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: Misganaw Haile*

# Learn without fear:

## Plan Canada

Plan Canada is part of Plan International, a global movement for change, mobilizing millions of people around the world to support social justice for children in developing countries.

## CHALLENGE

No country is free from school violence. According to a 2006 United Nations Study on Violence Against Children, 20-65% of all schoolchildren report being verbally or physically bullied. Some 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence during 2002. At present, school corporal punishment is legal in 77 countries.

Each type of school violence has negative consequences, not only for the future of all affected children, but also for their countries as a whole: children who experience violence at school are likely to earn less, be in greater need of healthcare and other services, and contribute less to their countries' economies.

## RESPONSE

Since Plan believes that every child has the right to a safe school environment, our campaign vision was of a world where children can go to school in safety and Learn Without Fear or threats of violence.

The campaign emerged from three complementary perspectives: (1) requests by grassroots organizations and community members to address child protection in schools, (2) our organizational strengths on child protection and education, and (3) our commitment to help deliver the recommendations from the UNVAC report.

Plan Canada has been supporting the implementation of the campaign, particularly in Africa.

To develop Learn Without Fear initiatives, Plan worked closely with the community on a development plan that assesses how activities will impact children and their rights. Children play a central role in shaping this plan and identify issues they feel are affecting them — of which adults or parents may be unaware. Through this process, Plan Canada helps create a space for children to be heard.

## LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

Since school violence emanates from diverse factors, from the very beginning it was obvious to Plan that a multi-dimensional response was needed. Its holistic approach to school violence includes the following:

- **The best available evidence:** This comes not only from systematic reviews but also from child-led research projects. It informs our programs, as well as national policies and international congresses.
- **Mainstreaming:** Central to our holistic approach is to work closely with key stakeholder groups both inside and beyond school walls. For that reason, Plan has trained not only children and teachers, but also police officers, paralegal staff, religious leaders, and policy makers.
- **Proactive prevention strategies:** This includes not only awareness-raising activities, but also school manuals, teachers' codes of conduct, first aid kits, improved referral systems, child helplines and home visitation with abused children.

Results to date have led to new laws and policies that protect over 500 million children around the world against school violence. More than 50,000 teachers have been trained in non-violent teaching methods and more than 30,000 schools are involved in the international campaign. Children are involved in the entire process and help bring about changes in the community and to national legislation.

## MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Since the campaign takes place in multiple countries simultaneously, different organizations — including Plan Canada — readily share knowledge. Plan's Latin American and West African partners, for example, presented their lessons learned at a workshop at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society.

Moreover, since Plan implements this program in partnership with local organizations, there is always informal knowledge sharing. Finally, information and evidence gained from the different countries running the campaign has allowed Plan Canada to contribute to policy dialogue with CIDA concerning safety and security in schools.

## NEXT STEPS

Now that the Learn Without Fear campaign is ending at a global level, Plan's school violence prevention work is transitioning into the following areas:

1. **Plan programmes:** Since the campaign's inception, some colleagues working on Learn Without Fear have been doing programmatic work. Training teachers on positive discipline in a systematic way, for example, is not necessarily campaign work. The plan now is to use what has been learned to make this type of Plan intervention more effective.
2. **Advocacy work:** Learn Without Fear has affected legal change at a national level. In the future, Plan staff doing advocacy work on school violence-related issues will continue to promote new national laws. However, they will also work on improving law implementation at a national level and on promoting international legal instruments that encourage States to protect children from school violence.
3. **BIAAG:** In order to strengthen the Because I am a Girl (BIAAG) campaign, Learn Without Fear campaigners will keep sharing their lessons learned on how to make the best of Plan campaigns. More specifically, one of the BIAAG campaign pillars is gender-based school violence and the plan is to share all the expertise not only on promoting girl-friendly schools but on violence-free schools.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Learn Without Fear website and blog,
http://blog.becauseiamagirl.ca/tag/learn-without-fear/
http://plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear