



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022/23**



**Change
for Children**

SINCE 1976

HUMAN DIGNITY | HEALTHY COMMUNITIES | GLOBAL JUSTICE

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MESSAGE FROM OUR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Lorraine Swift

**Executive Director,
Change for Children**

Thank you for your dedicated support of Change for Children’s community-led projects! It is my pleasure to share our 2022/23 Annual Report. This year has been one of collaboration and of preparation. We leaned into renewing prior partnerships and also established new ones to explore opportunities. Deepening relationships with local stakeholders and leveraging connections with local and regional governments and ministries has positioned and prepared us to implement ground-breaking work in hard-to-reach places.

The theme of our 2022 Development Dinner was *Planting Seeds*, and we did a lot of that this past year. We established circuit riders in the BOSAWAS to better equip communities to access clean water; we married technical knowledge with traditional Indigenous knowledge to protect the rainforest; we prioritized water quality by investing in simple technology; we increased

access to educational tools for teachers and students alike, and we saw and supported the proliferation of natural medicine. And we could not have done any of it without you. **Thank you!**

This has also been a year of evaluation. What gets tested gets done right! Through the rigours of three external project evaluations this year, we feel vindicated by the results and are confident we are doing a great job honoring our mission to promote health and human rights and to create solutions to poverty through sustainable development.

Gender equality initiatives have also seen much of our focus this year. In remote Guatemalan communities, technology in the classroom is helping to close the education and gender gaps exacerbated by the pandemic. In Nicaragua, increasing the participation of women in local governance is creating an inclusive community planning environment.

Time is a valuable resource for women and for families. By removing the burden of water scarcity, by providing relief from the challenges of food insecurity, by creating opportunities for education, there is time to build the capacity of women and girls to be agents of change. Time can be the greatest gift of all. Please join us at our Development Dinner this fall to be part of initiatives that aim to give some of it back. We think **It’s About Time.**

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: GLOBAL GOALS

A project prioritizing local Indigenous knowledge and gender equality to build self-sufficiency, local governance, and conservation capacity, in the Bosawas, Nicaragua.



Despite contributing the least to the causes of climate change, Indigenous peoples are among the first to face the direct consequences given their dependence upon, and close relationship with, their environment and its resources.

With support from the Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT), this project tests the impact of prioritizing local Indigenous knowledge and gender equality in improving the local population's capacity to protect their traditional territories, strengthen resilience and self-sufficiency, and improve governance capacity of the Indigenous government.

Territorial protection efforts focus on implementing Citizen Science as a conduit for Indigenous and local knowledge in conservation. Forest Rangers work together

with savvy students trained in technology through our Tech-Education project to leverage the use of MAPEO software to map the territory, including areas of traditional significance and areas of encroachment, with the purpose of leveraging the documented information to address environmental and sustainability issues with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

To improve self-sufficiency and strengthen the practice of local Indigenous agricultural innovators and natural medicine practitioners to improve nutrition and community health, traditional medicine gardens are being established, knowledge-sharing workshops are facilitated, and engagement with the Ministry of Health is increasing.

Activities including re-establishing the Miskito Indigenous women's organization (WIMPA) and gender equality training at the local and regional level (including religious leaders, community coordinators, water committees and health promoters) focus on gender equality in an effort to create an inclusive community planning environment and localize and decolonize Indigenous governance.



GIRLS UP FRONT.

The work of women and girls customarily includes being responsible for hand-pounding rice to remove the outer sheath - an activity that consumes hours each day.

A mechanical rice processing machine has been piloted in the community of San Andres, helping to reduce but one of the burdens faced by women in the BOSAWAS.

Girls who have been trained in technology are now on the front lines of citizen science, natural

medicine practitioners are more resilient in the face of climate change, and the participation of women in governance has increased. The inclusion of a female community coordinator in each of the 35 Indigenous villages prioritizes all voices being heard at the territorial government level.

The triple burden faced by women – reproductive work, productive work, and community work – as a result of their triple role in society is often a barrier to empowerment. The project aims to build the capacity of women and girls to be leaders and agents of change.

CLEAN WATER FOR BOSAWAS

WATER EVERYWHERE. NOT A DROP TO DRINK.



A consistent source of clean drinking water is out of reach for many in the BOSAWAS. In many cases, dirty river or stream water is being used as a substitute for safe drinking water. Untreated, both represent water sources with high levels of bacterial contamination.

Back-to-back hurricanes in 2020 wreaked havoc on water systems. Pipes are broken, valves are in need of replacement and repair, storage tanks are leaking, and infrastructure is deteriorating.

Our team and our partners logged many miles this year visiting community water sources to inventory critical repairs required to restore the flow of water to homes and to investigate potential measures for communities currently without any water systems at all.

In partnership with communities, water system repairs are now underway in Pamkawas and San Andres. Water committee capacity-building is a critical component of maintaining

consistent access to clean water for BOSAWAS communities, and two circuit riders have been added to the team to provide support.

