Season!

Print and be proud. Show your support by sharing! Remind others what joy feels like and it just might inspire someone to do the same. (visit change4children.org for printable sign)



Change *the* Present

What if the gift that says **you mean the world to me** this year is the gift that lets your loved one **mean the world to someone else**. Invite those on your Christmas list to improve the lives of children, families, and communities. Invite them to Change the Present this year!

Give a Global Gift Card (or add one to your own Christmas list!) and share in the joy of making the world a little better.



Thank you volunteers, donors, partners, fundraisers, advocates, friends and tireless supporters. Your local support means global change. You are the spirit of Change for Children.



Please join us!

Change for Children's
Annual Holiday Open House

Friday, December 9, 2016
5pm - 10pm

2nd Floor, 10808 - 124 St
Edmonton

Live music 7pm - 9pm.
Refreshments provided.

Everyone Welcome.



Be part of something BIG this holiday – together we can Change the World

CFCA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of:



Global Affairs
Canada

