Canadian Civil Society Organizations Influencing Policy and Practice

The Role of Research

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Canadian Partnerships Research Reports

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About the Author

Stacie Travers holds an MA in Educational Studies with a concentration in Adult Education from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her interest in ethics and designs surrounding educational models, as well as non-western and critical perspectives on education, led her to complete thesis research on developing meaningful study abroad programs. She previously completed her BA in Cultural Anthropology and International Development Studies at McGill University in Montreal. She studied and worked in Panama, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, before beginning a teaching career abroad and in Canada.
Preface

We are pleased to share with you this fifth Research Report of IDRC’s Canadian Partnerships (CP) Program, researched and authored by Stacie Travers, during her 2011 research internship with IDRC’s Special Initiatives Division (SID), home of the CP Program.

Under its 2010-2015 strategy, SID’s CP Program aims its work at: (a) promoting collaboration in research and knowledge sharing among Canadian institutions and with counterparts in developing countries; (b) increasing the contribution of Canadian collaborative research and knowledge to policy and practice of development actors; and (c) improving the capacity of Canadian institutions to learn from their experience in international development and share lessons with others.

Ms. Travers’ paper attends to the second outcome area by documenting and assessing recent experiences of Canadian civil society organizations’ (CCSOS)’ use of research to influence policy and practice for development in the global South.

In 2012, SID’s research internship will survey and assess Canadian CSOs’ experience in organizational learning, the third outcome area.

Ms. Travers’ paper has helped the CP Program gain a less anecdotal and more broad-based awareness of the role played by research in CCSOs’ strategies to influence change for development in the global South. Interested in those CCSOs that are engaged in international cooperation for development but do not have research as a primary mandate, the study uncovered the many ways in which research activities interact with and support activities more central to those CCSOs’ missions. It identified: the wider range of actors from whom CCSOs access, and with whom they conduct, research to inform their actions; CCSOs’ organizational roles and the purposes which this research serves; as well as strategic provisions taken by CCSOs to increase the odds that their use of research will be effective in bringing about positive change.

Ms. Travers’ findings challenge two misbeliefs still widespread outside the CSO sector engaged in international development cooperation, even here in Canada. Firstly, despite its focus on 162 CCSOs that do not have research as a declared primary focus of activity, her nationwide survey (53% response rate) found that 62 out of 69 responding CCSOs do value and use research to influence policy and practice in the global South. What is more, a large majority of them actually use their own staff, interns and
volunteers to carry out the research needed to inform their actions. This research usually differs in purpose and approach from that led by universities and other research-mandated institutions, but the findings confirm that CCSOs that carry out research do also retain a considerable measure of control over its agenda, process, and dissemination or use.

Secondly, the study reveals that, beyond carrying out their own research, CCSOs also draw on that conducted by a wide variety of other actors, both in Canada and the global South. Former CP research intern Natasha Khamis, in CP’s Research Report 3 (2009), illustrated with case studies how sophisticated CSOs’ strategies can be for accessing knowledge that is useful to their activities.

It may also come as a surprise to some that, CCSOs overall depend more on research produced by global South organizations or produced with them, than on research produced by or with Canadian organizations (except for research produced by Canadian universities). In Canada, the more important research providers are Canadian universities, followed by other CCSOs and CSO councils. Even so, the percentage of CCSOs saying they use research produced by or with Canadian organizations in any given category is never higher than 31%. Since percentages are not cumulative (the same CCSO can draw research from several other types of organizations), only a minority of the 62 organizations seems to be drawing research from Canadian sources other than themselves. Canadian universities are the top Canadian category as both source and collaborator for research, but even then, CP intern Elena Chernikova’s own survey, in CP’s Research Report 4 (2010), suggested that research collaboration is only achieved once trust has been established through less risky interactions, such as internships. On the other hand, 44% of CCSOs collaborate on research with their peers in the global South, while only 6.5% do so with their peers in Canada. Therefore, it seems there is considerable room for increasing and improving research collaboration among CCSOs and with Canadian universities.

This paper does not question the fact that it makes sense for CCSOs to rely on research produced by organizations outside the Canadian CSO community to inform specific and localised activities in the global South. Collaborating with global South CSOs on such activities must remain an integral part of CCSOs’ cooperation strategy for local change.

Yet, one may wonder how much Canada’s CSOs actually interact with each other to collect and share lessons on particular issues and, in this way, evolve and innovate in their approaches. To what extent does research carried out by Canadian universities and CSO coalitions actually assist Canadian collectives of civil society to generate knowledge and share this knowledge for the benefit of the larger Canadian CSO community?
One gap which deserved more attention therefore is the relatively limited extent to which CCSOs reported collaborating with other CCSOs on research to influence policy and practice in the global South. Some of this inter-organizational research is being implemented through coalitions and university-CSO collaborations. Ms. Travers’ survey indicates that nearly a fifth of CCSOs use research produced by Canada’s international cooperation councils. Although these are provincially and regionally mandated, they occupy a meso-level in the Canadian international cooperation system which positions them well for knowledge management. Ways should be explored to assist those that want to strengthen their role in this regard.

This study also has implications of interest to CCSOs. CCSOs seeking donor support for their research activities should ensure that donor agencies do understand the functions and connections of the proposed research with their other activities. Different from research by universities, CSO research is a much smaller component but one embedded in CSOs overall strategy to influence change. This carries at least two implications for CCSOs in their rapport with CP:

Firstly, as recommended by the report, CCSOs should clarify to other actors the roles which research plays in their organization (how it supports other objectives), as well as the provisions which enable them to systematize knowledge from their actions. Beyond research for specific interventions in the field, donor agencies can support efforts by CCSOs to better explain and communicate to the larger public the research and knowledge management strategy that supports their various roles and purposes. Systematizing experiential learning is a key aspect of knowledge management, for which capacity could be strengthened with external support.

Secondly, as research is usually not a discrete activity in CCSOs’ strategy for change but rather blended with others, CCSOs should explain in their grant requests the interfaces between the proposed research and their other activities, so that donor agencies can understand and assess the full functionality of the research agenda and its process. This may enable such agencies to suggest project designs that can optimise the various purposes which research is intended to serve. And we now know from this study that CCSOs with many roles are more likely to want to use research for multiple purposes than others that are more narrowly focussed.

Ms. Travers’ study raises many questions which further research could address: in Canadian CSOs’ experience, which dimensions of research make it more effective at influencing change in policy and practice: is it rigour, credentials, participation, timing, alliances, advocacy? What skills and strategies do CCSOs need in order to make research more effective at influencing change: are those CCSOs with in-house research capacity more effective with research than others which rely more on third parties’
research? Are there significant differences between the kind of research required to influence public policy in Canada and that required to influence public policy in global South contexts? What can Canadian CSOs learn from global South CSOs’ use of research to influence public policy in their own country, and vice-versa?

Ms. Travers’ research for this paper and her November 2011 seminar at IDRC in Ottawa generated considerable interest on the part of her Latin American and Canadian informants and their organizations. We hope that you will enjoy reading this report and find it useful for your work. We also welcome any comment you may wish to share with us on its methods and findings. We equally would appreciate to learn about any innovative experience unaccounted for in this paper.

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Ottawa, 19 January 2011
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I extend special thanks to all participating Canadian organizations who took time away from their important and dedicated work to provide useful insight for the survey. I specifically wish to thank Mélanie Lambrick and Kathryn Travers of Women in Cities International; Marie Léger and Thomas Cormier of Rights & Democracy; Sébastien Valdieso and Michel Mathieu of Société de coopération pour le développement international (Socodevi); and Marlen Mondaca and Marcela Vallejos of Save the Children Canada, who graciously gave their time and feedback for the case studies.

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Acronyms

AAJDHAA Abogados y Abogadas por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos/ Lawyers for Justice and Human Rights of Mexico

CCSO Canadian civil society organization

CIDA Canadian International Development Agency

CIDDHU Clinique internationale de défense des droits humains/International Clinic for the Defense of Human Rights

CISCSA Centro de Intercambio y Servicios Cono Sur-Argentina/ Exchange and Services Centre, Southern Cone-Argentina

COAJ Consejo de Organizaciones Aborígenes de Jujuy/ Council of Indigenous Organizations of Jujuy

CSO Civil society organization

IDRC International Development Research Centre

ILO International Labour Organization

IPEC International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ONIC Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia/ National Indigenous Organization of Colombia

GiCP Gender Inclusive Cities Programme

MOLACNATS Latin American and Caribbean Movement of Working Children and Adolescents

R&D Rights & Democracy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Red Latinoamericana de Maestrías de Infancia/ Latin American Network of Masters in Children’s Rights and Social Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>Save the Children Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCSO</td>
<td>Southern civil society organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCODEVI</td>
<td>Société de coopération pour le développement international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEC</td>
<td>Unidad de Negocios de Especias y Condimentos/ Spice and Condiment Business Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHN</td>
<td>Women and Habitat Network</td>
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<td>WICI</td>
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Executive Summary

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are credited with having a role to play with regards to making research relevant, and with using it to contribute to changes in policy and practice in the developing world. For all actors in the field of international development, there is a need to understand the strategies and the contributions of these institutions in order to strengthen, expand, and facilitate this type of work. With this aim, the current study seeks to understand how Canadian civil society organizations (CCSOs) attempt to use research to influence policy and/or practice in the global South. The role which research plays for these organizations is examined through an analysis of how CCSOs access research, how they incorporate research into their strategies for influence and the ways in which research helps them meet their multiple objectives. Understanding how CCSOs view, produce and use research in their collective work to influence policy and practice in the global South can help CCSOs, their Southern partners, funders and government combine their efforts in ways that bring about real change.

A general survey and case study analysis produced quantitative and qualitative data which provide a rounded picture of the links between CCSOs, research and influence over policy and practice in the global South. Not only are CCSOs using research in their work, but they generally retain a degree of control over the research process, either carrying out research themselves or in collaboration with others. This can help ensure that research complies with their mandates, philosophies and resources; that CCSOs can be flexible and adapt research questions and methods as needed along the way; and that the research process serves to build capacity. Regarding collaborations, findings suggest that CCSOs collaborate in ways that account for their established networks, the local contexts, and their own resources and experience; the strategic choice to collaborate based on experience and practical reasoning tends to create more research collaborations between Canadian and Southern CSOs than with any other category of organizations. There were very few research collaborations among CCSOs cited, suggesting that partnering with Southern organizations is mutually exclusive to partnering with other Canadian organizations. This finding is in need of further study and a suggestion is made to examine the role which Canadian coalitions play in terms of fostering research collaborations among CCSOs.

Data collected suggests research is an important part of CCSOs’ work, regardless of the organizational roles that they play. Research supports CCSOs in their roles of capacity building, advocacy and technical assistance, among others. Furthermore, there appears to be a relationship between the range of roles that a CCSO plays and the purposes for which it uses research: the wider the range of roles a
CCSO plays, the more ways it finds to use research in its work to influence policy and practice in the global South. Research helps CCSOs fulfill their roles and objectives in two main ways. First, research is often needed to work toward fulfilling roles or objectives (ex; collect data to better understand an issue, then use this knowledge to plan an awareness campaign) and secondly, the research process itself allows certain roles to be fulfilled or objectives to be met (ex; engage local women as survey takers so they gain certain skills and establish key relationships, thereby building capacity).

Different strategies for influence are detailed through introducing the work of four Canadian organizations: Women in Cities International, Rights & Democracy, Socodevi and Save the Children Canada. Through an exploration of respective projects and programs of each organization, this study highlights the ways in which research is accessed and used by CCSOs and how these ways correspond to their strategies for influence. CCSOs work within constraints; they face a lack of funds, time, personnel, and sometimes expertise. CCSOs, therefore, find ways to maximize their funds, time and influence, expand their capacity and access certain knowledge and skills. This is done by forming strategic alliances and partnerships, identifying and using organizational strengths and paying attention to methodological design.

For both Canadian and Southern CSOs involved in this study, research is not always (though can often be) as systematized and rigorous as university-based research. It is often combined with awareness-raising, capacity building or implementation activities. The way in which research is embedded into CSOs’ work is understood in the context of CSOs working to influence through a variety of means, but also working to meet multiple objectives. Given the blended nature of CSOs’ research, it becomes less visible and suggests to some that their work is based solely on anecdotal experience rather than supported by carefully designed research.

Canadian civil society organizations working in international development are doing more than delivering services and assistance to the South. They are supporting and working through local and participatory actions to influence policy and practice. Although very much action-orientated, the CCSOs interviewed recognize and address the need for their actions to be evidence-based and respond by incorporating research into their work. Their work is based on the ground, it involves Southern perspectives, it is adaptable and flexible and it is in no way an end in itself. Findings suggest research is an important, integrated and multi-purpose component of Canadian civil society’s organizations and their strategies to influence policy and/or practice in the global South.
In order to continue to encourage CSOs both in Canada and the South to use evidence-based strategies for influence, it is recommended that donors be open to flexible and adaptable methodologies and respect the ways in which CSOs make multiple uses of research, combine it with other types of activities and design it with local capacity building in mind. Consideration should be given to the fact that sound and credible research may mean something different to CCSOs than it may to universities and other research-mandated organizations, as CCSOs aim to strike reciprocal relationships with their Southern partners and, as such, strongly believe in avoiding researcher/subject divides or North-South transfer of knowledge. This being said, it is also suggested that CSOs may want to devote greater attention to systematizing their knowledge and making more explicit to other actors the role which research actually plays within their organizations.
Chapter One: Introduction

Knowledge leads to empowerment, which in turn provides the basis for developing equitable and prosperous societies. Research and corresponding knowledge-sharing activities are essential in both acquiring and disseminating this knowledge. Often associated with academia, research is no longer the realm of universities or research centres alone, nor is it equated with scientific data or left to theorists. Research has come to include broad categories of methodologies, disciplines and actors. Not only have the types of research changed with time, but the researchers themselves have also changed. Individuals without research as their main objective and organizations without research as part of their stated mandate can and do carry out a variety of research activities as part of a strategy to further other objectives. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are credited with having a role to play with regards to making research relevant, and with using it to engage in policy-making processes and broaden their impact. With the shift to knowledge-based approaches to development comes the need to examine the role of CSOs as emerging and under-examined actors, with regards to knowledge creation and distribution. For all actors in the field of international development there is a need to understand the strategies and the contributions of civil society organizations to the policy process, practice and overall change in development.

