



ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

2 EMBODY GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY WHILE PROMOTING WOMEN AND GIRLS' RIGHTS

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they promote and practise development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experience, while supporting women's efforts to realize their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process.

COADY

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Igniting Leadership

The International Centre for Women's Leadership



Photo: Coady International Institute

International Centre for Women's Leadership: Coady International Institute

The Coady International Institute was established in 1959 at St. Francis Xavier University to train and support development practitioners and community workers around the world, and enable them to lead social and economic change.

CHALLENGE

Coady has developed a range of educational programs from professional certificates and leadership diplomas to a Master's degree in Adult Education. Building on this success, and the need for greater involvement for women in leadership roles across international development organizations and sectors, Coady identified the need to develop a new mechanism to promote women in these roles.



RESPONSE



In 2011, the Coady Institute established the International Centre for Women's Leadership (the Centre) whose flagship program — Global Change Leaders — offers practical training, placements, networking, and mentoring to inspire emerging leaders in the development sector. The program targets women from developing countries who have demonstrated leadership capacities, and the desire and initiative to make a difference in their home communities. Women from across sectors - health, education, civil service, women's rights, community leadership - participate in the program. The program stresses both empowerment and confidence building, as well as the development of leadership capacities such as communication skills, negotiating, partnership development, organizational learning and change, and understanding of different development strategies. In addition to the Global Change Leaders program, the Centre offers a similar program for Indigenous women in community leadership, and a summer institute for women working in the not-for-profit sector in Canada. The Centre also advances women's leadership through publishing a case study series, conducting expert consultancies, networking and partnering with like-minded institutions internationally.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

There has been significant interest in the Global Change Leaders program. In 2012, there were 420 applications for 16 spots. Through the Coady adult education approach, students are able to bring their own experiences into the teaching process, which enriches the learning for all. Common points of interest among women from different countries are also leveraged to produce lively debate and creative brainstorming: for example, topics explored include women's rights, girls' education, innovation and social enterprise, role models, access to funding and so on.



MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



The Global Change Leaders program has a strong relationship-building component. The curriculum includes a two-month placement to foster South-South dialogue and cooperation, as well as a mentoring component to help guide participants. The placement aims to expose participants to like-minded institutions in a developing country different than their own, and to apply learnings in their own contexts.

NEXT STEPS

Future directions for Global Change Leaders include reaching out to similar institutions and creating a research and cooperation network. In addition to facilitating case study research in curriculum, this kind of outreach will enable the program to keep tabs on the latest research, both in leadership and development scholarship.



FURTHER INFORMATION

International Centre for Women's Leadership Program website
<http://www.coady.stfx.ca/women/change-leaders>

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