
28 August 2014

Dear Friends,

Last week we shared excerpts from the first three parts of our new publication: “Protecting our Children: How African Community Organizations Strengthen Child Protection Systems”. This week we share excerpts from parts 4 and 5.

In our three-year initiative on child rights, we learned so much about the work that CBOs are already doing to bridge the gap between local customs and international child rights. With support on child protection policies, case management, and referral systems, our partners were able to significantly strengthen their overall child protection systems.

This publication captures some of the lessons learned in our child protection initiative. We hope you find it useful.

In partnership,

The Firelight Team

(Resource) Parts 4-5 of “Protecting our Children”
(Essay Contest) How would you reinvent foreign aid?
(Open for Applications) Cisco Global Impact Cash Grants
(REMINDER - Call for Letters of Inquiry) Firelight Foundation “Safe Communities, Resilient Children” in Tanzania and Zimbabwe

(Resource) Parts 4-5 of “Protecting our Children”

PART 4: Strengthening organizational child protection systems

One of the key objectives of our child protection initiative was building the capacity of community organizations to protect children. To understand their capacity building needs, we used a multistep process to assess organizational capacity. The supportive environment and the objectives of the assessment — to inform capacity building — created a space that allowed organizations to be honest.

Overall, our assessment found the following key strengths of community-based organizations:

- Engaging with families and communities to develop a protective environment.
- Building the capacity of community structures and mechanisms to respond to child

- abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Challenging harmful cultural practices that violate children’s rights and lead to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
 - Facilitating skills and knowledge to build positive familial relationships that place protection of children at the center.
 - Increasing children’s involvement in reporting cases of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Areas of challenge included gaps or weaknesses in the following areas:

- Child protection policy with supporting tools that facilitate adherence to the policy.
- Case management systems with supporting tools and referral systems.
- Understanding of child-related laws and effectively utilizing them.
- Providing safe spaces where children can be cared for to prevent further abuse.
- Knowledge of effective approaches to complex issues such as child trafficking.

Focus: Child protection policy, case management system, and referral network

Based on what we had learned in the assessments, we prioritized support for organizations to understand the laws in their countries and develop child protection policies, effective case management systems, and referral networks.

Child protection policy

Most organizations either did not have a child protection policy or were using a generic policy, adopted from another organization that they did not engage their own stakeholders in developing. The process of working with community members and leaders, organization and government stakeholders, and often children to develop child protection policies was transformative for these groups. It mobilized their communities and activated dormant child protection networks. It seemed to change the DNA of the organizations. Rather than having child protection as one program among many, it seemed to make child protection the organizing principle behind all their work.

Case management

This was a big gap for many organizations, resulting in the possibility of further victimizing or harming children. Part of the reason for this gap is that organizations often had not had the benefit of exposure to a well-developed case management system. Through this project they were able to visit organizations that had strong case management systems and see firsthand how they worked.

Case management is not just about how the organization manages the case of abuse, but it is in fact how they support the child through a process to get him or her to safety, provide care and support, and facilitate recovery and healing. Once systems are working effectively and are linked to work together well, case management plays an important role in the child’s movement through the system. An important benefit of an effective case management process is that it helps the organization to document the case effectively, which helps them in prosecution and in reviewing the effectiveness of their strategies.

Referral networks

Community organizations recognize that they can be successful in protecting children only if the systems in the community work for children's protection. The process of both creating a protective environment and responding to abuse requires strong relationships between the different actors and systems. No single organization can do everything that needs to be done when a child has experienced abuse. Organizations that try to do it all often stretch their staff thin and in the end fail the child.

Our partners involved local community and government leaders in the process of developing their child protection policies. This helped to strengthen the relationships our partners needed to build their referral networks. At the conclusion of the project, our partners are able to provide more specifics about which government entities they are partnering with and how. Based on scores from the endline assessment, we know that the capacity to make effective use of their relationships is now 64 percent higher.

Though our partners see these relationships as vitally important for their child protection work, they still struggle with the commitment and cooperation of some of their government counterparts. These challenges include weaknesses in the justice system, lack of national case management systems, fragmented data collection, and government departments with insufficient resources (such as transportation) to reach the communities they are responsible to serve.

Conclusion

At the start of the initiative, most CBOs saw child protection as important, and some were ahead of others in championing child rights and child protection. At the conclusion of the initiative, it is clear that our partners now have practices, policies, and strategies for building child protection into the organization in more specific ways. Organizations that came in as generalists moved from responsively addressing cases of child protection as they arose to a more systematic child protection structure. Organizations that came in at a higher-capacity level for child protection found and strengthened the weak points in their systems.

Our partners told us the greatest value they found in the initiative was developing child protection policies, case management systems, and strong referral networks. They also appreciated the linkages and relationships they formed with each other as they learned how other organizations are working to protect children in their own communities.