In the coming year, water committees will receive training and gain skills in water management to plan ahead, determine and collect user fees to sustain systems, and be better equipped to perform regular maintenance and repairs to water systems.

SUSTAINABLE WATER

IN NORTHWEST NICARAGUA



For over twenty years, water — the right to it, the quality of it, the availability of it — in Nicaragua, where access to it sometimes must defy the odds, has been a priority of the Change for Children community. You have held water walks. You have rallied together with your friends to drill water wells. You have made contributions to acknowledge that every drop counts. Because, it does.

Our current investment in Circuit Riders - trained water technicians - means communities making progress to improve their water quality and water management

receive the ongoing support they need to succeed. Circuit riders, making their rounds by motorcycle, efficiently support hundreds of communities gain skills in water management and water system maintenance.

Water quality has also emerged as a priority this year. Simple water treatment (chlorination) at the tank level ensures that water flowing to homes is safe to drink. We have partnered with EOS International to pilot a water tank sensor program that indicates for the presence or lack of chlorine in the water. The goal is a solar-powered sensor that alerts the circuit rider and community plumber via sms message if a lack of treatment is noted. Automation ensures that changes to the system are noted early and that appropriate mitigation measures can be made efficiently to ensure water quality is maintained.

Leveraging simple technology to collect data allows the use of machine learning algorithms to translate the data into useful estimates, with a future vision of using AI to predict chlorine levels and make recommendations for water committees and circuit riders.

THIRSTY FOR CHANGE



HONDURAS

SAFE WATER FOR STUDENTS: HONDURAS

This year, we initiated support of safe water and improved nutrition in primary schools in Marcala, Honduras. Combination water systems separate out contaminants from heavily polluted water sources at schools and use water treatment to render the water safe for consumption. Safe water means fewer incidences of illness and fewer missed school days.

In these same schools, the bounty of newly established school gardens includes carrots and beets, lettuce and corn - harvests sown and reaped by students who learn to do by doing. Vegetables from the school gardens and the access to safe water combine to create healthy lunches for students, ensuring at least one nutritious meal each day. Safe water and school gardens increase opportunities for students to thrive!

RAINWATER CAPTURE IN GUATEMALA

Making careful use of every piece of land, every resource, every kernel, every drop, is second-nature to the Maya-Mam women in Comitancillo, Guatemala. Economic activities of rural households include harvesting small gardens and tending to domestic livestock, both of which are reliant upon water and often yield little return.

When the six-month dry season withers the water supply, oft-contaminated rivers and hand-dug wells stand-in as unsafe and insufficient substitutes. And the impacts can be devastating. Change for Children has initiated work with vulnerable families to implement rainwater collection practices as a low-cost, simple solution to address water scarcity. A collection of rooftop gutters channel the rainy season downpours into a storage tank for use when water is scarce. Rainwater collection will mean water for more families, every month of the year.



TECHNOLOGY FOR EDUCATION

IN REMOTE GUATEMALAN COMMUNITIES.



Informed by the success of our offline technology for education projects in Comitancillo, Guatemala and in Nicaragua, we have extended our reach to the Department of Quiché, Guatemala, which is among the areas of Guatemala with the lowest literacy levels.

For many students who enthusiastically helped to unbox laptops and off-line servers containing a digital library

of educational materials in four rural Indigenous communities, it was their first chance to approach computers.

In San Pedro Belejú, the accompanying teacher training started late in the day due to a lack of electricity, but the enthusiasm of the teachers did not wane. They have had little access to resources, internet, or physical libraries, and were happy to extend their day to learn the potential of the new technology to improve both pedagogy and education in the remote region.

The pandemic has exacerbated the gaps in education between rural populations (who lack access to internet and technology) and urban populations. Recent studies indicate that children are now more than two years behind their grade levels, and the expansion of this technology project aims to bridge the gap.



A STRONG FOUNDATION

Change for Children’s relationship with The Bishop Croteau Foundation dates back to the early 2000’s, and our Nicaragua Water Project has benefitted greatly from the generosity of the foundation and its supporters. In the fall, hosted by Change for Children, Michel Botermans visited projects in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras on behalf of the Foundation and recommended Foundation support of five projects in the three countries. The Foundation’s continued support of clean water, food security, and education will help us to reach those most in need, and we are grateful for the shared commitment of passionate promoters of sustainable development projects.



A FITTING FIELD VISIT

Whether seated at desks, cramped in boats, standing in the forest and in gardens, convened in schoolyards and offices, welcomed into homes, or gathered on the fieldhouse balcony, whether formally or informally, there is no substitute for bearing witness — for the opportunity to better understand each other and the ways in which impact is experienced, felt, and lived. This is exactly what transpired in February when an adventurous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) team from the Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) traveled with us to the BOSAWAS.