Understanding the Policy Process

“Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic, promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives”(Synergos, 2008, p.6).

It is important to understand the policy-making process for anyone trying to influence it. Not surprisingly, therefore, social scientists have studied this process in depth with such examinations having produced numerous understandings and corresponding models. Each model looks to explain how the policy process works, and indicates how, when and if influencing the process is possible. It is rare to read a discussion of the policy-making process without the focus turning to how that process can be influenced by research.

The literature on policy-making is in many ways intertwined with what has been written on research utilization. These two streams of literature relate in that each policy process model has
implications for the use of research, while the research utilization models explain how and where knowledge fits into the policy process. There has been much discussion and debate surrounding the research-to-policy link. Although bridging the gap between research and policy is an interesting debate, it will not be fully addressed here since the focus of this study is not how and why policymakers use research to inform their decisions, but rather how civil society organizations attempt to use evidence to influence the larger policy-making process.

Understanding the policy process means understanding the key institutions and actors. By doing this it becomes easier to identify the incentives and pressures which exist for those involved, as well as the type of evidence and communication strategy needed to maximize the chances of policy influence (Court, Mendizabal, Osborne and Young, 2006). The aim in what follows is to lay out the various conceptualizations of the policy-making process and other key concepts needed to grasp these understandings, in order to visualize how, when and where those outside the official decision-making circles can focus their efforts to influence policy using research as part of their strategy.

The Linear Model

The earliest and understandably most limited model describing the policy process dates back to the 1950s and the work of Lasswell (1951), who sought to separate policy-making into rational, sequential steps. Also referred to as the policy-cycle model, it distinguishes between four phases: problem definition and agenda setting, formal decision-making, policy implementation and evaluation (Stone, Maxwell & Keating, 2001). The policy-making process described in this way is seen as “a problem-solving process which is rational, balanced, objective and analytical” (Sutton in Neilson, p.14). Although the separation of the policy process into discrete phases can help focus research and serves as a good departure point for further studies, the linear model described here has been criticized for the last 40 years, as many argue that it does little to capture the reality of the policy-making process and fails to relate to actual experience. For these reasons, its simplistic explanation of what has come to be viewed as a very complex process is not widely accepted.

Incrementalism

A more accurate and accepted model was proposed by Lindbolm and is referred to as incrementalism. Put forth as a modification to the linear model, this model focuses on the decision-making phase of the policy-making process, in which small incremental steps are taken to bring about a
policy change. As Nielson (2001) explains, “policy change is seen more as a reform process where
decision-makers make modest or regular decisions rather than sudden, dramatic or fundamental
decisions” (p.17). According to Friedman (1987), as cited in Nielson, Lindblom believed that large
decisions could be divided into smaller ones and that these smaller decisions were shared amongst an
array of actors; these actors in turn would make independent decisions in pursuit of their own interests,
but based on information received about the actions of the other actors. This type of process would result
in rational policy decisions as all relevant viewpoints would be presented and discussed. However, with
its singular focus on the decision making phase, it is only a partial explanation of the overall policy-
making process. It is not useful to explain policy decisions made as a result of crises, in contexts of high
stakes and major fundamental changes, and it deals only with existing policies. Therefore, many authors
have been led to argue that *incrementalism* is not a useful model to understand the policy-making process,
especially in developing countries where routine changes are not the norm (Nielson, 2001).

**The Interactive Model**

With the linear and incremental models both limited in their ability to capture a comprehensive and
accurate picture of the policy-making process, attention shifted to models which would take the political
context into account. The interactive model, proposed by Grindle and Thomas, focuses on the
implementation phase and takes a political economy perspective. According to Nielson (2001), the
framework for this model is based on the policy reforms in developing countries and differs from the
rational models (linear and incremental) in that “it takes policy change as the central analytical feature
with respect to the difference between policy adoption and policy implementation” (p.19). Grindle and
Thomas argue that implementation is the most important aspect of the policy-making process: explaining
this phase calls for an understanding of the relationship between policy elites (the formal decision-
makers) and the political environment (Nielson). Policy outcomes can therefore be understood in terms of
the actors involved and the context at hand. Crewe and Young (2002) describe the model proposed by
Grindle and Thomas as one which views decision-makers as “responding to pressure exerted by interested
parties and economic conditions, but it still relies on the idea that individual actors calculate losses and
gains” (p.4). A further critique of this model is that it leaves no room for those outside the policy elite
sphere, such as civil society organizations, to influence the decision-making process.
Political Models

The complexities of the policy-making system are better illustrated by the various political models. The policy network models, for example, take into account groupings which emerge around issues, epistemic communities, policy communities and advocacy coalitions. Thus, understanding the policy-making process requires an understanding of these ‘knowledge communities’ since they can play a role in the policy-making process. Issue networks, according to Heclo (1978), as cited in Nielson (2001), are policy activists who are well-informed on a particular issue and it is the issue or policy debate that holds significance, not individual interests in that issue or debate. Epistemic communities are networks of professionals (not necessarily from the same discipline) with expertise and competence in a certain area, and this allows them to lay claim to certain policy-relevant knowledge (Nielson, 2001). Neilson explains how, according to Haas (1992), decision-makers often look to these communities for advice, when dealing with issues of a complex or technical nature. Policy communities are networks of policy actors from within and outside government comprised of specialists in a broad policy area or sector, such as health, education, etc. According to Lindquist (2001), the policy community concept, put forth by Pross “captured the same actors as Heclo did with his issue networks, but made a distinction between those actors located in the ‘subgovernment’ and others in the ‘attentive public’” (p.6). Pross thought that the subgovernment actors (i.e. influential departments in the government, interest groups able to influence those departments, and international organizations) would choose to support the status quo or more conservative changes to policy in order to protect their interest in the existing approaches. The smaller interest groups, academics, journalists and less influential government organizations that make up Pross’ ‘attentive public’ would be more critical of the status quo. They would more likely provide creative and innovative ideas for new policy approaches, given that they do not have a stake in maintaining the existing policies (Lindquist, 2001). The strength of this model, according to Lindquist, is found in that it indicates “the presence of international organizations and donors and the fact that they exert strong influence on public policy through national or local government authorities in developing countries, and increasingly through civil society organizations” (p.7).

Policy communities are not based on shared beliefs, but rather on a shared understanding of the problems or of the decision-making process itself within a policy area (Lindquist, 2001, p.11). On the other hand, advocacy coalitions are a result of the bonds and relationships between actors who share similar beliefs and values. They can be tightly or loosely coupled and comprise government agencies, academics, research centres, interest groups, associations, think tanks, journalists and prominent
individuals. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) describe advocacy coalitions as people from different positions with a shared belief system and who show some measure of coordinated activity over time (in Nielson, 2001). These belief systems are unlikely to change, or at least resist change, and are therefore “the principle glue of politics” (Nielson, p.26). A policy change comes about as a result of these advocacy coalitions attempting to translate their beliefs into public policy and programs and/or as a result of external factors, such as changing socio-economic conditions. The role which research plays within this framework is to assist in the production of better arguments, as well as to test the claims of the opponents.

While Lasswell’s linear model focuses on the decision-making process, and Grindle and Thomas’ interactive model gives importance to the implementation phase, other attempts at conceptualizing the policy process deal with the agenda-setting phase. Referred to in the literature as the agenda-setting or multiple streams model, this concept “gives attention to the flow and timing of policy activities in terms of its focus on how subjects or issues are selected for the policy agenda (problems) and how alternatives are considered (solutions)” (Nielson, 2001, p.28).

John Kingdon identified three streams of activity which work to move possible solutions higher on the political agenda. These streams, explains Nielson (2001), relate respectively to the problems, the policies and the politics and it is only when all three come together at a given time that a policy change occurs: (1) the problem stream looks at how people recognize problems, or rather how a condition becomes a problem (in need of a solution) and the attention that any one problem receives can disappear as quickly as it arises; (2) the policy stream is where ideas are located, and ideas about “what constitutes a significant problem, and what might provide the best solution, are always in a state of flux...there is a rolling –though always evolving –sense of what stands as the best advice at a given time” (Lindquist, 2001, p.17); and (3) the political stream, composed of national mood, organized political interests and government, is seen as having its own dynamics and flow, with the various combinations of these factors placing some subjects high on the political agenda (Nielson).

Kingdon’s argument is that rarely does a single stream move an issue onto the agenda and result in a policy decision. It is when at least two of these streams come together at the right time that a policy change can occur. As Lindquist describes, “there needs to be sufficient political interest and energy available to match a suitable alternative to a problem and to convert an alternative into a decision” (p. 18). Kingdon, and later others, give considerable attention to the notion of opportunities or policy windows which must exist for programs and policies to be adopted. Changes in the political stream result in the opening of these windows, but it is difficult to predict when they will open and how long before they
close. Therefore, there is always an element of chance coupled with randomness in the policy-making process (Lindquist).

The policy-making process is nowhere near straightforward. In fact, it is highly complex, difficult to completely make sense of or predict, and it changes from context to context. Although this overview depicts simplistic models being replaced by more and more complex ones, what varies from model to model are the relationships between the different phases and the interactions amongst the various elements, actors and influencing factors. What stays the same are the stages of the process itself (problem definition, agenda setting, formal decision-making, policy implementation and evaluation). Although in reality, especially in developing countries, policy-making does not work through these stages in a linear manner, understanding the policy process in terms of these stages provides a framework to examine when and how civil society organizations can and do aim to influence public policy through research.

**Civil Society Organizations (CSO)’ Engagement in the Policy Process**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are in a sense defined by what they are not. That is, they are not organizations of the state, the private sector or the family domain. Court et al. (2006) define a CSO as “any organization that works in the arena between the household, the private sector, and the state, to negotiate matters of public concern” (p.1). CSOs include NGOs, advocacy groups, trade unions, faith-based institutions, professional associations, academic institutions, research centres, think tanks, networks and social movements.

As this definition illustrates, civil society and the organizations representing it are as diverse as the roles that CSOs play in international development. According to OECD’s 2009 report *Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness*, there are four areas in which CSOs engage as development actors: civic engagement; service delivery, self-help and innovation; humanitarian assistance; and as international aid donors, channels and recipients. Court et al. (2005) describe five functions of CSOs: representation (citizen voice), advocacy (lobbying), service delivery (implementation of projects and service provision), technical inputs (information and advice) and capacity building (support to other CSOs). Beaulieu (2010) identifies three categories of CSOs in Ghana, based on combinations of three main functions: Research and Advocacy Organizations (with research as a primary focus, but supported with advocacy), Advocacy and Research Organizations (with advocacy as a primary focus, but supported with research) and Program Delivery, Research and Advocacy Organizations (involved in all three activities).
Not only have the roles and functions of CSOs grown over time, but the context in which they work has also changed. Democratization, reductions in violent conflicts, government decentralization, increase in the development of ICTs and opening of markets are all trends that characterize many of the developing countries where CSOs work. As the operating environment for CSOs improves and their roles expand, CSOs find themselves in a better position to work with policymakers (Court, Hovland & Young, 2005). Crediting their contributions, but also recognizing limits on their effectiveness, Court et al. (2006) explain:

Civil society organizations (CSOs) make a difference in international development. They provide development services and humanitarian relief, innovate in service delivery, build local capacity and advocate with and for the poor. Acting alone, however, their impact is limited in scope, scale and sustainability. CSOs need to engage in government policy processes more effectively. (p. iv)

The focus of this paper is partly to uncover how Canadian CSOs are attempting to heed this advice with the use of research or evidence. Other studies have focused on whether there is room for CSOs in the policy-making process. The OECD report, for instance, includes examples of official recognition of CSOs in policy statements, concluding that a space has been made for these organizations to engage in policy dialogue. According to Court et al, “CSOs have become aware that policy engagement can often have a greater impact than contestation” (2006, p.1) and this engagement can bring about more benefits than service delivery alone. Although there are many limiting factors when it comes to CSOs engaging in the policy process, it is first worth describing the various influencing capacities of CSOs. In other words, how are CSOs working to influence policy?

Influencing policy is not necessarily, or even routinely, a direct and easily observable occurrence. Carden (2005) describes three categories of influence: expanding policy capacities, broadening policy horizons and affecting decision regimes. He explains:

Affecting a policy or action means: procedures for deliberation and deciding questions of public policy become fairer and more effective when fact-based, scope and competence of governmental policy formulation grows stronger, policy execution is more efficient, citizens secure new knowledge, a better informed understanding of public policy choices and a wiser judgment about government. (p.50)
If one understands influencing in this way, then there are several ways in which CSOs can be seen to influence policy. In an IDRC working paper entitled *Evidence Based Advocacy: NGO Research Capacities and Policy Influence in the Field of International Trade*, Paul Mably (2006) identifies four strategies used by NGOs in their attempts to influence trade policies. These are: lobbying (informal process of approaching policymakers), advocacy (formal process of approaching policymakers), promotion or dissemination and mobilizing public pressure. In their case study of 26 Australian NGOs, Nathan, Rotem and Ritchie (2002) try to understand how NGOs take action to influence government policy and practice for health equity. They found that NGOs had taken on the role of advocating for health equity. That is, they made use of tools and activities able to draw attention to an issue, gather support for it, foster a consensus around it and present arguments in order to get policymakers and the general public to back it. Some of the tools and activities used to achieve these goals were coalition building, media and publicity, letter writing, building community support and monitoring. In their report on effective CSO engagement in the policy process, Court et al. (2006) present the findings of a CSO survey, in which 130 respondents indicated the different ways in which they try to influence policy. Ordered in terms of most to least used (although the least used still represents over 30% of respondents), these are: a) network with other organizations; b) provide training; c) comment on draft policy documents; d) organize policy seminars; e) publish on policy issues; f) provide services; g) submit articles in the media; h) pilot alternative policy approaches; i) insider lobbying; j) website; k) newsletter to policymakers; l) work on projects commissioned by policymakers. These strategies elaborate on what Thomas (2001) describes as the ‘four Cs’ of influence: collaboration, confrontation, complementary activities and consciousness-raising. CSOs combine these strategies and do so at different stages in the policy process. In a *Practitioner’s Guide to Influencing Public Policy* (2008), Synergos identifies various strategies as these relate to the different stages in the policy cycle. Building coalitions, public education, convening stakeholders and community organizing, for example, are quite logically associated with the agenda-setting stage. Common strategies used to impact policy in the adoption phase include issue advocacy and public/private partnership creation, while litigation is used in the implementation phase. Finally, research and analysis are useful strategies in the evaluation phase. There is of course overlap, meaning that the same strategy can and is used at different stages. However, and whatever the influencing strategy may be, it is becoming more and more common for CSOs to ensure that this is evidence-based.

I turn now to the role evidence plays in CSO strategies to influence policy. In other words, how do CSOs collect and/or use evidence with the aim of influencing policy?
Evidence-based Attempts at Policy Engagement

There is a consensus that the policy cycle is complex and that changes in public policy result from a number of factors and actions by different sets of actors at different times. It is also believed that one of these sets of actors, CSOs, uses a variety of different strategies to influence this process. The degree to which CSOs succeed in influencing policy will not be the focus here. Instead, examples of evidence-based strategies will be examined to illustrate ways in which CSOs use evidence to try to influence policy. Influencing policy is of course not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end of saving lives, reducing poverty and improving quality of life in developing countries. It is argued that “better utilisation of evidence in policy and practice can help policymakers identify problems, understand their causes, develop policy solutions, improve policy implementation, and monitor strategies and performance” (Court et al., 2006, p. 5).

Therefore, there is a place for the use of evidence throughout all stages of the policy process. Court et al. outline the various ways in which CSOs can use evidence in each stage (2006). In the problem definition and agenda setting phase (in some cases described as two distinct phases), where the need is to convince policymakers that an issue requires attention, CSOs can use evidence to enhance the credibility of their argument; to create links between themselves, researchers and policymakers; and to help spread an advocacy campaign. In the formulation phase where the aims are to inform policymakers on available options and formulate a consensus, CSOs ready with relevant and reliable evidence can act as a source of information and channel resources and expertise to policymakers. When a policy is in its implementation phase, the objective is to complement government capacity. Here, CSOs can use evidence to improve the sustainability and reach of the policy and innovate in terms of service delivery. Finally, in the evaluation phase where the goal is to review the implemented policy and understand its impact, CSOs can be the ones providing representative, on-the-grounds feedback to policymakers.

In his case study of 22 international NGOs, Mably (2006) notes NGOs find little use of doing research for the sake of research. Instead, they gather or use evidence to support an action strategy. The most common actions cited for their use of research were: action to influence and change public or corporate policy; popular education or capacity building; building alternatives; and notifying grassroots groups to emerging issues in order to enable these to take local, regional or national action. Also mentioned, was the use of research as a means to create better (and more informed) dialogue among stakeholders. Their understanding that the policy process is not a straightforward linear one is evident in their cited use of various attempts to involve their constituencies and target groups in the research
process. In other words, there is an indication that CSOs can and do find ways to use research as a tool to engage more effectively in the policy process, in hopes of influencing it.

**Canadian CSOs (CCSO)’ Research and Policy Engagement**

Much of what has been written on CSO engagement in the development policy process comes out of the UK, specifically the Research and Policy in Development program of the Overseas Development Institute. Based on the literature, case studies, participatory workshops and an ODI survey, Court et. al (2006) identify key reasons which explain why CSOs have limited influence over policy. They note that:

the most common barriers were internal to CSOs, with respondents listing insufficient capacity and funding (62% and 57% respectively) as their biggest constraints. Others cited the closed nature of the policy process as an impediment to their participation, with 47% of respondents noting policymakers do not see CSO evidence as credible. (p. 15)

Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has addressed the research-to-policy link, as well as international CSO contributions to policy influence. More specific to Canada, the role which Canadian CSOs could play in influencing policy has been of interest to the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), a coalition of Canadian voluntary-sector organizations working to achieve sustainable human development internationally. Between 2003 and 2006 CCIC, with support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), carried out a project entitled *Building Knowledge and Capacity for Policy Influence*. This project was part of a larger initiative aimed at strengthening civil society policy engagement with the Canadian federal government. This particular project was initiated “to promote knowledge development, learning and capacity-building on the part of Canadian civil society organizations, their Southern partners and the Canadian government for effective policy dialogue between government and the international voluntary sector” (CCIC, 2006, p. 1-1). Based on this experience, in 2006 the CCIC published *Building Knowledge and Capacity for Policy Influence: Reflections and Resources*. They found that, from small NGOs to large international networks, CSOs are important development actors and, as such, they bring unique perspectives to the process of public policy development. In addition to describing many of the aforementioned elements in the policy process, and possible methods for involvement in this process, CCIC also pointed to a number of barriers to this involvement by CCSOs. These barriers, identified by an initial 2003 CCIC survey of its members, limit the policy roles which CCSOs can play. Namely, CCSOs do not have a sufficient understanding of the foreign policy-making process in Canada; they often lack an understanding of how best to capture policy-
relevant knowledge from their field experience; they face constraints in terms of resources needed to produce policy-relevant research and analysis; they lack the management/board political will to prioritize policy work; and are unaware of their legal and regulatory constraints as registered charities.

After this initial survey, the project continued with the development of two new tracks of programming at CCIC: a series of training workshops to build an understanding among the CCIC membership of the foreign policy-making process in Canada, of CSO cooperation in North-South partnerships and what policy influence requires; and a concrete “learning by doing” activity on how to create and tell policy-relevant “stories” or narratives which highlight the roles of CSOs in aid effectiveness. An important focus of project activities was how CCSOs could work with Southern CSOs, as a way to capture knowledge from the field which is relevant to policy development. The CCIC recognized:

It is not possible for all organizations to have a research department or knowledge-management staff, but much can be achieved through relationships with some of the bigger CSOs, research centres and interested academics. Northern CSOs should seek out links with sources of intellectual and policy knowledge in the South. They also need to increase efforts to link with, and recognize the knowledge of, citizens’ and peoples’ organizations. (p. 5-7)

These partnerships with Southern actors are a way for CCSOs, according to CCIC, to access knowledge and glean effective policy messages for their dialogue with different levels of government. In other words, partnering with Southern institutions is a way to build capacity of organizations in the North. Also, the CCIC suggests that CCSOs might overcome their lack of research capacity by engaging with research in ways other than carrying it out themselves. They write, “Not every organization will have the resources and capacity to collect and analyze field-based knowledge. Some may conclude that they can be most effective by disseminating and popularizing the research and analysis of Southern organizations” (p. 3-4). Still, although the CCIC study noted that CCSOs face barriers with regards to influencing policy, one being a lack of research capacity, it did not investigate how some CCSOs use strategies to strengthen this capacity in order to influence policy. They concluded that CCSOs will need to make strategic choices about what they are going to do, when and with whom, in terms of the types of activities that they take on to influence, but limit the discussion to influencing Canada’s foreign policy.

Almost eight years after the original CCIC survey comes this study, which takes another look at CCSOs and their policy influence. Firstly, it focuses on how CCSOs make strategic decisions about how
to implement research-centred strategies for influence (once this initial decision to use research to influence has already been made) in ways that fulfill other organizational objectives, maximize their resources and make a higher contribution to influence. Secondly, a narrower coverage is taken by excluding those types of CCSOs, such as universities and think tanks, which have research as a main objective and therefore arguably possess a much stronger research capacity. Thirdly, the study focuses on examining attempts to influence policy in the global South, as well as influence local community or institutional practices, and CSOs’ own programming and ways of working, in order to improve livelihoods. The study is meant to help fill a gap which exists in relation to how Canadian civil society organizations are using research (producing it, disseminating it, learning from it) and how that research is part of their strategy to influence policy and/or practice in the global South.

**Research Questions**

The broad focus of this research project is to understand how Canadian civil society organizations\(^1\) (CCSOs) attempt to use research\(^2\) to influence policy and/or practice in the global South. The narrower focus seeks to a) assess the extent to which CCSOs conduct research themselves or work in collaboration with others (academics, local CSOs, research organizations, etc.) to produce it; b) identify the purposes which these uses of research serve; and c) document what the perceived roles of this evidence are in relation to influencing policy and practice. To study these questions, a survey was sent to CCSOs across Canada which are active in international development, in order to gauge their level of research use and address the aforementioned research questions.

In addition to affording a broad overview of the CCSO landscape, the survey helped identify CCSOs with ongoing projects or programs where research played a role in their attempts to influence policy and/or practice. Four of these CCSOs were chosen as case studies, as their projects were collectively located in the same geographic region, but represented a range of thematic areas, as well as CCSO characteristics. Information for the writing and analyses of these particular CCSO projects and programs was collected via multi-country fieldwork. This included interviews with CCSO and partnering Southern CSO (SCSO) staff, local government officials in South America, and project beneficiaries. Focus group discussions, participation in workshops, visits to project sites and conferences complemented this five-week fieldwork phase. This combined-methods approach produced both quantitative and qualitative data which provide a rounded picture of the links between Canadian civil society organizations, research and influence over policy and practice in the global South. In the next chapter I
analyze the data from the survey, with some of the findings raising questions that I will further explore through case study analysis in Chapters 3 and 4.
Chapter Two: Findings for the Broader CCSO Landscape

The general survey of Canadian civil society organizations (CCSOs) reveals that these are using research as part of their strategies to influence policy and practice in the global South. Also, across a diverse array of sectors, the majority of CCSOs rely on their own staff and their collaborations in the South to produce this research. Many have moved beyond simple service delivery and are working to build capacity and support local communities in the global South, as they search for long-term and sustainable solutions.

Findings and conclusions are based on a seven-question survey which was sent to 129 CCSOs. The selected sample was meant to represent a range of CCSOs working in international cooperation for development, but only targeted those which did not appear to have research as their primary focus or sole mandate. Of the 129 CCSOs surveyed, 69 replied: a response rate of 53%. Three, however, replied stating either that they were not able to provide the feedback required, due to time constraints or because they did not fit the description of a CCSO using research as part of their strategy to influence policy and/or practice in the global South. Another four partially completed the survey but indicated that they did not use research. The results discussed in this chapter, therefore, are based on the responses of 62 CCSOs. Figures 1 and 2 describe the sample in terms of the types of CCSOs and their different sectors of work. Categories in both figures are not mutually exclusive since in each case CCSOs can fall into more than one category.

Figure 1: Types of CCSOs among Respondents

Source: Travers, S. (2011) n= 62
Faith-based organizations, for instance, are also NGOs and most CCSOs are not-profit oriented. The CCSOs were categorized by their main identity or descriptor as indicated on their websites. Similarly, in terms of sectors, CCSOs were grouped by their primary area of focus. In any event Figures 1 and 2 suffice to convey a sense of the variety of CCSOs included in the survey sample; aside from a slightly under-representative response rate from environment-focused CCSOs, a small category in the overall sample targeted, the distribution of the 62 respondents across the ‘type’ and ‘sector’ categorizations reflects that of the 129 CCSOs in the original sample targeted by the survey across the same categorizations.5

Figure 2: Sectors of CCSOs' Work among Respondents

In order to gain a better understanding of the Canadian CSO community, CCSOs were asked “what role does your organization play?” What is clear from Figure 3 is that most CCSOs do not see themselves as working within specialized mandates. On average, organizations surveyed stated that they play four roles, with capacity building leading the way. This may be explained in part by the fact that there is a certain language and “in” way of doing things, which is considered by donors, government and other CSOs alike as more legitimate and credible. However, the most likely reason for organizations to declare such comprehensive mandates is that several, if not all, of the roles mentioned are inter-related and complementary. For example, CCSOs may provide technical assistance in order to help build local CSO capacity, while advocating internationally and, in so doing, represent a particular group and their concerns. In many instances, service delivery, although much less of a focus than in past decades, is still
an entry point to building trust with new partners and provides a foundation for locally managed change. Responses do vary in terms of particular combinations of roles, yet all CCSOs said they do use research, to varying degrees, as they work to influence policy and practice. This leads one to suggest that the roles which a CCSO plays do not seem to limit their opportunities to use research in general. Having said that, and as will be illustrated in Chapter 4 of this report, particular roles may affect how the research is actually designed, as the very act of using research (accessing it or carrying it out) is a means by which these roles are fulfilled. The next section examines this research more closely and specifically two of the research questions: Whose research are CCSOs using and for what purposes?

**Figure 3: CCSO Organizational Roles (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travers, S. (2011)
Whose Research are CCSOs Using?