At the conclusion of the child protection initiative, an evaluator visited each organization to again complete the child protection capacity assessment tool. At endline, each partner had gained capacity, with an average gain of 47 percentage points — a large gain in a short time period. While organizations came into the project at varying capacity levels, each organization showed significant capacity gains between baseline and endline.

PART 5: What we learned

This three-year initiative has shown us that CBOs play a central role in activating and strengthening local efforts to protect children from violence. Some things stood out in the course of the initiative:

- Child protection is an organizing principle. The process of working with CBOs began with engaging them and their local stakeholders to develop strong, explicit child protection policies and systems. This transformed how CBOs understood child protection. Organizations that formerly saw child protection as one among a set of programs now see child protection as a mandate behind all their work, part of their DNA. Rather than integrating child protection into other programs, child protection became the organizing principle for their work as a whole.
- Strategies must be responsive to local context. While there are key priority issues and strategies that are common across organizations, the variability in the activities of organizations shows that most organizations work in ways that are appropriate to the specific needs in their communities. There is no one standard approach to protecting children from abuse, neglect, and violence, but networking and learning from each other leads to an increasingly holistic response.
- Effective child protection systems must link the formal and informal. Responding to violence against children is facilitated by local action within informal community systems. But it is not effective unless it is connected to the formal systems of law enforcement, social welfare, and health. For Firelight, this initiative has been a confirmation of the central role that CBOs play in mobilizing community and government structures to support children. They build the capacity of each of those systems, for example, they often activate dormant child protection committees or can help district governments create databases to track cases of child abuse. More importantly, they link the local community stakeholder system and the formal government system to work together more effectively.

The full “Protecting Our Children” publication also includes case studies of two organizations that worked to strengthen their child protection systems and two tools our partners used to assess and strengthen their child protection systems:

1. Program Mapping Tool - helps organizations map out the key actors affecting child safety and wellbeing in their community
2. Program Model tool - helps organizations spell out their programs and how they fit together to create change in the community.

To download the full publication as an ebook, visit: <http://bit.ly/1sHll1k>

(Essay Contest) How would you reinvent foreign aid? - \$20,000 Prizes

We know many of the people receiving this newsletter are great writers and have

valuable perspectives about how foreign aid can be improved. Share your ideas on the future of development assistance through the Global Development Network’s “Next Horizons Essay Contest 2014,” in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The world has changed radically since the emergence of official development assistance and since the aid agency was invented. How should aid change? Aid is by no means the only source of financing for development in today’s world. Yet for the poorest countries, aid is a vital source of government finance. Aid helps fund critical social services and may catalyze other sources of development funding, such as private investment. In the lead up to 2015, when many significant financing commitments for development will be made, there is a need to be smart about where and how aid is deployed, based on an understanding of how aid can be most valuable in a given country.

In order to help bring attention to the need for scholarship and fresh ideas in this area, and to encourage broad participation, the Global Development Network (GDN) in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announces an international essay contest. The contest invites essays on the future of development assistance. The primary objective of the contest is to invite fresh thinking related to the future of aid that can inform the ongoing discourse on development assistance and to make this thinking available to policymakers and key stakeholders.

Up to 20 winning entries will be chosen, and receive \$20,000 each. An independent panel will make the final selections of the best and most potentially consequential submissions, based on criteria defined. Select winning ideas may be promoted by GDN and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Theme and Topics:

The themes for paper submissions are listed below. The questions invite positive answers—for example, on how aid recipients can better manage donors—because we are searching for solutions. However, contrarian submissions are acceptable too. Although many of the questions are broad, a strong entry might respond narrowly, for example, by proposing a particular financial tool.

Instruments: Which financial instruments should be used to provide aid, and what is the right balance among these different instruments? Should financial instruments as diverse as loans, guarantees, insurance, and equity be used and be mixed with varying degrees of subsidization? If so, how and when? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different financing instruments? How can we assess the contribution of debt, equity, and risk management instruments—as distinct from grants—towards meeting internationally agreed targets for human development—such as relating to health, education, and gender equality?

Bilateral and multilateral institutions: How should the donor “aid system” be organized? Some donor countries administer bilateral aid from their foreign ministries, some from independent cooperation ministries and some through aid agencies. Are there

other options? Is there a preferred way? What are the respective comparative advantages of bilateral and multilateral channels to deliver aid?

Middle-income countries: If the main objective of ODA is poverty reduction, is there a case to restrict ODA to the poorest countries? What should an aid agency do for a country that has millions of poor people and a space program? If one answer is to work with subnational entities such as provinces and cities, how should donors adapt to do so? How would details of risk assessments, national qualification criteria, national borrowing limits, financial tools, and so on, need to be adjusted?

