

## ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

### 1 RESPECT AND PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they develop and implement strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development, with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people.



Photo: Ken Phillips/Kenoli Foundation

## Advancing human rights: The Ken and Oli Johnstone Foundation (KENOLI)

Kenoli is a private Canadian foundation established in 2007 from the estates of Ken and Oli Johnstone of Vancouver, BC. Its mission is working to alleviate poverty and hunger by supporting organizations that build community self-sufficiency and advance human rights in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

## CHALLENGE

Promoting individual and collective human rights in post-conflict states has often led to further threats and human rights violations. Kenoli recognized this challenge, and through partnerships with local, national, and international organizations, Kenoli began supporting programs dedicated to protecting and building the capacity of human rights defenders and their communities in the most violent states in Central America.



## RESPONSE



Underpinned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Kenoli supports local partners who challenge existing power structures by expanding the space for dialogue between human right defenders, state officials, and the international community. In 2011, Kenoli began to engage with two human rights organizations: the Association for Economic and Social Development (ADES) in El Salvador and the Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (UDEFEQUA). ADES, with the support of Kenoli, developed a community-led human rights network to empower the most excluded to achieve their basic rights, many of whom had returned from Honduras post-civil war.

The network includes an educational component with human rights training for future defenders, including students and community leaders - over 600 individuals have been trained and are now training others. In addition, the network includes a youth-run radio station broadcasting programs on specific human rights issues that reaches 100,000 people. Accompanying these activities is the provision of legal assistance in cases in which human rights have been violated, including abuse of authority and confiscation of community land.

UDEFEQUA's emergency fund for human rights defenders, supported by Kenoli, provides resources, training, and security for the most vulnerable defenders in Guatemala. Those most at risk receive legal assistance, re-location assistance and psychosocial support.

The overarching component for both ADES and UDEFEQUA is working with officials at every level to protect, promote, and implement all human rights.

# LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

Promoting human rights in contexts where there has been a long history of violations poses significant challenges. For example, in El Salvador, when the youth-run Radio Victoria started to air programs on human rights, the radio station and local partner, ADES, received anonymous death threats. Rather than stop broadcasting, ADES, supported by UDEFEGUA, created a strategy that publicized the threats in the national media, while acknowledging and preparing for the risks that this would involve. The strategy worked and the threats stopped — for now. Despite the success of Radio Victoria, Kenoli recognizes that the promotion of human rights is only the beginning, given the rise of human rights' abuses in the region.



With a solid asset base, Kenoli is uniquely positioned to act independently from the constraints that many CSOs experience. This independence is reflected in the relationships Kenoli has with its partners and the flexibility both can enjoy. This way leadership and decision-making come from communities, who have the knowledge of what they need, and local CSOs (Kenoli partners), which have the expertise and cultural knowledge to empower communities to meet their needs.

## MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



Representatives from UDEFEGUA have spoken at many international conferences worldwide, sharing information on human rights issues. They have also established regional networks.

## NEXT STEPS

In August 2012, Kenoli hosted its first partners' forum in El Salvador, bringing together representatives from its 30 partner organizations across Central America and Bolivia to share best practices.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Kenoli Annual Report 2011 (contact BCCIC)

La Unidad de La Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos (UDEFEGUA) | Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit  
<http://www.udefegua.org/>

La Asociación de Desarrollo Económico Social (ADES) | The Association for Economic and Social Development  
<http://adessantamarta.codigosur.net/>

Go here for more examples of how Canadian civil society is improving its development practice: <http://www.ccic.ca/IP-case-studies.php>