The overwhelming majority of CCSOs (~84%) use their own staff to conduct primary research, which is then used in their efforts to influence policy and practice directly (i.e. in lobbying decision-makers) or indirectly (i.e. in enhancing their organizational credibility). CCSOs’ interns or volunteers are also charged with carrying out research, with 59% of CCSOs surveyed citing using research from these sources. This may be related to the issue of credibility. In other words, influence based on evidence is more likely to happen if that evidence is seen as firsthand. CCSOs are also better able to stand by a piece of research if they have conducted it on their own or in collaboration with well-trusted partners. By using their own staff or interns whose research agenda is set by the organization, CCSOs retain control of the research process from design to execution to dissemination. In principle, there would be several advantages to retaining this control (e.g., compliance, flexibility, and capacity). Firstly, CCSOs can ensure that the research meets their specific needs with regards to their objectives and programming, and that it complies with their overall mandate and approaches to doing things. Secondly, with their established relationships often in place and their knowledge of specific contexts, CCSOs are well-positioned to identify and include the full range of stakeholders, as they plan and carry out research. They can ensure that stakeholders are consulted and treated respectfully and participate in the process itself. Thirdly, having control over the research process allows organizations to be flexible and reformulate research questions along the way, as they see appropriate. This reformulation of ideas and adjustment of methods or strategies can be done relatively easily, as there are fewer people involved in the decision-making process with regards to the approach. Fourthly, greater control over the research process, especially a participatory approach, allows for CCSOs to use this process to build and strengthen the capacity of local communities, thus increasing the sustainability of initiatives and programs as locals take control of them and push them forward. As one Quebec organization noted, the use of participatory research in their *Support to Peasant Populations Program* in West Africa has helped build the observation and analysis skills of the small farmers: these participate in field trials which test new agro-environmental practices. This capacity building has also extended to the partnering Southern CSO (SCSO), a federation of small farmers, now better equipped to design and implement field trials, interpret results and consider data and recommendations from their field personnel.

Despite the seemingly numerous advantages to choosing to maintain control over the research process, this is not always a choice for CCSOs. Funding, limited opportunities for collaboration, time constraints and in-house expertise are practical reasons for using staff as researchers. If retaining control over the research process explains the sources of CCSOs’ research, one would expect to see higher
frequencies of use for research done either solely by the CCSO itself or in collaboration with other actors. Figure 4 illustrates the frequencies of all CCSOs’ sources of research sorted into the same categories and divided only by collaboration or none. The bars in blue correspond to sources in which CCSOs “have a hand” in the research design and process. These include cases where the research is undertaken by the CCSO staff or interns, and also where some type of collaboration is indicated (with universities for example). The green bars, on the other hand, correspond to research being done by someone other than CCSO staff, where presumably CCSOs have less or no control over the research itself. With only one exception, for each source, the blue line representing collaborative research efforts is longer or equal to the green line representing second-hand research. The instances where CCSOs as a whole give up control of the research process are when using other Canadian CSO research. Just over 31% of respondents cited using research which is undertaken by other CCSOs, while a surprising 6.5% cited using research done in collaboration with other CCSOs. This unusually low number of CCSOs stating they use research resulting from their collaborations with other CCSOs is in part due to the structure of the questionnaire. This required respondents to include collaborations with other CCSOs in the “with other Canadian institutions, agencies, centres” category and specify. This takes more time than simply checking a box, which was the way to indicate using research resulting from the other types of collaborations. However, given that the majority of respondents (50 of 62) did take time to specify and in many cases provide in-depth responses and descriptions to other questions in the survey, it is reasonable to assume that the true number of CCSO-CCSO research collaborations is still well below other collaborations and the 31% for research done by other CSOs.

Figure 4: CCSOs’ Sources of Research- Collaboration or None (%)

Source: Travers, S. (2011)
Why is the number of CCSO-CCSO research collaborations so low, given overlapping interests and limited funding opportunities? It is possible that CCSOs are not aware of other CCSOs’ work or do not have the opportunities to build and maintain partnerships for collaborative research efforts. Still, evidence suggests that CCSOs do have networks and coalitions which would allow them to communicate their activities and objectives. In their 2006 report, CCIC noted that its members were “involved in a range of policy networks, coalitions and alliances” (p. 5-3). The Canadian Food Security Policy Group (FSPG), for example, brings Canadian NGOs together to examine the impact of international trade rules on agriculture and food security in developing countries. The Halifax Initiative, formed by Canadian NGOs over 15 years ago, is described as “a coalition of development, environment, faith-based, human rights and labour groups, and the Canadian presence for public interest work and education on the international financial institutions”. Over 20 civil society groups make up the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, which calls for greater government oversight of Canadian extractive sector activity abroad. The Canadian Global Campaign for Education started in 2004 as a broad-based coalition of non-governmental organizations, unions, religious groups, education and research organizations interested in promoting the universal right to education. These are only a few of the coalitions, networks and groups which bring Canadian CSOs together.

Further research on these groups may help shed light on how effective they are in promoting and building partnerships which lead to CCSO-CCSO research collaborations. It would also be interesting to further explore what channels exist for CCSOs to share their results with the larger CCSO community. That is, what opportunities are there to share findings of research in areas of concern to other CCSOs, and how can CCSOs access the outcomes of projects or initiatives with research components in order to learn from these and prevent an unnecessary duplication of research?

There is some evidence of CCSO-CCSO collaborations. A November 2008 publication entitled Pathways to Resilience: Smallholder Farmers and the Future of Agriculture contains seven case studies prepared by various CCSO members of the FSPG; work of partner organizations in the global South is examined in order to see how their successes might inform Canada’s response to the Global Food Crisis. This illustrates how CCSOs work together to produce a discussion paper and provide recommendations based on case analysis. Yet, this type of collaboration was rarely cited in response to this study’s survey. The lower number of CCSO-CCSO research collaborations likely results from disadvantages to Canadian collaborations, and from advantages offered by other types of collaborations.
Before discussing this further, a closer look at all sources cited in order of frequency (see Figure 5) is needed, along with analysis of the North/South distribution of sources. Beyond using their own staff (~84%) or their own interns/volunteers (59%), the CCSOs surveyed answered that some of the research which they use is produced in collaboration with SCSOs (~57%), or by SCSOs (~44%). Given that over 95% of CCSOs surveyed cited capacity building as one of their roles, these percentages are not surprising as they suggest that SCSOs are either producing research alongside their Canadian partners or producing research alone (or with other SCSOs), which CCSOs (partners or not) then use. In fact, as the case study analysis will illustrate, engaging SCSOs in the research process serves multiple CCSO purposes, including increasing opportunities for influence.

Figure 5: CCSOs' Sources of Research (%)

Figure 5 also illustrates that there is no other Canadian involvement in the top five most cited sources. The most used source of research involving other Canadians is that which is produced by other CCSOs or in collaboration with Canadian universities (both at ~31%). Closely behind is that which is done by others elsewhere in the world, with 29.5% of respondents using research from this source. The other category generally includes training and research centres, universities, consultancies and development agencies in the North, as well as UN agencies and international network members.
Figure 6 better illustrates this Canadian/Southern comparison. What stands out is that the closest gaps between Canadian and Southern research as sources for CCSOs exist within the university categories. In fact, research produced by universities in Canada is the only source which is used by CCSOs more (although only slightly) than research by the equivalent source in the global South. There is also very little difference between the numbers of CCSOs who use research produced in collaboration with Canadian universities (~28%) and those which use research produced in collaboration with universities in the global South (~33%). Does this say something about the perception or access to university-based research in Canada vs. the global South or is it an issue of community-university partnerships? In her paper entitled *Shoulder to shoulder or face to face? Canada’s university-civil society collaborations on research and knowledge for international development*, Elena Chernikova explains why CCSOs collaborate with Canadian university-based researchers:

CSOs most of all appreciate access to different kinds of knowledge through their collaboration with universities, be it theoretical expertise, research skills, integration of
contemporary technology, or ability to evaluate their work. Most responses stressed the importance of academic expertise in research methodology…With the help of faculty and graduate students, monitoring and evaluation becomes feasible and practitioners enjoy learning from it. It also enhances the capacity of CSOs and their partners on the ground and it raises the profile of CSOs. This affords a greater level of impact, greater recognition, and potentially a greater ability to influence policy. (p.40)

Survey findings indicate that Canadian universities are the main Canadian source of research for CCSOs, which implies that they are an accessible and credible source for research collaboration. Information collected through interviews with CCSO staff support this notion, but also suggests that CCSOs primarily collaborate within their networks, taking practical approaches and not necessarily weighing the pros and cons of particular sources. Choices are specific to context (global South universities without funds for research might cause CCSOs to approach Canadian universities), established networks (if a partnership exists, research collaborations might start here) and resources (working with Canadian interns may be cheaper than working with local professionals).

This same reasoning helps explain the large difference found when comparing those CCSOs which use research produced in collaboration with other CCSOs and those using research that they produce with SCSOs (6.5 % vs. ~44%). The contexts in which CCSOs work, and the networks which they have built, bring CCSOs to collaborate more with SCSOs. This study does not seek to question these partnerships which are easily defensible given that in the field of international cooperation for development considerable expertise lies in the global South, and long-lasting results and meaningful change are more likely if aid organizations take on supporting roles and aim to build their partners’ capacity in the South. Therefore, a tendency for CCSOs to create research collaborations more with SCSOs than with other CCSOs is not so much due to their not wanting or being able to collaborate with other CCSOs, but rather results from a strategic choice to collaborate based on experience and practical reasoning.

Disincentives may also explain why few CCSOs cited research collaborations with other CCSOs: conscious or unconscious competition for program and project funding, organizational credibility and a voice in Canadian and international policy forums, along with funding terms and agreements, feasibility and logistics. However, less competition for funding and lack of competition for a voice among Canadian policy forums, along with these funding agreements encouraging North-South collaborations are also incentives for CCSO-SCSO research collaborations. Although carrying out research with CCSOs and carrying out research with SCSOs are not mutually exclusive, it makes sense that many organizations
stick to one model. Given that very few CCSOs are working without SCSO partners, any collaborative
CCSO research initiative would undoubtedly complicate the coordination over the management of the
research process. Consider that if each of three CCSOs already each works with a different SCSO in the
same area and on the same issue, a collaborative research effort initiated by the three CCSOs would
already encompass six organizations, who would then have to agree on the research questions, design,
methods, dissemination strategies, etc.

**What are CCSOs Using Research for?**

As CCSOs work to influence policy and/or practice in the developing countries where they work,
alongside or in support of their local partners, research from various sources is used for a variety of
defined purposes in an attempt to achieve these objectives. The CCSOs surveyed all used research for
more than one purpose; answers ranged from 2-13, with the average number of purposes cited as eight.
This does not indicate that a single piece of research is used on average for eight different purposes
(although in some instances that may be the case), but rather that CCSOs as a whole, working in a wide
range of contexts on a variety of issues over a period of time, understand that research can serve many
different purposes and work to engage with the evidence in a variety of ways, in order to achieve their
objectives of influencing policy and/or practice. If we look closely at what these purposes are (see Figure
7), the one most cited (~93% of respondents) corresponds with the most common understanding of what
research is used for: to confirm and support understandings of an issue, idea, or problem (or as one
respondent added, challenge these).

More surprising is that ~80% of CCSOs use research to help build local capacity. For instance, one
respondent produced a capacity-building manual, which resulted from its extensive research and
documentation on food security and sustainable livelihoods. The manual, disseminated to the CCSO’s
overseas partners and available online, “has contributed to greater knowledge and best practice sharing in
the area of capacity building”. Identifying priority issues, evaluating projects/organizations and
formulating alternatives through research are also common purposes with 77%, ~72% and 70.5% of
CCSOs citing these respectively.
With over 50% of respondents replying yes to 11 different purposes, clearly CCSOs recognize the value of multi-purpose research and/or multiple research uses. However, of the respondents who chose to indicate a role other than the five options listed, only five indicated research (Figure 8). This could mean that research is in fact a very small part of what they do, or that it is viewed more as a means of responding to their roles, rather than a role in and of itself. In fact, there are CCSOs which fall into both categories. A very small independent organization that campaigns for justice and freedom in Latin America, for example, does some research to build on the case studies which it uses to support its work in representing and advocating for victims of human rights abuses in that region. On the other hand, a large internationally networked organization implied that they had so many ongoing and recent projects using research to influence policy and practice in the South, that they would not even know where to begin, when asked to describe one such example. Yet, this same organization indicated that their sole role was advocacy. Research for this CCSO, it seems, is part of how they work and is not seen as one of the roles that it plays.
Figure 8: Other CCSO Roles

Roles and Purposes

The particular mandate of a CCSO, including its breadth, seems to bear on the number of different uses which CCSOs make of research. The frequency table below (Table 1) illustrates the number of organizations categorized by the ranges of their use of research (wide, medium or narrow) and the breadth of their mandate (specialized, medium, and comprehensive). The blue arrow indicates the tendency for the purposes of research to increase in range with an increase in the number of roles. In other words, the more roles a CCSO feels it plays, the more ways it finds to differently use research in its work to influence policy and practice in the global South. There is a concentration of CCSOs playing several roles and using research for several different purposes. Forty-four of the organizations surveyed (~71%) described themselves as playing more than three roles and using research for more than six purposes. This implies that, in general, CCSOs work in a variety of ways to achieve their many, yet complementary, objectives and that research is playing an important role in their strategies. The reason why the majority of CCSOs find themselves working in this way can potentially be linked to organizational effectiveness and influence. That is to say, there is a tendency to use a variety of strategies, and engage with research in a number of ways, since working this way has a better chance of producing the desired results. The case studies presented in the next chapter illustrate what some of these strategies look like and help suggest some common practices.
Table 1: CCSO Organizational Roles and CCSO Purposes of Research Use (#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles→ Purposes↓</th>
<th>Specialized (1-2)</th>
<th>Medium (3-4)</th>
<th>Comprehensive (5+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide range (9+)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium range (6-8)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow range (1-5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Travers, S. (2011)
n= 62

Of course, another very likely reason is related to resources, in terms of accessing them, maintaining them and making the most of them. If results, and often immediate and tangible results, are required to guarantee continued funding and increase the likelihood of new funding, then CCSOs must try a number of different things in order to achieve these results. Interviews with CCSO staff reveal that working in this way, despite running the risk of this leaving them overstretched and under-resourced, is, in their view, the best way to engage effectively.

