



# Change for Children Association

## PROJECT POLICY

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### PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

#### Project Criteria:

All projects accepted by CFCA are required to meet the following criteria:

- a) The project must be located in one of CFCA's areas of expertise: Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, or the Philippines.
- b) The project must be developmental rather than welfare or relief oriented.
- c) The project must aim to foster empowerment and self-reliance by responding to the expressed needs of the beneficiaries.
- d) The project must display thorough planning and analysis.
- e) An organized NGO or community group, as opposed to an individual must implement the project in the South.

Before accepting a project CFCA will analyze each project submission according to the following categories:

#### a) Environmental Impact

CFCA is dedicated to protection of the environment. We recognize that environmental issues are an integral part of the struggle for justice and peace. We, therefore, will not accept projects that promote thoughtless neglect and harm towards the physical environment. Staff will seek thorough explanations from project partners if a project application does not demonstrate an environmental consciousness. Decisions pertaining to the acceptance of the project will then be weighed according to the information obtained.

#### b) Gender and Development

CFCA recognizes the fact that women face systemic discrimination on a global scale and generally earn less than men, are prevented from owning land, face numerous obstacles to holding positions of authority, and face many threats of violence just because they are women. We are dedicated to justice for women and therefore strongly favour projects that are thoroughly conscious of gender equity. Projects that do not demonstrate this consciousness will not be accepted. The staff will seek thorough explanations from project partners if project proposals do not demonstrate that the project is fully gender inclusive -- from the participants to the decision-makers. The decision pertaining to the acceptance of the project will then be weighed according to the information obtained. Projects promoting or perpetuating injustice towards women will definitely not be accepted.

#### c) Institutional and Financial Sustainability

By supporting community development projects designed and implemented by Southern partners, CFCA aims to promote empowerment and self-sufficiency in the communities we assist. Project applications must therefore

demonstrate that the project will continue after the cessation of external support. This is not always applicable. For example, if the project is to fund a one-year educational campaign, we do not expect that the educational campaign as such will continue after the withdrawal of our support. However, if the project is to fund a community agricultural co-operative, for example, plans should be in place for its continuation after the cessation of our financial support. This should be demonstrated in the project application. If it is not, staff will obtain the necessary information and the decision around the project's acceptance will be weighed accordingly.

d) Expertise and Accountability of Implementing Organization(s)

As CFCA's approach does not involve sending staff members to the South to assist with the implementation of the projects, it is vital that the organizations and/or community group(s) implementing the projects be organized and accountable. All project proposals will be analyzed with this in mind. Before a project is accepted, the project partners must demonstrate that they have the organizational capacity and necessary expertise to undertake the project. It is strongly preferred by CFCA that the organization or community group have legal recognition. However, we recognize that this is not always possible, as would be the case of a fledgling co-operative venture. Information on the implementing group must be thorough before a project application will be approved by Change for Children. Information in the area of financial administration of project funds must be especially thorough. It must be ensured that project funds will not be handled by an individual who is not required to be accountable to the project participants and to CFCA. The implementing organization must be willing to sign a legally binding project contract if the project is to be approved.

e) Decision-Making Structures

CFCA recognizes the importance of full community participation in the process of just transformation. Each project submission will therefore be analyzed with regard to decision-making structures. It is important that decisions pertaining to projects are not made by one or two people but communally by a representative population of the project participants. We recognize that decision-making structures will vary according to the needs of each particular project. For this reason we cannot name a preferred decision-making structure. We can, however, specify that projects that demonstrate an unrepresentative power structure will not be approved.

f) Indigenous Culture

CFCA recognizes the fact that indigenous peoples throughout the world have faced systemic oppression in all areas of life. We are committed to the maintenance and preservation of indigenous cultures, traditions, and dignity. As well, we are dedicated to the elimination of the injustices that have resulted in the oppression and abuse of indigenous peoples on a global scale. We, therefore, will not accept any projects which, consciously or unconsciously, promote or perpetuate injustice towards native peoples, their customs or their traditions.

