

ENGAGING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

Canada is working to provide its international assistance in ways that are more rapid and more effective in reaching local populations. These days, Canada is directing more assistance to local organizations in developing countries.

Canada is also enhancing its support to, and partnership with, women's rights organizations and women's local movements in developing countries. They are key agents of change that help strengthen the rights of women and girls, and help societies achieve gender equality. Many of the initiatives profiled in this report rely on the capacities, access and dynamism of local partners to achieve their desired results.

In 2017, Canada launched the Women's Voice and Leadership Program. Canada is committed to allocating \$150 million over five years to respond to the needs of local women's organizations in developing countries that work to advance the rights of women and girls and promote gender equality. Canada's allocation makes it a leading donor in supporting women's rights organizations in developing countries.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives is one of the mechanisms for working directly with local organizations, academic institutions and governments to deliver small-scale, high-impact projects that respond to local priorities and needs. In 2017-2018, this fund supported nearly 600 projects in 125 countries and in the West Bank and Gaza. A total of \$14.7 million was disbursed to implementing partners through Canadian embassies and high commissions.

For instance, in Cambodia, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives funded a project for \$19,500 to enhance accountability and inclusion in the

country's 2018 national election. Citizen observers from marginalized populations, including women and youth, were trained and deployed to 150 communities to provide independent civilian oversight of voter registration stations. These observers recommended changes to the management of the voter list to provide greater transparency and inclusion. These recommendations were later adopted by the National Election Commission.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives also funded a project for \$45,000 to support the promotion of peace and security in Niger. Two hundred children and youth were trained as peace ambassadors in four regions of the country. In addition, 30 journalists were trained on ways in which the media can contribute to creating a culture of peace. The project enabled young peace ambassadors to share their messages of responsible citizenship, peace and non-violence via community outreach activities, as well as on radio, television and social media platforms.

In Sri Lanka, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives funded a \$30,000 project to help current and prospective women politicians use information and communication technologies to give them an edge. The project created a database of politically active women across the country, and launched a social media campaign to promote women's political participation. In addition, 50 elected female officials were trained on how to prevent corruption and increase cooperation among political parties.

In Syria, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives provided \$33,800 to enhance human rights reporting in the country through a training and mentorship project for Syrian journalists. This resulted in the publication of nearly 100 news items focused on human rights, governance and gender equality, which reached an estimated audience of 100,000.