**Purposes and Sources**

There is also evidence of a positive relationship between the range of sources of research used and the range of purposes for using this research. As seen in Table 2, most CCSOs surveyed (36 respondents or 58%) indicated that they used a medium or wide range of sources for a medium and wide range of purposes. Of the 13 CCSOs indicating they used research for a narrow range of purposes (less than five), ten also said they made use of a limited range of sources. Still, seven CCSOs (or 11%) see themselves as using limited sources (less than three) for a wide range of purposes (more than nine). The fact that almost 1/6 of CCSOs occupy the limited range of sources and wide range of purposes category challenges the assumption that CCSOs should access a variety of sources of research in order to make use of that research in multiple ways. Upon analysis of the seven CCSOs putting this assumption into question, they
seem to pertain to two categories. The first is comprised of three very different organizations, in terms of characteristics like size, composition, geographic and thematic focus, years of experience and operating budgets. However, they are essentially organizations without much research capacity or any mention of the word research in their mission statements or approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes → Sources ↓</th>
<th>Narrow range (1-5)</th>
<th>Medium range (6-8)</th>
<th>Wide range (9+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide range (8+)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium range (4-7)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow range (1-3)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Travers, S. (2011)  
n= 62

However, this lack of research capacity does not necessarily restrict or limit the variety of ways in which they use research. The lack of, or relatively small, research capacity of these CCSOs, combined with the large range of roles (four or more) which they take on, can explain why they try to use research in a variety of ways, but do not (or cannot) always access a variety of sources to do so. These CCSOs are working with few resources in terms of research, but are attempting to play several roles and therefore try to spread their research in terms of its use.

Using a narrow range of sources of research, however, is not always an indication of small research capacity. In fact, the other group of CCSOs in the narrow range of sources/ wide range of purposes category includes four CCSOs who place research at the core of what they do. They are different again in terms of size, focus and composition, but according to their websites, “their actions are underpinned and directed by thorough research and analysis”, their “mission is to undertake research and action”, their “methods emphasize participatory research” and much of what they do “has been researching and analyzing trends and developments”. Their use of limited variety of sources of research is in many ways intentional, as they can accomplish the abovementioned objectives or missions through relying on research produced by only a few sources. However, not all CCSOs which emphasize research in their mandates, missions and approaches are in this category, which indicates that there is a variety of
strategies which CCSOs use to access research and ensure that such research enables them to meet their objectives. What is important to note is the following: CCSOs can rely on a narrow range of sources of research for a wide range of different purposes, but the extent to which this is easily done and effective may be dictated by the CCSO’s research capacity and by how much it emphasizes research in its stated mission and approach; using a narrow range of sources of research for a wide range of purposes is just one of the many strategies which CCSOs use to have influence; and CCSOs with research as a main component of their work and a relatively large research capacity think differently in terms of the usefulness of resorting to a narrow, rather than a wide, range of sources.

Based on these survey findings and corresponding hypotheses, a more detailed phase of the research was aimed at better understanding how particular CCSOs’ strategies differ, with regards to using research to influence policy and/or practice. In the following chapter, I analyze four different case studies to highlight how CCSOs are working to use research as part of their strategies to affect change. Not only do they employ a variety of strategies to bring about changes in policy and/or practice, but when research becomes part of these strategies (the shared aspect of all four case studies), CCSOs also resort to a range of ways in which to obtain and use this research. Case analyses will focus on why these research-centred strategies for influence were chosen, how they aim to affect change and what incentives/disincentives underlie them. The cases are meant to complement the quantitative data from the survey and answer specific questions regarding CCSOs’ research collaborations and relationships between the breadth of their mandate and their uses of research.
Chapter Three: The Case Studies

Civil society organizations play a role as emerging, yet still under-examined, actors with regards to knowledge creation and distribution. This is a hypothesis of this study which the current analysis seeks to examine. Survey findings have confirmed that Canadian civil society organizations (CCSOs) working in international development, that is to say NGOs, professional organizations, unions and networks, are using action-oriented research to varying degrees to influence policy and/or practice in the global South. These same findings have highlighted the importance of their maintaining control over the research process, their collaborating with Southern CSOs and making use of research in ways that fit with their overall aims, context and organizational characteristics. Strategic decisions are routinely made which can combine to affect real change. In this chapter I illustrate and analyze four different case studies of how CCSOs use research as part of their strategies to affect change.

At first glance the four case studies (see Table 3) seem to have little in common. The CCSOs vary in size, objectives and focus, while the featured projects and programs differ in their length, stakeholders and resources. In this way, taken together, they reflect Canadian civil society working in international cooperation for development, a diverse sector united under a very broad goal: sustainable human development. However, they do have something in common: each case represents an attempt by a CCSO to influence and create change, spelled out in concrete objectives, and to do so in a way that injects and disseminates knowledge. Their strategies differ but they are all research-centred attempts at influencing policy and/or practice, and this through various activities including the research process itself. Although it would have been interesting to measure or trace the contribution which these particular organizations have made in terms of influencing for change, this type of evaluation or mapping is not the focus of this study. Rather, the aim is to understand how CCSOs implement their strategies for influence, what these strategies look like and the role which research plays, as well as the role which the CCSO may play in knowledge creation.

The case studies also explore how CCSOs are working within some of the constraints outlined by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation in their 2006 publication.6 CCIC found CCSOs face constraints in terms of resources needed to produce policy-relevant research, and lack an understanding of how best to capture policy-relevant knowledge from their field. The case studies examine CCSOs’ strategies to achieve influence within these constraints and provide evidence of how they can systematize their knowledge and experience, while working toward multiple objectives.
### Table 3: The Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canadian civil society organization</th>
<th>Women in Cities International</th>
<th>Rights &amp; Democracy</th>
<th>Socodevi</th>
<th>Save the Children Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A non-profit network organization with a focus on gender equality, prevention of violence against women, and local governance</td>
<td>A non-partisan NGO with an international mandate to promote human rights and democratic institutions and practices</td>
<td>A network of co-operatives and mutuals with a non-profit international development corporation that promotes sustainable development through cooperatives</td>
<td>A member of an international federation of organizations working to promote the rights, well-being and development of children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Featured project/program &amp; funding agency</th>
<th>Gender Inclusive Cities: increasing women’s safety by identifying and disseminating effective and promising approaches to promote women’s equal access to public spaces</th>
<th>Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas: The case of indigenous women</th>
<th>Development of an agro-industrial value chain in the spices sector for the economic growth of marginalized communities of rural Bolivia</th>
<th>SCC programming on child workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UN Trust Fund</td>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>CIDA and FDTA-Valles</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Research integrated into this project/program is mainly carried out by: | SCSOs, chosen strategically based on networks and familiarity with the issue | SCSOs and Canadian experts working together | Own staff and interns, with reliance on Canadian universities and research centres as required | Members of an academic network based in the South |

| Research has been integrated into this project/program to: | 1-Confirm and support understandings of an issue or problem 2-Formulate alternatives 3-Pilot alternatives 4-Build local capacity | 1-Confirm and support understandings of an issue or problem 2-Build local capacity 3-Provide feedback to local communities or governments | 1-Formulate alternatives 2-Pilot alternatives | 1- Confirm and support understandings of an issue or problem 2-Inform public awareness campaigns 3- Provide feedback to local communities or governments 4- Focus programming |
Women in Cities International collaborates with a regional CSO network to identify public policies for greater gender inclusion and equality

Women in Cities International (WICI) is a non-profit network organization based in Montreal which works to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and strengthen women’s participation in local governance and urban development. Established as an exchange network, WICI works to facilitate “knowledge- and experience-sharing on the improvement of women’s and girls’ safety and status in cities and communities”. Specifically, WICI focuses on organizing events for training and networking, advancing technical expertise, producing research and developing multi-stakeholder projects and programs as a means of achieving their objectives. By identifying, studying and disseminating good practices, tools and intervention models, WICI works to create cities free of gender exclusion. WICI turns to their staff and interns, in addition to partnering with other CSOs both in Canada and abroad, enabling them to achieve a wide range of objectives in line with particular projects or programs. WICI coordinates and participates in action and participatory research projects to help build local capacity, identify issues and alternatives and create awareness amongst citizens and governments alike.**

* Learning from women to create gender inclusive cities (see references)
** survey responses

WICI responses to CSO survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of roles played</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of sources of research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of purposes of research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.femmesetvilles.org

7Birthplace of soccer great Lionel Messi, revolutionary Che Guevara and the Argentinean flag, Rosario in Argentina is the country’s third largest city with approximately 1 million inhabitants. While the city centre bustles with economic activity and contributes more than half of its province’s GDP, several of its six administrative districts are marked by poverty, unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure and services (WICI, 2010, p.24). Despite the city being considered relatively safe compared to other Argentinian cities, Rosario women perceive insecurity, which limits their movements and access to the city.

Violence against women, gender inequality and urban exclusion are not new concepts in Rosario. In Argentina in general, there exists a long history of declarations, policies and action plans dealing with women’s safety which have urged governments to implement actions and strategies addressing this issue.8 Rosario, a uniquely socialist municipality, has had a Women’s Department for 23 years, located under the Secretary of Social Promotion. Regional programs raising awareness of these issues and run by local NGOs and women’s groups have been in place for the past eight years. Here, activities of the governmental and non-governmental sectors have combined to address issues of workplace violence, women’s economic development, active
citizenship and empowerment, adolescent mothers, and rights promotion. A regional program entitled *Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All* has been particularly successful. In many ways, Rosario stands out as having an interest and the political will to place gender equality on the agenda.

An important local NGO network and partner of WICI, the Women and Habitat Network of Latin America (WHN), began their work in Rosario with a 2003 study on the use of public space by men and women, with safety as one of their variables. The results of this initial study were used to support a 2004 project funded by the UN Trust Fund and implemented in Lima and Rosario. This aimed to sensitize local governments to the unequal use of cities by women. Formal implementation of a regional program known as *Safe Cities for All* began in 2006, with pilot interventions in Rosario’s peripheral West District. Despite years of dedication and hard work, “violence against women in public spaces remains invisible and rarely sanctioned or punished,” with very few legal norms to address the issue and a lack of data on the magnitude of urban violence and its effects on women. It is within this context of actively engaged networks, both within and beyond civil society, and of years of promoting women’s equal access to the city in Rosario, that WICI began to coordinate another study which would examine the significant barriers to creating public policies addressing the issue.

**Gender Inclusive Cities: Increasing Women’s Safety by Identifying and Disseminating Effective and Promising Approaches to Promote Women’s Equal Access to Public Spaces**

WICI grew out of the realization that, world-wide, several dedicated individuals and organizations were committed to addressing violence against women, both at home as well as in public spaces. The need existed for a network which would allow all those promoting gender equality and inclusion to exchange ideas and information. As organizations and individuals began to share and exchange, it became apparent that many

The Women and Habitat Network of Latin America (WHN) is an important network of institutions and individuals dedicated to promoting women’s rights and gender equity in relation to habitat. In this area, WHN works to produce and share knowledge; raise awareness; develop initiatives, programs and projects, strengthen leadership demands and dialogue, and promote cooperation between civil society and government. WHN participates in joint spaces both regionally and internationally and forms part of the Habitat International Coalition. An example of its collaborative nature, WHN has implemented regional programs with the participation of several institutions throughout Latin America, such as *Cities without Violence Against Women, Safe Cities for All.*

*www.redmujer.org.ar*
were using the same methods and approaches in their respective cities. The Women’s Safety Audit, for instance, was a common tool which not only turned a critical eye on the city and its manifestations of exclusion and insecurity; but also involved local women, bringing them together to begin thinking through some of the issues affecting their security and discussing possible solutions. With this commonality came a shared interest in uncovering how cities differed from one another, with respect to women’s ability to access their cities without fear or limitations. This initial information exchange paved the way for further discussion and planning of a multi-country project.

The Gender Inclusive Cities Programme (GICP) focuses research and action on women’s safety and women’s experiences of gender-based violence. This three-year program, which began in 2009, aims to identify:

- the geography of public gender exclusion and its interactions with other marginalized identities such as race, religion, and economic status;
- the activities, tools and public policies that act as enablers of or as barriers to greater gender inclusion and equality; and
- good practices related to gender inclusion, piloted within the GICP (WICI, 2010, p.10).

