



ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

7 CREATE AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND COMMIT TO MUTUAL LEARNING

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they enhance the ways they learn from their experience, from other CSOs and development actors, integrating evidence from development practice and results, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities, strengthening innovation and their vision for the future they would like to see.



HUMANITARIAN COALITION

Together saving more lives



Photo: Brendan Bannon

Working together for more effective outcomes: the Humanitarian Coalition

The Humanitarian Coalition brings together Canada's leading aid agencies to finance relief efforts in times of international humanitarian crises.

CHALLENGE

Canadians don't know enough about how international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) work in developing countries. This hampers our ability to successfully reach out to Canadians and engage them in our work and our story. Indeed, in 2007, the proportion of donations from Canadians directed to international causes was only 6%. In times of humanitarian disasters, aid agencies compete for public donations, often leaving Canadians confused about where to give. Sector-wide, competing fundraising campaigns during large humanitarian crises have led to duplicated fundraising costs and missed opportunities to present a united voice to Canadians regarding humanitarian needs and appropriate responses.



RESPONSE



After the tsunami in Asia in 2005, CARE Canada, Oxfam-Québec, Oxfam Canada, and Save the Children Canada drew on successful European joint appeal models to form the Humanitarian Coalition. The Coalition members sought to work together during times of international humanitarian disasters to eliminate unnecessary competition, reduce duplicated fundraising costs, and better educate the public on humanitarian needs. Their objective was to work together to get more help to those who need it.

Conceived as a pilot project, the Coalition issued its first joint appeal to raise funds for relief efforts after Pakistan's Earthquake in 2005. The informal partnership worked so well that the Coalition was formalized and hired its first staff member in 2007. Three years later, following the earthquake in Haiti, the Coalition raised an impressive \$15.5 million in its first major appeal. In 2011, Plan Canada joined the group, and the Coalition continues to solicit the participation of other Canadian aid organizations.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

Media play an important role in informing the Canadian public about humanitarian disasters, but are not able to sponsor individual aid agencies because of their requirement to stay neutral. Because it represents five aid agencies, the Coalition has been able to partner with a number of Canadian broadcasters to secure free advertising that individual agencies would not have obtained on their own. The Coalition has also succeeded in increasing the visibility of some humanitarian disasters through its united appeals. Its 2011 appeal for the East Africa drought crisis raised over \$14 million for relief efforts when similar slow-onset crises in the past had gained very limited visibility with the Canadian public.



The Coalition has also raised the bar for monitoring and evaluation of Canadian-funded humanitarian programs. As part of a commitment to greater accountability and transparency, members agree to be evaluated against established humanitarian standards [e.g. The Sphere Project and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)]. The Coalition has further sought to contribute to lesson learning and reduce duplications by partnering with the Disasters Emergency Committee in the UK on Real-Time Evaluations. Confidential individual member program assessments further provide members with valuable information to improve their responses.

MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



The Humanitarian Coalition is committed to sharing all evaluation reports publicly and presents its findings to Canada's humanitarian sector on an annual basis. Reports are also shared through its website. Additionally, members participate in joint evaluations directly, providing them with valuable additional access to the best practices of their peers. The Coalition is also in regular contact with its peer joint appeal mechanisms in other countries, including the UK, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Italy.

NEXT STEPS

The Humanitarian Coalition continues to pursue its goal of increasing Canadians' donations for humanitarian crises by enabling members to join forces (which takes the guesswork out of giving) and partnering with private sector organizations that can support national appeals for aid at critical moments. In the long term, the Humanitarian Coalition aims to attract all of Canada's most experienced humanitarian agencies to join its membership in order to reach the full potential of a collective fundraising model for humanitarian disaster relief.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Humanitarian Coalition
<http://humanitariancoalition.ca>

Humanitarian Coalition Evaluations
<http://humanitariancoalition.ca/about-us/reports/evaluation-reports>

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