The monitoring visit was very well received by the local population, who were happy to have this opportunity to communicate how the FIT-funded innovations have modernized their classrooms, facilitated cross generational knowledge-sharing, united their communities in territorial defense, and improved gender equality in their classrooms and communities. We were grateful for the opportunity to show and to tell. Special thanks to the FIT for funding initiatives in the BOSAWAS and further for prioritizing the important step of monitoring, evaluation, and learning, for the benefit of future collaborations and the development sector as a whole.



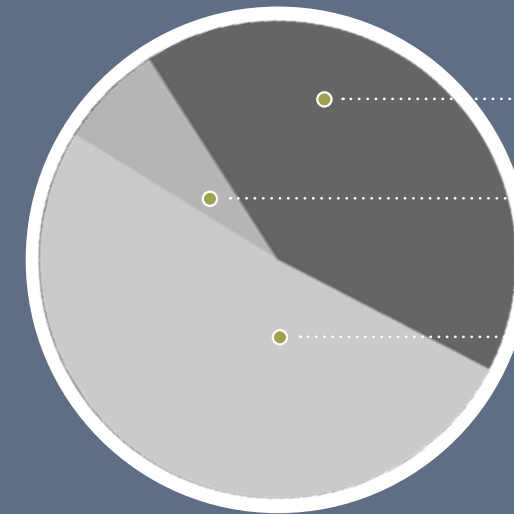
MEASURING UP

Evaluating a project, internally and externally, is an important step in responsible development initiatives. Assessing a project’s effectiveness at meeting goals, empowering people, and affecting change, lends a critical eye that serves to inform future investment, leverage learnings for future priorities, and assess future risk.

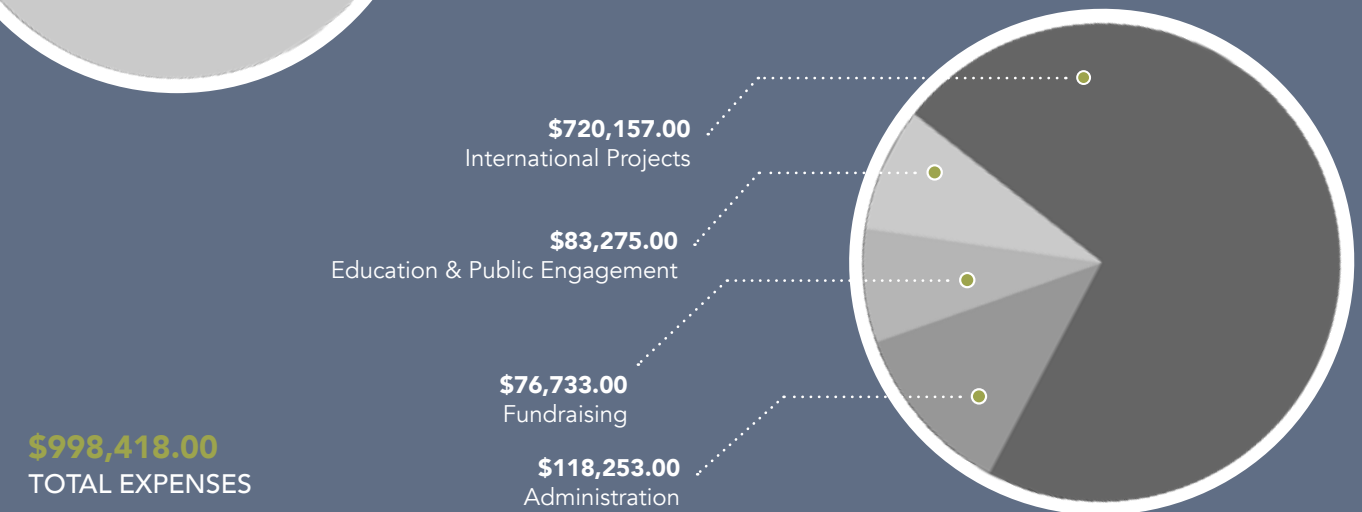
Global Affairs Canada completed a five-month audit and evaluation process following the close of our five-year Technology for Sustainable Water Resource Governance project. The Fund for Innovation and Transformation evaluated two of their innovations in BOSAWAS in February 2022, and Change for Children commissioned an external evaluation of our Technology and Training for Quality and Equality in Remote Indigenous Communities project in May 2022.

FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUES 2022/23



EXPENSES 2022/23



Contributing to Change for Children projects opens doors, empowers women, educates students, quenches thirsts, improves food security, reduces malnutrition, advocates for rights, and stimulates economies.

Change for Children maintains a healthy balance in retained earnings at year-end to facilitate the continuation and completion of multi-year projects. Our work would not be possible without the support of local partners, global partners, and community supporters.





IT'S
**ABOUT
TIME.**

DEVELOPMENT DINNER 2023

PLEASE JOIN US

Friday, September 22, 2023

Chateau Louis Conference Centre

FOR TICKETS

www.changeforchildren.org

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