WICI coordinates this multi-country program, while four local partner organizations implement it in Petrozavodsk, Russia (Information Centre of the Independent Women’s Forum); Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (International Centre and Network for Information on Crime); Delhi, India (Jagori) and Rosario, Argentina (Women and Habitat Network). Activities fall into three stages: data collection, data analysis for intervention planning, and intervention implementation. Each phase relies on collaborative efforts and local participation. The initial stage brought WICI, the implementing partners and local women together to develop and use a set of tools to gather data on the condition of women’s safety in their cities. These tools were implemented through four main activities: a review of policy, legislation and initiatives; focus group discussions; street surveys and women’s safety audits (link to tool kit: http://womenincities.org/pdf-general/GICP%20Tools%20Report_internet.pdf). Each activity and tool was modified and incorporated into the implementing partner’s ongoing activities as informed by its particular context. In Rosario, for example, where key networks had been established with local government, officials participated in some of the safety audits. They listened, as neighbourhood women walked, observed and recorded their views on safety-related issues as they

“The aim has been to conduct research and plan interventions in partnership with government and non-government bodies in order to incorporate relevance, ownership, sustainability and the involvement of a wide set of stakeholders”

-Women in Cities International
noted them. While these safety audits helped women identify the factors leading to their feelings of insecurity (poor lighting, lack of signage, etc.) and think about what should be changed, the surveys and focus groups enabled them to understand the types of violence women confront in public spaces, how this violence affects different women and to discuss how to prevent and eradicate these forms of violence. The second year of the project was spent discussing the findings and planning appropriate interventions. Various stakeholders were engaged throughout this process. In Rosario, an important step was mapping out the different organizations and individuals interested in working together on this issue. Since the GICP in Rosario was an opportunity for WHN to strengthen and build on their regional program, which had already been implemented in the West district, there were examples and lessons that proved helpful in implementing the GICP in the Northwest and South districts. Interventions included the planning of a safe corridor, campaigns to raise awareness of the issue, and events held in public spaces involving the aesthetic transformation of these spaces, but also filling public areas with people and children again. In other cities where the GICP is being implemented, training and consultation with bus drivers and police have also taken place.

As is often the case, changes have been slow, but they have taken place. In the South district of Rosario, better lighting and signage have led neighbourhood women there to feel safer. The perception of violence in this district, although not always supported by actual incidences of violence, used to be very strong and very real. With lots of work aimed at raising awareness, creating links and solidarity between neighbours and taking back once abandoned public spaces, this is beginning to change. Women are more aware of their rights to the city and less afraid to stand up for them.

**Research for Influence Strategy**

Before WICI joined forces with WHN in Rosario, the issue of violence against women in public spaces had already been raised. In many aspects it was on the local political agenda, setting Rosario apart from many other cities. What this three-year program has accomplished in Rosario is that it has enabled WHN to expand their activities and widen their reach. It has allowed the issue at hand to be discussed, analyzed and discussed again with local women and government. Opportunities for these two groups to engage have resulted from the various capacity-building activities conducted throughout the program and local government representatives engaging in the collection of data. Many local women in Rosario agreed that having actual data and the opportunity to discuss the findings collaboratively has helped them in their fight for equal

"[The GICP] was a way to have other resources and to expand the working methodology to continue comparing what happens when women [themselves] transmit their experiences"

–Mara Nazar, Women and Habitat
access to the city. Also, the fact that local women participated in collecting the data has helped create awareness. What’s more, by participating in this multi-country project, WHN is able to learn from and share good practices of other CSOs. WICI helps coordinate the exchanges between the four partners, bringing added value to each. In addition, WICI provides certain expertise, while also working closely with a monitoring and evaluation expert. The reality revealed in my conversations with the implementing partner, WHN, is that while many of the tools and processes were helpful, they were part of a larger process which they envisioned slightly differently. WHN’s activities and interventions have often been research-dependent, but their staff explained that it is difficult to separate the research from the intervention, since new knowledge is applied throughout the process. “We carry out research”, explained team member Paola Blanes, “to familiarize ourselves with the issue, to make contacts, to expand our networks and to prepare concrete interventions”. The process is not as systematized as one might assume in that there is no clear data collection phase, followed by an analysis phase leading to the development and implementation of interventions which affect change. All of this takes place but the lines between each phase are blurred. For WHN, simply raising a question within the community is an intervention in itself. As data on one particular theme is gathered, the network may choose to distribute information from past studies, thus raising awareness and sensitizing the population while gaining new insights and information. This blending of research and other related activities is common not only to the other CSOs involved in the GICP, but to WICI and other Canadian CSOs as well, since it allows resources to be maximized and fulfills a wider range of roles and objectives.

**Dissemination of Knowledge**

The efforts to disseminate the results of the GICP and work prior to the project have been substantial. It is no secret that, as Secretary of Social Promotion in Rosario Susana Bartolomé put it, in order to get government officials to take up a cause “you need to make them fall in love with the idea…in three words”. WICI, WHN and many others have tried to do just that. There are pins and posters, radio show spots and letters of commitment signed by political candidates, not to mention brochures, murals, flyers, and workbooks. In addition, community get-togethers have been held to share findings, using public spaces to make them safer and forge relationships between neighbours. As a result, the Municipality of Rosario is well aware of what the issue is and what work is being done. Most importantly, small changes are starting to be implemented: The Third Plan for Equal Opportunity and

“Before the work of women’s networks, like WHN, the government of Rosario wasn’t thinking about this issue as something that they had to keep in mind when developing public policy. Today, they are including it.”

-Paola Blanes, WHN
Treatment among Women and Men, coordinated by the Women’s Department but implemented throughout the municipal government, now includes Safe Cities for All as a focus for municipal action.

![Dissemination materials produced in Rosario by WHN](image)

**Challenges**

Each implementing partner of the GICP continues to face challenges both within and beyond the scope of the program. Local participation can wane, shifts in government can require organizations to start their sensitization and relationship-building work all over again, and time and money are often lacking. For WICI, trying to facilitate, monitor and evaluate this program has meant being flexible, patient and placing trust in their carefully chosen partners. A challenge in some respects, WICI Program Director Kathryn Travers explains that not being constantly on the ground has its benefits as well. It provides their local partners the opportunity to take on the work and be the face of the project, which positions them to push the work forward and ensures that they have participated fully in the development of tools, approaches and relationships. Since WICI is not directly involved in local implementation, they take on the role of grouping all lessons learnt into a final publication. The amount of work involved in this task is illustrative of one of the GICP’s major challenges: a lack of time. This type of multi-country project, says Project Officer Melanie Lambrick, “requires so much time for everyone, especially since everyone is in very different political, cultural and linguistic contexts. To establish a means of effectively communicating with and learning from each other and to come up with an approach that works for everybody…requires a lot of negotiation and discussion [and] can take a year.” Further time is devoted to establishing a good working methodology, building trust between organizations and local communities, and of course, carrying out the work itself, which may often happen closer to a project’s end date. Once work has begun, stakeholders understandably begin trying to identify what changes have been brought about. Capturing qualitative change, which as Melanie Lambrick states “is maybe all you can capture with a three-year project,” is a further challenge but one on which WICI’s research is focused. Specifically, they are working on finding the best methodologies to capture different types of experience.
in the city as well as different ways of knowing. Kathryn Travers added that WICI makes a point of identifying, reflecting on and documenting qualitative changes arising from their work, such as creating a space for dialogue, which she sees as a huge achievement.

Soledad Perez, Mara Nazar and Paola Blanes of Women and Habitat Network

Why it works....

For any program to be successful, there should be continuity despite organizational and frequent governmental shifts. By choosing to work with WHN in Argentina and by encouraging collaborative and participatory research, WICI has helped WHN and the many other actors involved to keep violence against women in public spaces on the agenda and in the minds of the population, while also facilitating exchanges of lessons and good practices with counterparts in other countries.

What’s more, WICI implemented this short-term project in four cities where similar initiatives had some traction. All four cities have civil societies involved with or interested in the issue, and in each location work on inclusion, safety and prevention of violence against women had advanced to different levels. WICI recognized that progress on the issues varied from city to city, and this enabled them to set appropriate and feasible objectives for each city and to evaluate the GICP accordingly.

Although there were few and sometimes no “official” data in each of the four cities on the issue, information available from civil society and other sources made it possible for WICI partners to develop and implement effective strategies of data collection, analysis and dissemination.

Fitting research into a context with so many factors already aligned allowed WICI to contribute to policy influence by extending and augmenting the dialogue, therefore moving it further onto the political agenda.
The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, more commonly referred to as Rights & Democracy (R&D), was created by the Parliament of Canada in 1988 as a non-partisan organization which would support and encourage “the universal values of human rights and the promotion of democratic institutions and practices around the world.”* By working with individuals, organizations and governments in Canada and abroad, R&D fights to promote the rights outlined in the United Nations’ International Bill of Human Rights. Headquartered in Montreal, R&D works in countries throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa to achieve specific strategic objectives.* In recent years, R&D has focused its work around four thematic areas: Democratic Development, Economic and Social Rights, Indigenous Peoples’ Rights, and Women's Rights. As part of its new strategic framework, R&D will place more emphasis on engagement with local democratic institutions, creating partnerships and augmenting their field presence. It is also shifting to country-specific programming which will be based on findings from country-wide strategic analyses. These analyses are an example of how research is incorporated into R&D’s work. A benefit of receiving core funding is that it allows R&D to emphasize different aspects of their work; research included. They support, collaborate with and use research produced by CSOs, and research organizations in Canada and abroad**, and “encourage and support students in Canadian universities to conduct research and undertake educational activities – in consultation with faculty – that promote and reinforce human rights and democratic development universally, and more particularly in the global South.”**

*http://www.dd-rd.ca/site/home/index.php
** survey responses
R&D responses to CSO survey

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Rights & Democracy coordinates research efforts of local CSOs as they collect information on gender and ethnic discrimination to create jurisprudence and better inform policy.

13 What do Mexico, Colombia, Argentina and Quebec have in common? In all these places and across the Americas, indigenous women suffer multiple forms of discrimination as a result of being women, indigenous and in many instances poor. Their economic situation and “dual status of indigenous and women make them vulnerable and results in multiple human rights violations”. These violations, which affect Kolla women in Jujuy, Argentina, and Nukak Maku women of the Colombian lowlands, as they do Tzeltal women in Chiapas, Mexico, and Mohawk women off the island of Montreal, intersect and reinforce each other in complex and little understood ways. In terms of accessing health care for example, an indigenous woman may have limited access because her community is in a rural area where care is not available and she is forced to travel long distances to obtain these services. She may also have limited access because certain services are unavailable to her as a
woman (common in the area of family-planning), thus limiting her access to healthcare in a second way. The reality is a complex set of violations which manifest themselves in all aspects of indigenous women’s lives. Part of the complexity results from the fact that indigenous women suffer discrimination both from outside and within their community. While they suffer racial and gender discrimination from the society at large, within their own communities, their “problems are often undermined…[and] their situation is confined as a second and often third priority after the issues set by the indigenous struggle” (Rights & Democracy, 2008, p.4). This is due to their not being part of the decision-making processes within their communities. In Argentina, for instance, the State has failed to implement bilingual intercultural education which would benefit the lives of the country’s 994 indigenous communities. Often, there are simply no opportunities for indigenous children to receive secondary (and sometimes primary) education in or near their communities. For those able to migrate to the cities, linguistic and cultural barriers prevent them from receiving a fair education. In addition to these “outside” forms of discrimination, indigenous families often choose to keep girls at home to receive knowledge passed down from their mothers, as women are expected to transmit culture, and to protect them from possible difficult situations.

**Discrimination and the Law**

There are several laws, standards and protections in place to protect indigenous and women. Mexico, for instance, adopted a law over 25 years ago that penalizes anyone who performs sexual sterilization without full and informed consent. However, the problem allegedly continues to affect a disproportionate number of indigenous women, especially in Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca. In Argentina the National Education Law, passed in 2006, guarantees the right to intercultural bilingual education for all of Argentina’s indigenous groups. Still, provincial authorities in the northern province of Jujuy have made little progress to turn this right into a reality. The Colombian State signed the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1996, which encourages States to recognize the vulnerability to violence faced by certain groups of women. Despite this promise, indigenous women are highly affected by the ongoing armed conflict in Colombia; they suffer as victims of sexual violence at the hands of soldiers, are displaced as their lands are taken over by armed forces, and they are abandoned as fathers and husbands are killed or leave to fight. In Canada, indigenous or aboriginal women continue to face discrimination as a result of the Indian Act, a set of rules governing all aspects of “Indian life”, including defining who is able to access certain rights guaranteed to aboriginals. Despite the recent adoption of an act to promote Gender Equity in Indian Registration, aboriginal women are still denied fundamental rights. In addition to the failure of numerous States to abide by the laws, standards and measures theoretically agreed upon, “there is no legal provision or
jurisprudence specific to indigenous women that takes into consideration their particular situation and multiple burdens” (p.5). Rights & Democracy, the Continental Network of Indigenous Women and Université du Québec à Montréal’s International Clinic for the Defense of Human Rights (CIDDHU) stated in 2006:

In order to remedy this situation, statistical information on violence and discrimination against indigenous women needs to be gathered. Furthermore, investigation regarding the root causes of this phenomenon is urgently required.\(^{16}\)

The following section explores how these three groups are working to provide the necessary information to understand and prevent these forms of discrimination for indigenous women in the Americas.

**Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas: The Case of Indigenous Women\(^ {17}\)**

Building on its relationships with certain indigenous organizations in the Americas, R&D in 2005 began to coordinate and bring together individual country-level research aimed at understanding “the roots and consequences of the intersection and superposition of indigenous women’s multiple identities” (p.6). A cross-disciplinary collaboration was set in motion by R&D Program Officer Dr. Marie Léger, a sociologist by training, and legal expert Professor Bernard Duhaime, Director of CIDDHU, who began working with a team of indigenous leaders in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Quebec. R&D funded both a preliminary analysis of indigenous women’s issues and a preliminary evaluation of the “normative and institutional framework available for indigenous women to remedy the situation” (p.7). This initial phase was carried out in a participatory way with national teams in each of the four countries. It enabled all collaborators to prepare for and present at a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, D.C. in 2006. Although the hearing drew a lot of interest and questions, in order to move forward with further research additional funding was needed. R&D therefore developed a proposal which they submitted to IDRC in 2008.