Aid and governance: Aid is often criticized for reducing the accountability of government and funding corruption. Yet good governance seems central to economic development. What are the ways for aid to improve governance?

Recipient role: Most discussions of foreign aid center on what donors should do, and are generally shaped by donors' perspectives. Recipient governments may have very different views. How should recipient countries allocate aid in the context of other sources of financing (i.e. where is aid most effective)? How can recipient governments manage foreign aid to minimize distortions and build their institutional capacity?

Data and information technology: There is growing excitement about the power of open data as a tool both to inform policy and spending decisions and to hold governments to account for commitments they make. What will this data and technology driven transformation in the development project "marketplace" actually look like?? How might citizens use data to provide feedback on government services and development projects? What will it take to get there?

Essay Submission Format:

The format of the essay should follow the guidelines given below:

Essay Cover Page: The cover page should display the title of the essay and contain an abstract of at most 250 words. Information on the author(s) should not be presented on the cover page or in the abstract. Information on the authors can only be present in the list of referenced documents. Essay documents containing author information in places other than the list of referenced documents will be liable for disqualification.

Essay Word Limit: The main text should contain at most 5,000 words, not counting notes and reference lists. Sources should be cited consistently. The abstract should not be more than 250 words and must be included in the essay document.

Essay Margins and Spacing Requirement: The format should be in Times New Roman, minimum 12-point font, 1 inch/2.5 centimeter margins.

Essay Document and Page Formatting: The submission should be Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format. Essays in PDF will not be accepted.

Essay Language: Essays can be submitted in the English, French and Spanish languages only. The competition is open in three languages.

Deadline: 15 September 2014

Essays must be submitted through this website: <http://bit.ly/1roTkfo>

(Open for Applications) Cisco Corporate Responsibility

The company Cisco welcomes applications for Global Impact Cash Grants from community partners around the world who share their vision and offer an innovative approach to a significant social problem.

Cisco makes social investments in areas where they believe their technology and people can make the biggest impact—education, economic empowerment, and critical human needs. Together, these investment areas help people overcome barriers of poverty and inequality, and make a lasting difference by fostering strong global communities

Education Investments

Cisco supports the creation and deployment of technology-based solutions and education delivery models that improve student performance and engagement. We support K-8 programs that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies, and secondary and higher education programs related to technology, engineering, and math. What we look for:

- Innovative solutions to increase the capacity of grantees to deliver, administer, and track education development more effectively and efficiently.
- Tools which increase the availability of, or improve access to, products or services for curriculum development, student-centricity, teacher development, and parental participation.
- Programs for underserved populations and students at greatest risk of dropping out.
- Note: Cisco does not provide direct funding to schools.

Economic Empowerment

Cisco's strategy is to encourage employment success, entrepreneurship, and long-term self-sufficiency by providing access to skills, knowledge, and financial products and services via technology-based solutions. What we look for:

- Programs for underserved populations transitioning from education to workforce or re-entry to workforce.

- Solutions that facilitate widespread and equitable access to resources needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency and participate in local socio-economic development.
- Tools which increase the reach, efficiency, sustainability, transparency and social impact of microfinance institutions to provide more access to financial products and services.
- Initiatives that support knowledge access and technical and leadership skills development to equip people for the workforce and to make informed decisions for their families.

Critical Human Needs

Cisco seeks to help overcome the cycle of poverty and dependence through strategic investments in organizations that successfully address basic needs of underserved communities. We believe that children who have good health and a place to call home are better equipped to learn. What we look for:

- Innovative solutions to increase the capacity of grantees to deliver their products and services more effectively and efficiently.
- Design and implementation of web-based tools which increase the availability of, or improve access to, products and services that are necessary for people to survive and thrive.
- Programs that provide clean water, food, shelter, disaster response and other essential prerequisites to self-sufficiency.
- Note: By policy, relief campaigns respond to significant natural disaster and humanitarian crises as opposed to those caused by human conflict.

Organizational Requirements

- Organizations from outside the U.S. must (a) provide information and documents to determine whether the organization is the equivalent of a U.S. public charity, or (b) agree to sign and comply with an expenditure responsibility contract. Cisco will determine whether (a) or (b) is appropriate for a particular organization.
- Organizations to be funded must serve an audience greater than 65 percent economically underserved relative to the average standards of the target geography.
- Organizations and programs must focus on at least one of our social investment areas: access to education, economic empowerment, or critical human needs.
- An organization's overhead is not to exceed 25 percent. (Organizations are occasionally exempt from this requirement; however, they must be exceptionally aligned with Cisco's values and criteria, and they must clearly explain and justify their overhead costs. Exemptions to the requirement on overhead expenses are determined on a case-by-case basis.)
- The maximum request amount for first-time grant recipients is US\$75,000.

