



## ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

### 8 COMMIT TO REALIZING POSITIVE SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.



Photo: Abdul Jalil/CHF

## Targeting the ultra poor: Canadian Hunger Foundation

The Canadian Hunger Foundation (CHF) is dedicated to enabling poor rural communities in developing countries to attain sustainable livelihoods.

## CHALLENGE

Through its work, CHF seeks to increase the standard of living for people living in poverty in rural areas through holistic community development and market-based interventions. CHF believes in training and capacity building to enable communities to lift themselves out of poverty. To realize this goal, CHF recognized the need for specific strategies to improve the livelihoods of those in extreme poverty—particularly small-scale farmers.



Smallholder farmers are often the majority of the population in developing countries and are also frequently the most food-insecure because of an array of challenges. Limited access to tools and farming techniques that would increase their yields makes it harder for farmers to thrive. Women are the most likely to go hungry and least likely to have access to resources they need—despite producing 60-80% of food in developing countries. Changes in climate make subsistence farmers increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters that can wipe out hard-won development gains if they are not resilient. Weak infrastructure, difficulties accessing crop prices, and poor ties to markets prevent farmers from getting the best prices for their harvests. Overcoming these and other challenges facing smallholder farmers and their families is a daunting task, but for many of these issues feasible solutions are within reach.

## RESPONSE



The Canadian Hunger Foundation developed the Sustainable Livelihoods for the Ultra-Poor (SLUP) project in Bangladesh to address the different underlying constraints faced by households living in extreme poverty. The project directly supported 10,500 ultra-poor households through a broad range of asset and capacity building support with a goal to sustainably improve and diversify their livelihoods, increase their incomes, and achieve food security. Drawing on the “aspiration-based” model of development, the project enabled each household to discuss its needs and goals and put a plan in place to reach them. Throughout their involvement in the project, target households benefited from community facilitators, follow-up, and coaching, as well as some start-up capital (in the form of an “asset”).

CHF has found that supporting beneficiaries’ aspirations with assets, training, and knowledge is an effective way to attain substantial development results and is successful in a broad range of contexts. In Bangladesh, incomes of benefiting households more than doubled over the project period—a real income increment of 142% for female-headed households and 133% for male-headed households. In South Sudan, we’ve seen a 60% increase in farmers’ harvests. In Kenya, the average monthly income of beneficiaries has more than doubled. And in Guyana, 771 farmers increased their incomes by 20% or more.

# LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

CHF and a local partner jointly implemented the five-year “Sustainable Livelihoods for the Ultra Poor” project in Chandpur District, Bangladesh. Over the course of the project, improvements were tracked to show “graduation” in the community by evaluating six categories, including resilience, food security, housing, education, income and women’s empowerment.



Households received points in each category, which were then added and averaged based on a weighting system. Income increase made the biggest difference to a household’s graduation score (30%) followed by food security and resilience (both 20%), whereas the education of children had the least impact (5% of total). Based on their scores, households were then placed into three categories: green, yellow, and red.

- Green: Scored 76-100 points (Household has graduated out of ultra-poverty)
- Yellow: Scored 61-75 points (Household is moving towards graduation)
- Red: Scored 60 points or below (Household is lagging)

The “graduation” scheme provided an overall measurement of households’ movement out of ultra-poverty, and also provided critical feedback for project planning and implementation. Based on this data, project staff provided follow-up support, asset management training, and coaching to the most vulnerable households identified through this process. Interventions with more successful households then focused on value-addition training and linking them to self-help groups and markets.

By the end of the project, 60% of the targeted households were expected to have graduated from ultra-poverty. Results surpassed expectations: 76% of households have graduated out of ultra-poverty (green), 9% were categorized as near graduation (yellow) and 15% as lagging (red).

## MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



The project has the potential to be scaled up and replicated elsewhere, provided the necessary capacity is available. Additional efforts could take place in Bangladesh. But one of the strengths of CHF’s local partner model is the capacity to harness global experiences like these to generate similar results in communities around the world. The project has the potential to be scaled up and replicated elsewhere, provided the necessary capacity is available.

## NEXT STEPS

CHF is looking at a longer-term involvement, following and aiding these households as they transition out of extreme poverty, as well as examining different types of interventions to help them prosper.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Canadian Hunger Foundation  
<http://www.chf.ca>

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