The early analyses allowed each team to identify a specific thematic focus which would be addressed in the larger research project. With coordination, funding and technical support from R&D, IDRC and CIDDHU, Consejo de Organizaciones Aborígenes de Jujuy (COAJ) of Argentina, Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) and Abogados y Abogadas por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (AAJDH) of Mexico set out to examine multiple forms of discrimination related to the access to education for indigenous girls, the consequences of the armed conflict on indigenous women
and forced sterilizations, respectively. Quebec Native Women, which represents women from the First Nations of Quebec and aboriginal women living in urban areas, participates fully in this project as well, but without IDRC funding. They are undertaking research and raising awareness on the impacts of several laws which discriminate against indigenous women in Quebec. Having learnt what specific situations indigenous women in the Americas face and understanding where and how the legal remedies fail them, R&D and their partners, through the *Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas* project, seek a more qualitative understanding of how indigenous women experience multiple forms of discrimination within these pre-identified areas of importance. A carefully crafted methodology has been put in place in order to help meet a set of separate, yet complementary, objectives. The overall objective is to contribute to social and legal changes that will reduce these multiple forms of discrimination faced by indigenous women.

![COAJ workshop on rights awareness in Northern Argentina](image)

Specifically, this project aims to reach this objective by:

- building capacity of indigenous women through their participation in the investigation on discrimination;

- analyzing the intersections of gender and ethnic identities as articulated in the stories voiced by indigenous women, as well as through additional sociological research;

- adjudicating cases of double discrimination by using national and international normative instruments; and

- analyzing and evaluating the impacts of the adjudicative strategy put forward by the indigenous women on the empowerment of indigenous women as a whole, as well as on the Inter-American System in terms of systemic changes and legal reforms.
This project engages local teams of indigenous women, who have set out to document cases of double discrimination against indigenous women. These cases can be used to create jurisprudence both locally and internationally. The expectation is that “by increasing the production of jurisprudence regarding indigenous women’s double discrimination, Inter-American institutions will gain a better understanding of indigenous women’s specific situations which may lead to the creation of new legal protections for them or to new interpretations of current norms” (p.12). While systematic changes are ultimately sought, considerable emphasis is also placed on both building organizational capacity to influence policy and on raising awareness, so that women living in the communities can recognize and question routine rights violations as such. In many ways, R&D and its partners are looking to influence policy by helping define the problem, working to get it on the agenda, providing evidence for the development of new policies and revealing what stands in the way of implementing current policies and protections for indigenous women.

**Research for Influence Strategy**

In order to influence governments who disregard the laws and norms protecting indigenous women, as well as courts that currently force these women to choose to define the discrimination which they face as a result of either their gender or their ethnicity, research is needed. There is very little information on indigenous women, given that national censuses which do capture data on indigenous people do not disaggregate these data by gender. Also, there have been very few attempts to include qualitative data based on the perspectives and concerns of indigenous women. By developing the *Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas* project as a research project, R&D and partners have begun to fill these knowledge gaps and also build local capacity. Throughout, a participatory and action-oriented approach has been used for several purposes. By involving indigenous women directly in all aspects of the research (from defining the issue, to interviewing and recording stories, to analyzing and adapting findings and methods to disseminating knowledge and exchanging lessons), this project aims at strengthening partnering organizations’ research capacity, as well as their capacity to use international legal remedies and tools for future claims. Just as R&D set objectives that went beyond bringing a case of double discrimination in front of the Inter-American court system, its partners also knew that this project was about more than just documenting cases of violations against indigenous women. A member of the Colombian research team explained how this project could not be simply about going, getting the case and leaving. She said:

We have learned that documenting a case with indigenous women is not the same as documenting a case with non-indigenous women...a case of indigenous women requires a
process of training and support in the community. [It requires] that women learn about their rights. We are working hard to create this awareness.

Similarly, the team at COAJ, who strongly base their work on inclusion and reciprocity, views this project as much more than an exercise in data collection. They see it as a process of continual support and exchange, in which it is their role to ensure the women whose lives they are seeking to document are aware of their rights, have the confidence and self-esteem to exercise these rights, as well as the tools and capacity to continue the dialogue and analysis once the project closes. They work to see this through by holding workshops for local women to discuss their rights and the notion of self-esteem and to help them recognize what discrimination looks like. In addition, COAJ works closely with local women identified by their communities as leaders to provide them with training and tools to continue these meetings and discussions on a regular basis. Although all collaborators work as a multi-national and multi-disciplinary team, each national team has had to adapt specific methodologies to their own context. Each partner has incorporated the project into their ongoing work and, in so doing, has been able to use their existing strengths to maximize their efforts. R&D works to ensure that all organizations are able to exchange knowledge and build their capacity through these exchanges.

Research in Use & the Uses of Research

With the project entering its third “official” year, teams are comfortable with their chosen strategies of documentation and are working to identify specific cases of double discrimination which they can argue in local courts. There have been many efforts to disseminate the research findings and draw public and political attention to the issue by all those involved. COAJ, having collected important statistical information from several communities in Jujuy, has built an online database which provides a panorama of the situation in these communities, with an emphasis on women. They negotiated an agreement with the provincial statistics and census bureau (DiPPEC) to publish part of their findings. The database is meant to be user-friendly and includes succinct analyses of quantitative data, as well as testimony from the life histories collected as part of the Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas project (www.infomujerindigena.com.ar). The Mexican

“If you’re trying to help legislators understand how to be a good legislator but also [to] look at how the parliament functions in terms of an institution, it’s very helpful to have research-based tools...we have to have some kind of body of research [so as not to] just talk in abstract terms”

-Thomas Cormier
Program Director, Rights & Democracy
team at AAJDH has published a book based on its findings; this addresses the Mexican State’s program to combat poverty and demonstrates how equal opportunity policies can still produce rights violations for indigenous women. In Colombia, ONIC maintains a dialogue with the State and has used the project, both the experience and the findings, to incorporate a gender perspective into their policy interventions. Like COAJ, prior to this project and work leading up to it, ONIC had never exclusively addressed the issue of indigenous women. Both organizations now have the experience and capacity to do so and express interest in continuing to incorporate this dimension into their future work. In this respect, R&D has also contributed to influencing organizational practices of their partner organizations, which will affect how future projects/programs are designed and implemented. Recently, all four national teams, as well as R&D and CIDDHU representatives, met in Washington, D.C to exchange possible legal strategies, as well as to meet with lawyers of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Commission’s Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, despite having yet to successfully try a case in front of a court, and recognizing that many factors may stand in the way of ever presenting an actual case before the Inter-American court system, several project objectives have been met. Participating indigenous organizations in all countries feel they have gained valuable experience, skills and methods to carry on this important work. They also notice changes at both community and individual levels in terms of awareness, reflection, and empowerment, which they feel are a result of their work.

Challenges

Despite engaging with research in numerous ways, on all sorts of themes and for a variety of different purposes, civil society organizations do not usually have the same reputation as universities or large research centres. Unlike these, CSOs face the challenge of proving themselves as credible and reliable sources of sound research. R&D Program Director, Thomas Cormier, explained “there are perceptions that CSOs are just about complaining, protest and pointing out problems”. R&D challenges these perceptions by developing their research capacity and engaging in an organized dialogue, recognizing the importance of using sound research that can stand up to scrutiny. They are also aware of a second challenge when it comes to research: making it accessible and understandable. Research as it relates to the work of CSOs is meant to inform and influence; communicating research findings effectively is therefore of primary importance. R&D recognizes this and works with its partners to understand key audiences, position and time the dissemination of findings and provide succinct relevant summaries that stand more chance of being used by decision-makers.

R&D, as demonstrated with the Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas project, firmly supports participatory approaches to research and local engagement. In many instances, this is the only way to build local capacity and move away from a subject/researcher division between them and
their partners. The benefits of having teams of local experts carry out research, adapting methodologies, systematizing data and disseminating findings as they see fit, often outweigh the benefits of controlling each phase of research with a more hands-on approach. Using a participatory approach in combination with working across countries and disciplines can mean that the project moves at a slower pace, as local teams find their way within the methodology, gain experience, consult and share among the network and ensure they carry out the work in ways true to their philosophies. R&D has emphasized the importance of each team participating in the same reflection to build their methodology, analyze their findings and document multiple forms of discrimination, rather than focusing on keeping all teams moving at the exact same pace. In addition to the challenge of keeping all teams moving forward as the project design outlines, the nature of this multinational and multidisciplinary team has meant work has had to go into creating a team identity. The four participating indigenous organizations are already umbrella groups for several different communities, and it is no surprise that despite their common goals, each operates within their own mandate with their own organizational philosophy and within different political, social and historical contexts. With groups from across the Americas, language is also a barrier to creating this identity. R&D worked to create, and now maintains and strengthens, the team’s identity. It holds yearly team meetings, as well as additional technical meetings for the team lawyers, and facilitates the exchange of lessons amongst the team. This learning and sharing strengthens each organization and the team as a whole, as they contribute to each other’s work and the end of discrimination against indigenous women.
Why it works….

Knowledge and understanding of the realities indigenous women across the Americas face was lacking and it was this absence which prompted Rights & Democracy to facilitate a collaboration that would help fill in these information gaps. In some respects the emphasis is on the findings (what is learnt which can fill in these gaps) but the project’s achievements to date relate less to what has been learnt and more to how that learning has come about.

The very way in which the information has been gathered, shared and analyzed has worked to build capacity and raise awareness. In other words, the carefully chosen research methodology has served multiple purposes. The participatory approach used throughout this research project has helped build capacity of local organizations by not only assisting them with the tools and skills to collect information, but also by providing them the opportunity to incorporate gender perspectives into their organizational operating strategy and gain experience in training, dissemination and trial preparation.

Dr. Marie Léger of R&D explained that a holistic approach, in which research is blended with other important and related activities, is more in line with indigenous philosophies, while the participatory nature of the research was the only logical choice, given that the very nature of the project is to “empower indigenous women and their organizations to access the Inter-American system and [to] build tools to better understand the gender and ethnic intersection in indigenous women’s lives”.

By setting objectives which are met by both the process and end result of research, R&D has been able to strengthen local CSOs in terms of their capacity to engage with and influence their governments and be heard in other forums as well.
Socodevi, established in Quebec in 1985, is a non-profit international development corporation which was created when several Quebec cooperatives and mutuals merged with an aim of sharing their experience and knowledge with organizations in developing countries. Through cooperation and knowledge sharing, Socodevi has contributed to over 375 projects in 40 different countries partnering with over 600 organizations. In an effort to improve living conditions in the communities where they work, Socodevi staff and members work to empower their inhabitants by providing them the resources, knowledge and support they need to generate income and achieve sustainable development. With expertise and experience in fields like agri-food, forestry, marketing and business management, Socodevi members do not shy away from introducing new and alternative income-generating activities they believe can benefit individuals, families and communities*. With many small-scale producers averse to taking risks, it is important that Socodevi dedicate time to studying new crops, models and practices, ensuring they are introduced in ways that manage potential risks and bring about sustainable results. Research is central to helping Socodevi pilot certain models and projects, including monitoring and evaluation of these, and also plays a role as they work to build local capacity and lobby decision makers. With over 3,000,000 network members and hundreds of partner organizations in the South, research is often carried out by Socodevi staff and members or in collaboration with local CSOs where they work. When necessary, specialized consultants are also used.**

* http://www.socodevi.org/en/_index.php
** survey responses

Socodevi responses to CSO survey

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Development of an Agro-industrial Value Chain in the Spices Sector for the Economic Growth of Marginalized Communities of Rural Bolivia

Socodevi began working with agricultural producers in Chuquisaca in 1998 with an initial grant from its long-term funder, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The first few years were spent carrying out research to identify ways to diversify local income-generating activities. Relying on their network of expertise and lots of trial and error, the focus soon came to be the growing, processing and commercializing of herbs and spices, specifically oregano (Villeneuve, 2006, para. 2). Oregano is successfully grown in the Mediterranean region, where conditions resemble those of Chuquisaca, as it resists disease and adapts to climatic conditions. Oregano is also sold dried, allowing more time for transportation. In addition, this herb is planted once every five years and can be harvested up to three times a year. A further advantage is that oregano by-products such as oil can be extracted and marketed as well.

With the proof in hand and two very specific varieties of oregano ready to plant on a wider scale, Socodevi faced the challenge of convincing local farmers, many of whom had never heard of oregano, to devote part of their land to growing this new crop. Many found the idea outrageous, but eventually Socodevi staff were able to convince community leaders to take a few seedlings and give it a shot. Once others witnessed first-hand the success of this alternative crop, more were willing to take the chance. According to CIDA, “by the summer of 2008, almost 1,000 farmers in 93 communities spanning eight municipalities in southeast Bolivia were growing oregano for cash.” By not abandoning the growing of their traditional crops, local farmers safeguard their continued subsistence and sell their oregano for an extra $205 per year on average. A typical farmer divides his/her land into four, growing three traditional crops, rotated every year, and leaving a quarter devoted to oregano, rotating it every five years. What one crop draws from the soil in nutrients the replacing crop replenishes, thereby creating an effective and sustainable system.

Agrocentral, an organization of cooperatives in the department of Chuquisaca, coordinates the growing component of the project. It ensures that technical advisors visit the farmers on a regular basis, in order to help them with arising issues and maximize each producer’s harvest (Villeneuve, 2006, para. 6).
The centre of the operation is Tomina, where a testing and production facility has been built. It is here where: the mother plants (imported from Canada) are grown; the seedlings are cut and planted, ready to be picked up or shipped to farmers; harvested oregano is occasionally dried in a large industrial dryer; dried oregano is processed and packaged; and essential oils and other marketable spices are tested. Local workers, mainly women who are either the wives or the daughters of coop members, have asked to work part-time shifts so as to increase the number of community members sharing in this income-generating activity. Before this project, there were no employment opportunities for women in Tomina. Although each cooperative is equipped with its own industrial dryer as found in Tomina, many farmers now have artisanal dryers on their property. With an initial loan to purchase the materials, farmers can build these tested structures with Socodevi’s support and dry their oregano themselves. This allows them to store the crop for up to one month, which some do as a means of saving, selling it when they need cash. This works because farmers are paid upfront for their oregano and not when the final sale is actually made. The artisanal dryers are a low-cost alternative which actually provides a higher-quality product.