Evaluation Criteria for Global Impact Cash Grants

Global Impact Cash Grants multiply the impact of eligible organizations around the globe with national or multinational operations. To improve the quality of your grant application, they recommend that you carefully review the criteria they use to evaluate grants.

1. Addresses a Significant Social Problem with Unmet Need

The program addresses a problem that affects a large number of lives within one of Cisco's Investment Areas, and which has severe effects on the lives of individuals and communities within the target area. A significant unmet need exists due to a gap in funding or a need for innovative approaches.

2. Incorporates Metrics to Measure Program Impact

The program defines and utilizes SMART metrics to help Cisco and the grantee measure progress towards success. The highest priority and funding consideration is given to proposals that clearly articulate the planned impact of their efforts, as well as the metrics by which that impact will be measured.

3. Serves the Underserved

The target audience is greater than 65% economically underserved, relative to the average standards of the target geography.

4. Utilizes and Leverages the Internet

The program uses the Internet and/or Internet-based communications technology to improve the efficiency and reach of program services.

5. Employs an Innovative Approach with Potential for Broad Impact

The program provides an innovative solution that creates an opportunity for significant impact beyond the direct benefits of specific Cisco-funded activities. For example:

- Market effects due to major shift in economics/productivity/effectiveness.
- Ability to catalyze behavior of other key agents or partners in ecosystem to achieve an order of magnitude more together than apart.

6. Designed to be Replicable, Scalable, and Sustainable

The design of the program allows it to be easily and cost effectively replicated in communities around the globe, and to meet the needs of the target population without a nearly equivalent investment for each individual or group. The long-term plan for the program enables it to flourish significantly beyond the resources provided by Cisco.

7. Possesses Outstanding Leadership

The organization has an outstanding leader and/or management team with qualities such as vision, execution ability, passion, ethical approach, expertise, external relationships, and credible track record in the relevant area.

8. Aligns with Cisco Goals and Values

The organization meets the basic criteria, guidelines and requirements as defined for Cisco's Global Impact Cash Grant program.

Applications are open year-round on Cisco's website: <http://bit.ly/1mrrEPr>

To apply, take their online eligibility quiz. If you are eligible, you will be invited to register and provide initial information about your organization and proposed budget. If Cisco determines that your organization's program is aligned with Cisco's mission, strategic approach, and objectives for grant support, you will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal.

(REMINDER - Call for Letters of Inquiry) Firelight Foundation "Safe Communities, Resilient Children" in Tanzania and Zimbabwe

Please note that the deadline for Letters of Inquiry in Tanzania has been extended. The deadline for both Tanzania and Zimbabwe is now 29 August 2014. Please share this opportunity within your networks!

BACKGROUND

Firelight Foundation believes in the power of African communities to create lasting change for children and families affected by poverty, HIV, and AIDS. We identify, fund, and strengthen promising community organizations that support the health, resilience, and education of children in Africa.

Firelight partners with community-based organizations (CBOs) for seven years, providing small annual grants of \$1,000 to \$15,000 USD. Throughout the partnership, we engage with our partners in an intensive process to strengthen organizational and programmatic capacity. Our goal is that at the conclusion of the partnership, our partners are in a stronger position in terms of organizational management, resource mobilization, networking, and sound programming. In this initiative, we will focus on building program competency in child rights, child protection, and programs that build children's emotional health.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Firelight is only able to support a small percentage of the 1,000 or more requests for funding we receive each year. In order for us to focus our efforts in an effective manner, we will only accept letters of inquiry in 2014 from organizations that meet the criteria outlined below.

Under this request for proposals, Firelight seeks to fund grassroots organizations working to keep children safe in their communities, including within their homes and in schools. We will prioritize organizations already working on child rights, child protection, or

activities that help build children's emotional health. However, we welcome applications from organizations that work to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children, families, and communities and want to integrate child protection, child rights, or emotional health into their work.

We are seeking to fund a cohort of partners in Shinyanga Region, Tanzania and in Zimbabwe in the following districts: Kadoma, Kwekwe, Gokwe North, Gokwe South, Nkayi, Lupane, Binga, and Hwange. Only organizations based in these areas are eligible to apply. Organizations based in other districts/regions will be declined.

THE DECISION PROCESS

The deadlines for receiving letters of inquiry is 29 August 2014 (Tanzania and Zimbabwe)

We will notify you by October 2014 if we are interested in receiving a full proposal from your organization. Because we are a small foundation with limited resources, we cannot support all of the qualified organizations that submit inquiries. If we decline your request, we will try our best to explain why. We expect funding awards to be made in January 2015. Please forward all letters of inquiry via e-mail, mail, or fax (e-mail is preferred) to:

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To view the guidelines and download the Letter of Inquiry Template, visit our website at: <http://bit.ly/1lk6uYG>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

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