**Partnerships in Development:**

CFCA highly values the partnerships we have developed with a variety of Canadian-based community groups and individuals who are advocating for a variety of Southern communities. Thanks to these groups and individuals, a wide range of Canadians can become personally engaged in solidarity and global justice work. These groups and individuals raise the initial funds needed for the particular project they are supporting, maintain close relations with the Southern communities involved, and often are involved in grassroots development education in Canada. The following project acceptance guidelines apply to Change for Children's partnerships in development with these groups and individuals.

Before a project brought to CFCA by a Canadian-based partner group or individual is approved:

a) The group or individual must be fully aware and supportive of CFCA's project policies and philosophy.

- b) The group or individual must assist CFCA as much as possible in understanding the culture and socio-political context of the Southern communities involved in the project.
- c) The group or individual must assist CFCA's office in establishing a strong communicative link with the Southern project partners.
- d) The roles of the CFCA office and the group or individual must be defined with regard to the project.
- e) The group or individual must understand that if a project is rejected by either the Board of Directors of CFCA or the government funding bodies, any seed funds which they had contributed will not be refunded. Through discussion between CFCA and the Canadian-based partners, it will be decided to either send the unmatched seed funds to the community for which they were originally destined, or designate them to another project of the group's or individual's choosing.

### **Stages of Project Acceptance:**

- 1) The CFCA project staff, in co-operation will review the project submission with board appointed advisors, according to the criteria above.
- 2) Once thorough information has been obtained from Southern project partners, the project submission will be drafted for the funding organization(s) -- the CIDA NGO Project Facility and/or the Wildrose Foundation. The decisions about which projects will go to one or both of these funding agencies will be made by staff on approval of the Board of Directors. The decisions will be based on eligibility and need. Should the number of projects exceed the amount of funds available, the projects will be submitted on a first come, first serve basis.
- 3) The Board of Directors will review the project submission and approve or disapprove it. If it is approved, it will be submitted to either or both of the funding organizations - the CIDA NGO Project Facility and/or the Wildrose Foundation.
- 4) The Project staff will answer any queries which arise from either or both of these bodies, if necessary by contacting the Southern project partners.
- 5) If the project is approved, CFCA will proceed to have a project contract signed by the Southern project partners before any funds are sent. If a project is not approved, the matter will be discussed with the Board of Directors and the project will either go ahead without government assistance, be resubmitted for government assistance or discontinued.

## **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

### **Implementation:**

Projects will be fully implemented by the southern partners. As per the project contract, the southern partners agree to:

- 1) Use the funds in the implementation of the project.
- 2) Inform CFCA in advance of all major modifications to the project.
- 3) Return to CFCA any funds that are not disbursed or accounted for in the implementation of the project.
- 4) Maintain accounting records so that the funds administered for the project can be clearly identified and verified.

- 5) Prepare and submit to CFCA both interim and final reports, including financial information.
- 6) To send an official receipt with at least two signatures to Change for Children after each disbursement of funds has been received.

As per the project contract, CFCA agrees to:

- 1) Make 95% of the total project funds, as per the schedule agreed upon in the project contract, available before the final report is submitted. (Payments to be made after the due date of the interim report will be withheld if the interim report is not sent or is incomplete.)
- 2) Make the final 5% of the total project funds available after a complete final report for the project is received.

### **Monitoring:**

CFCA will conduct at least one formal project-monitoring trip per year to a project region in order to foster north-south partnership and ensure accountability of the funds of donors and government agencies. The Board of Directors and staff members will decide on the region based on current project concentrations. This decision will be made each year in conjunction with the approval of CFCA's annual administrative budget. Staff members or persons contracted by the Board of Directors to monitor projects shall conduct the monitoring trips.

