

Capacity Statement on Capacity Building of Local and Community Organizations

ChildFund’s Vision, Approaches and Tools for Capacity Building of Local and Community Organizations

ChildFund believes that by acting in partnership, we can achieve long-term sustainability of social impact and programs to have a multiplier effect on society—reaching marginalized and vulnerable children directly, but also involving parents and other civil-society actors and organizations who are responsible for child development and upholding child rights. As such, we currently implement our activities through and with 145 local partners in 24 countries of Asia, Americas and Africa.

Local grassroots organizations representing disadvantaged, excluded and vulnerable people often have limited possibilities of receiving funding, networking and influence. There are many causes – lack of formal registration because of onerous administrative requirements, decision making bodies are centralized in the capital city including the Senate, Ministries, Judicial Courts, etc. to name a few.

Even if formally registered, their limited skills in fundraising, program and financial management, advocacy and networking, and limited access to technology, significantly hinder their collaboration with (and competitiveness against) larger, more connected and savvy NGOs.

However, if these grassroots organizations can address these challenges, their potential for growth, influence, and impact is significant. For example, in Ecuador, the *Coalición Social Contra El Abuso Sexual A Niñas, Niños Y Adolescentes (COCASEN)*, an umbrella organization consisting of eight (8) CSOs, CBOs and local NGOs (e.g. the Federación de Mujeres de Sucumbíos) joined forces to advocate for the prevention of sexual violence and abuse at the national level. In their work they provide legal assistance to victims of sexual violence, have participated in Task Forces within the Ecuadorean Parliament, been involved in the elaboration of laws for protection against sexual abuse, and have helped the Ministries of Education and Justice to report and prosecute cases of sexual abuse.

Informed by these realities, ***ChildFund’s theory of change for capacity building of these grassroots organizations*** is the following:

IF grassroots CSOs, CBOs and NGOs led by and comprising disenfranchised populations (e.g., religious minorities, women, LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous communities) successfully implement programs to promote and defend the rights of these groups, and;

IF these grassroots CSOs, CBOs and NGOs also enhance their capacities for program and financial management and reporting, for fundraising, advocacy and networking;

THEN, these disenfranchised groups will be in a strong position to increase civic engagement and fulfill their rights on a sustainable basis.

Our approach for capacity building of these local grassroots organizations is to partner with them:

(a) to jointly identify their gaps in the following areas:

- Fundraising, activism, advocacy, networking, leadership
- Program design, implementation, monitoring and reporting
- Financial and grants management, monitoring and reporting

(b) to jointly design and implement capacity-building plans (based on the identified gaps) which can also include (1) completing their formal registration; (2) enhancing their relationships and networking with government, civil society, international donors, private sector and the U.S. Embassy; (3) enhancing their capacities for organizational and personal security and (4) developing and implementing their organizational policy and commitment to child safeguarding, including safe, confidentiality and timely reporting systems.

(c) Periodically monitoring the results of these capacity building efforts and jointly agreeing in measures to address any unexpected results.

Results of ChildFund's capacity building of local grassroots organizations. In 2017 we initiated a yearly assessment for measuring partner strength across 14 measures, in four categories: compliance, governance, strategy and programming. For the purpose of our initiative, we consider a partner "strong" if they meet 11 of the 14 foundational measures. The 14 measures are comprised of 32 indicators and help identify gaps and the specific areas in which partners need support to strengthen their capacities. With those partners, we develop an action plan, help them implement strengthening activities for identified weaknesses, and support it within the grants we administer to them.

As we compared data from the 2019 to the 2021 surveys (Appendix A), we see our efforts are paying off in key areas, or are holding steady in others. We saw some backsliding, particularly in project implementation according to plan, but these appear be performance measures affected by COVID limitations in the country offices.

Methods/tools used by ChildFund to competitively award and manage sub-grants, small grants, and rapid response grants to both formal NGOs and informal associations.

In each of its country programs, ChildFund has established a small country office whose major roles are: (a) to directly implement advocacy activities which focus on the rights of children, youth and the disenfranchised; (b) to establish strong working collaboration with government, and international development agencies; (c) to participate in fora and working groups that advance ChildFund's program focus on the rights of children, youth and the disenfranchised, and; (d) to provide technical assistance and grants to strengthen the program implementation and advocacy capacity of grassroots CBOs, CSOs and NGOs. These organizations implement programs supporting ChildFund's mission in their localities and also strengthen their capacities in governance, organizational, financial management, program implementation and advocacy.

Examples of ChildFund’s granting and capacity building of grassroots groups

Guatemala: Since 1990, ChildFund has supported the *Renacimiento* CBO which serves the indigenous groups of the Kaqchiquel ethnic groups living in Chimaltenango and Solola. In FY21 they managed a \$205,676 grant from ChildFund to implement activities related to child protection, violence prevention, education and nutrition.

Mexico: Since 1995, ChildFund has supported the *Ninos Totenacos* CBO which serves the indigenous groups of the Totonaca and Nahuatl ethnic groups living in the Sierra Norte of Puebla. In FY21 they managed a \$307,000 grant from ChildFund to implement activities related to health, nutrition, education and child protection.

ChildFund allocates its grants to these grassroots organizations using ‘Letters of Agreement’. Each partner organization submits project proposals that support the goals of ChildFund’s Country Strategic Plans (jointly developed with participation and input from local partners) which are reviewed and approved by in-country ChildFund staff. Through its monthly program and financial monitoring tools, ChildFund measures results using standard performance indicators and results, which determine the subsequent monthly funding disbursement, ChildFund conducts a yearly capacity assessment of each grantee using 32 indicators related to compliance, governance, strategy, and programming, and each grantee implements an action plan to address any capacity shortcomings.

Annually, ChildFund sub-grants over \$50 million US dollars to approximately 145 grassroots organizations in 24 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas with parallel capacity building of their technical, managerial, financial and network/collaboration skills. For example, and during the year ending in June 2021, ChildFund provided \$1.9 million in grants to 16 grassroots organizations in Mexico, \$1 million to five organizations in Guatemala, \$1.1 million to five organizations in Ecuador, and \$2.3 million to three organizations in Honduras.

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APPENDIX A – Strong Partner Survey Results

| DOMAIN | MEASURES | PERCENT | | |
|--------------------|--|---------|--------|--------|
| | | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 |
| | | N: 202 | N: 194 | N: 146 |
| COMPLIANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of all correspondence that is “past range” 10% or less.* | N/A | 65% | 53% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of “available children” 2% or higher of the total number of sponsored children.* | N/A | 67% | 82% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous FY burn rate is above 85%. | 93% | 94% | 93% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR procedures include at least two of the following: job descriptions, competitive hiring and performance reviews. | 90% | 96% | 88% |
| GOVERNANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board terms range from 0 to 6 years. | 97% | 91% | 93% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board terms are staggered. | 77% | 84% | 83% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board reviews and provides guidance on written reports. | 83% | 91% | 96% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board reviews and provides guidance on budgets and financials. | 79% | 77% | 77% |
| STRATEGY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a strategic plan. | 66% | 88% | 95% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements based on strategy. | 66% | 85% | 97% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 26-75% of funding comes from ChildFund. | 17% | 22% | 11% |
| PROGRAMMING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners track participation in ChildFund-sponsored activities individually for each child.* | N/A | 96% | 90% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 91% of planned activities are implemented. | 72% | 80% | 62% |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong in at least one programming area (LS1, LS2, LS3 or CP). Strong in programming requires the following: LP has skilled staff, supervisory support, training manuals and programs, field guides and job aides in at least one area of programming. | 70% | 86% | 94% |
| * New measures | | | | |