The following guidelines apply to the staff member(s) or contracted individual(s) who visit the projects:

- 1) Before visiting the communities involved, a full awareness of the projects, their history and current status, is essential. Knowledge of the language in question and a cultural understanding is also vital.
- 2) In order to gain a clear understanding of each project, it is essential to meet with representatives from the implementing NGO and a cross-section of the participants to discuss the project. Clear information about the goals and activities of CFCA must also be presented in order to foster partnership and mutual understanding. Southern partners must be informed well in advance of a formal monitoring visit.
- 3) In order to ensure an adequate understanding of each project, the monitoring visit to each project should be no less than 2 days in length.
- 4) It is essential to see the physical aspects of each project (buildings, machinery, etc.) as well as the process of development taking place among the people.
- 5) In order to enhance CFCA's Development Education Program, photographs depicting the project's activities must be taken.
- 6) The monitoring visits shall be conducted in a non-paternalistic fashion, in keeping with the principals of mutual respect and solidarity.
- 7) The monitoring visit must include a viewing of the accounting records of the project, as agreed to in the project contract.
- 8) After returning to Canada a full evaluation report must be written within one month that includes the following information about each project visited:

- a) An assessment of the project's verifiable indicators.
- b) A comparison of the project's original goals to the actual accomplishments.
- c) A summary of the project's impact on the environment.
- d) A summary of the project's impact on the strategic interests of women.
- e) A summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses.
- f) A description of any problems the community(s) reported in implementing the project.
- g) An assessment of the long-term sustainability of the project.
- h) A description of the community(s) current needs and development plans, outlining the possibility of a prolonged development partnership.

This information will be shared with the government funding agencies involved.

CFCA must be notified immediately of any situation or occurrence that is of a severity that would require immediate action by the board.

- 9) A meeting with CFCA's Board of Directors shall be held upon completion of this report. If any recommendations pertaining to CFCA's project policies or procedures are made, the Board of Directors will study them and take necessary action.
- 10) Information from the monitoring tour will be incorporated into CFCA's Development Education Program in the form of an article in "Building Bridges" newsletter, a slide presentation for the membership, and the incorporation of the information into the outreach activities carried out by the Education Co-ordinator. If CFCA is seeking funds for one or more of the projects visited, the information may also be used in a separate educational fund-raising campaign.

In addition to the annual formal monitoring tour, informed informal visits to projects will be encouraged. Members will be required to notify the CFCA office of their intentions to visit projects, and CFCA staff will ensure that they receive the necessary background information on the projects and region. Upon their return, members who visit the projects will also be asked to report, either verbally or in writing, on their experience and the knowledge they gained from the southern partners. This information will also be used, where applicable, in CFCA's Development Education Program and as information for the Project Department.

Members who use CFCA's Development Education Travel Program to carry out informal visits to projects will be required to become informed on the projects and the region, and will be required to submit to CFCA a written report on their experience and knowledge gained from the southern partners.

Southern partners must be notified by CFCA that an informal visit will take place, and the date(s) that the visit will take place.

## **PROJECT EVALUATIONS**

Projects will be evaluated by CFCA after a complete final report is sent from the southern partners. The evaluations will:

- 1) Assess the project's verifiable indicators, as written in the original submission.
- 2) Compare the project's original goals to its actual accomplishments.
- 3) Assess the project's impact on the environment.
- 4) Assess the project's impact on the strategic interests of women.
- 5) Compare the project's strengths and weaknesses.
- 6) Take into account any problems the community(s) reported in implementing the project.

Upon the completion of each project, a written report detailing the above information will be prepared in the form of a final report and submitted to the government funding agencies involved and to the CFCA Board of Directors. Each evaluatory report will be based on information from the southern partners and on reports from any formal and/or informal monitoring trips to the project. The evaluatory reports will be kept on record in the office and will be referred to when necessary. For example, if CFCA is considering funding further development work with the community, the report will serve as a vital information source in making that decision. Also, if CFCA knows of a similar project being developed in another community, the information in the report will be shared in order to alert the community in question to possible problems which could arise and to share innovative ideas in implementing the project. This information will also be available to the board appointed project advisors so that they can increase their expertise in various types of projects and regions.