In 2005 a private company was set up to handle the commercial aspect of the project. UNEC (Unidad de negocios de especias y condimentos - Spice and Condiment Business Unit) carries out market research, controls the brand and packaging of the final product, sets the price paid to farmers per kilo and deals with customers. Currently, UNEC is also in charge of other research into the feasibility and marketability of new crops, essential oils and their by-products. Socodevi, Agrocentral and FTDA-Valles, a Bolivian funder since 2001, all hold equal shares in the company. Some of the profits are invested into UNEC, with only Agrocentral dividing what remains among its member cooperatives. Placing the
company in the hands of the local communities provides an opportunity for them to take ownership, leaving Socodevi with the possibility to pull out. It works as an incentive for farmers to commit to selling their oregano to the same buyer. UNEC is now “the main exporter of agri-food products in all of Chuquisaca, with exports to Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil (Villeneuve, 2006, para. 12).”

This project set out to change lives by changing the way things were done. Thirteen years after its start, it is safe to say that Socodevi’s well-researched model, along with local farmers’ willingness, commitment and dedication, has succeeded in influencing Bolivian farming practices and in improving lives. Specifically, the production and sale of oregano has meant families are enjoying a better and more varied diet, using the extra income to supplement their staple foods with rice, oil and other vegetables. Building the processing plant in the rural countryside and introducing an alternative crop that is not hugely labour-intensive and is grown all year round have also meant that migration to the cities has decreased, keeping more families together. Roberto Muñoz, UNEC director, also explained that with women earning disposable income, they are investing in their children, more of whom are now being sent to school. The difficult task of selling farmers on oregano has been replaced by that of turning down requests from those eager to diversify. Socodevi receives requests from delegations of farmers at their head office in Sucre who are too often turned away. Not all zones are ideal for growing oregano (ex; high altitude zones), or for exporting it (some farms are only accessible on foot). Unfortunately, even farmers from communities which meet the necessary criteria are being turned down and names are being added to an ever-growing waiting list. The facility in Tomina is producing at full capacity and until more greenhouses arrive (two more expected in December 2011), there are simply not enough plants to meet all the demand. However, Socodevi has just signed a second eight-year funding agreement with CIDA for the amount of $12 million CAD. The new grant will help scale up this model which, through years of research and practice, has been improved and expanded upon.

The Research*

As with most economic development models of this kind and within the food industry in general, research was and is an integral and crucial part of this Socodevi project. Initially, Socodevi staff set out to determine what, if any, advantages Chuquisaca had in terms of agricultural production or how the many disadvantages of the region could be turned into advantages. Although certain spices and herbs were productively grown around the Mediterranean, it remained to be seen just how these same crops would perform in the Southern Hemisphere. With genetic material imported from the Americas, Europe and the Middle East, tests were done on over 50 crops thought to have potential value in the spice/condiment and

*Everything was a learning experience. It all looks simple but it took lots of effort and sacrifice.*

—Roberto Muñoz

UNEC director
medicinal markets. Of all the crops tested, oregano, specifically two Canadian varieties of it, proved the most interesting. Positive selection assured that the highest-quality genetic material was used. A series of trial-and-error attempts were then initiated in order to identify how best to scale up the production, what types of greenhouses were needed to house the seedlings, how to most efficiently harvest, dry and process the oregano and just about every other aspect of the production chain. Socodevi collaborated with le Centre de recherche en agro-alimentaire d’agriculture Canada de St-Hyacinthe on themes such as the drying of oregano and the sensory analysis of oregano. When potential buyers in Brazil expressed interest in a product without the strong taste characteristic of European varieties of oregano, taste tests ensued, resulting in a unique variety essentially tailored to the Brazilian market, thus securing an important share in this market. Even once a working model had been put in place and Bolivian farmers were successfully growing and starting to profit from this new crop, experimental tests continued with the crossbreeding of different varieties, the production of crops like lavender, dill, and thyme and small-scale extraction of essential oils for cosmetic and medicinal products. Market research continues as UNEC looks to expand its presence in the dried-oregano market and enter into new ones.

**Challenges**

There are many factors which could have affected the success of this project. There was the initial hurdle of getting people on board, overcome in this case by engaging with community and increasingly political leaders and allowing others to witness the potential benefits. Related to this is the added difficulty, created by certain linguistic barriers, when working with indigenous farmers. By choosing to focus on the capacity building of coops, and training their leaders to be competent in selling in international markets, these difficulties were lessened. Other specific challenges are dealt with as they come. By having UNEC trucks pick up harvested oregano at community coops, they can include farmers in the project whose fields are not as easily accessible. When sufficient high-quality and durable materials cannot be purchased in Bolivia, they can take advantage of Socodevi’s network in Quebec to buy in Canada at a lower cost. When what they do import sits in customs for up to two months and taxes of 30+% are levied on their exported product, they can anticipate this and have recently begun negotiations with the Ministry of Production as a first step towards securing tax exemption for the exportation of agricultural products.

In terms of the research, Socodevi admits there was a lot they did not know and needed to learn. With secured long-term funding (a remarkable accomplishment in itself) they had some time to figure it all out and went about it in ways that may not have been the most systematized and rigorous, but were a good fit with their organization’s assets. There are no academic journal articles or book chapters detailing
their findings, but there are concrete and tangible results of this applied research: 1000 families ‘lifted from poverty’ and counting!
Why it works…

Socodevi has played a major role in introducing oregano production to Bolivian farmers and in ensuring that this production is sustainable, expandable and profitable. Years of research are at the heart of making this all possible.

Socodevi works with what they have and what they have is a reliable network of Canadian cooperatives with expertise, good relationships with Canadian research centres and expressed interest from Canadian interns. These first two assets have helped Socodevi cast a wide net for solutions, access advanced technologies and save on material costs. The latter has meant that at least once per year, for a period of 5-6 months, young Canadians use their theoretical knowledge and gain hands-on experience, assisting Socodevi in areas such as soil analysis, oil extraction and production of essential-oil products. These investigations are time-consuming and labour-intensive, but with a dependable pool of interns, there is no need to cut corners. This strategy has proved efficient and cost-effective. Socodevi staff themselves were surprised at all the research they were able to carry out with $2 million CAD.

Using what they had and what worked best, Socodevi was able to conduct research thoroughly over several years with findings that could back up their model and enable them to confidently push this project forward and effectively influence farming in Chuquisaca. They have also instilled the importance of research in UNEC, which is well-positioned to continue running the business once Socodevi leaves.
Save the Children Canada (SCC), a member organization of Save the Children International, focuses on the issues of Health and Nutrition, Education, HIV and AIDS, Child Protection, Emergency Relief and Child Rights Governance.* SCC and the 28 other organizations belonging to this international federation “work together by pooling resources, establishing common positions on issues and carrying out joint projects”** on child rights, well-being and development. Research and an evidence-based approach are integral components of all Save the Children programming and advocacy. Working in over 120 countries, Save the Children network members conduct and participate in all forms of research with many different agencies, institutions and organizations. One strategy which SCC is developing is engaging with academic partners to conduct operations research as a means to develop new innovations to improve the lives and well-being of children in all their programs.** In addition to using research to enhance their programming, SCC uses it to influence policy and practice in the countries where they work. This is not only done by feeding research to decision makers via local partners or using it to inform public awareness campaigns, but also by training professionals through strategic support to academic research-based programs and leadership programs. The idea is to provide professionals with the tools and knowledge which they need to become well-informed policy makers, while building up a body of research on relevant issues.

*http://www.savethechildren.ca
** survey responses

SCC responses to CSO survey

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Save the Children Canada Allies with a Regional Network of Masters Programs to Access knowledge on child workers in Latin America

Children working at home in Dhaka, Bangladesh (UN Photo/Kibae Park)

29 For many children worldwide, work is a daily part of their lives. Globally one in six children, or 218 million aged 5 – 17, work. Over half of these work in harmful or hazardous conditions, in gold mines, rock quarries, banana plantations, garment factories, construction sites or garbage dumps. The following excerpt from the International Labour Organization (ILO)’s publication, Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do illustrates some of the many very real hazards which working children face:

If not mercury in this mine, then manganese or lead in a smelter elsewhere. If not armed buyers of gold, then the beatings by an aggressive factory boss elsewhere. If not mine dust, then silica from quarry work elsewhere. If not loud and dangerous machines here, then unwieldy tractors and exposed blades on farm equipment elsewhere. (p. xvi)
In addition to these more referenced and visible types of child work, less obvious forms exist with the same prevalence. In most countries, children, especially girls, work at home or for their family businesses without any pay. There are those who engage in agricultural activities and collect water, fuel and fodder. It is also common for poor girls to work as domestic servants for richer families. Although without the same types of hazards, this work is not any less difficult. Many observers argue for a complete eradication of all forms of child labour, while others see certain work as part of a child’s development or learning, a cultural norm which initiates children to contribute usefully to community life. Those who fear that a complete eradication would affect the poorest of children and families insist on the protection of child workers.

Yet, although the ILO, whose International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was created in 1992, “does not claim all work is bad for children, only work which interferes with their development, schooling and general well-being,…the goal of IPEC remains the prevention and elimination of all forms of child labour.” The two main international child labour standards are the ILO Convention No.182 (1999) on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (which include hazardous work previously outlined, as well as more illicit activities involving children as slaves, prostitutes and traffickers) and its Convention No. 138 (1973) on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work (age varies according to region and type of work but is nowhere under 12). The ILO’s recently adopted Convention No.189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers also outlines standards related to domestic child workers, such as article 14 which reads: “Domestic workers aged 15 years old but less than 18 years old – their work should not deprive them of compulsory education, or interfere with their opportunities for further education or vocational training.”

However, conventions adopted and promises made by governments and industries alike have not brought an end to child exploitation. Whether they work in flower production in Ecuador, in cocoa farming in the Ivory Coast, in Brazil-nut harvesting in Bolivia or on fishing boats in the Philippines, children are still being exploited as labourers and being denied their rights to education, worker benefits and fair wages.

Save the Children Canada (SCC) works to prevent all forms of abuse and neglect tied to hazardous work done by children. They do this by working with “governments, international organizations, and local community partners to implement progressive laws and policies, change detrimental social and cultural practices, and improve the capacity of communities to protect
children.” Though they work toward preventing children from entering into harmful and hazardous work and suffering from neglect, abuse and exploitation, SCC’s goal is not to eradicate all forms of child labour, which in the regions where they work would be a very unrealistic proposition. Referring to Bolivia, where estimates of working children are as high as 42% (Zamudio, 2011, p. 2), an SCC Program Officer explained:

Child work is a reality in the region. Saying children shouldn’t work means nothing without offering an alternative, and for indigenous children, work is part of their life, it’s how they grow up as part of the community they belong to, part of their education, part of their identity, part of their formation as human beings.[Indigenous] leaders would laugh at you if you showed up saying kids can’t or shouldn’t work.

In these contexts, SCC chooses instead to protect child workers from exploitation and defend their rights to quality education, healthcare and fair wages. A new five-year SCC program funded by CIDA entitled Securing Children's Rights to Protection, Education and Survival, for instance, hopes to provide “improved life opportunities for working youth in Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua, Burkina Faso and Kenya who are educated about their rights and have acquired marketable skills. In Bolivia, provision of teacher-training in child-friendly pedagogy will lead to a better quality of primary education for indigenous children. SCC also supports vocational training schools for children in rural areas and works to find sustainable implementation methods for new policies and initiatives, such as Bolivia’s new law for inter and intra-cultural education, as well as the creation of vocational schools. Decisions like these, and all SCC programming in general, are based on knowledge gained from experience and through research. The following sections describe how, in Latin America, SCC has used their alliance with academia in innovative ways to fill knowledge gaps on the actual conditions of working children in the region and support training of professionals and future decision-makers.

The Latin American Network of Masters in Children’s Rights and Social Policies

In 2002, with support from Save the Children Sweden, an inter-institutional alliance was formed among three related Masters programs in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. Each academic program addressed children’s rights. The objective of this network, from now on referred to by its Spanish acronym RMI, was to strengthen each program’s capacity to train qualified professionals to produce relevant and useful knowledge to promote and defend the rights of children and adolescents. The RMI was a way for Save the Children to move forward. After more than a decade of investing in capacity
building through workshops, seminars, and other short-term training, there was a need to find ways of systematizing knowledge on children’s issues and rights, as well as producing new knowledge and formalizing the training of professionals. In addition, Latin America was home to movements of child workers, and child organizations who could benefit from having an academic school of thought to which their movements could be linked. The university and this network of post-graduate programs became the answer. Three years into the network, SCC joined the project and began funding the program to extend it to Bolivia, then to Huancayo, Peru and Nicaragua. The growth of the network further strengthened its ability to collectively generate knowledge on the common problems of children and adolescents, problems which cross national boundaries and affect the region as a whole. The RMI now comprises nine universities in eight different countries. Over 600 professionals have participated in its programs at Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (Peru), Universidad Externado de Colombia (Colombia), Universidad Mayor de San Simón de Cochabamba (Bolivia), Universidad Centroamericana UCA de Managua (Nicaragua), Universidad de Chile (Chile), Universidad Columbia del Paraguay (Paraguay), Universidad Landívar de Guatemala (Guatemala), Universidad Nacional del Centro de Perú (Perú) and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana de Quito (Ecuador). The latter hosts the virtual program, the existence of which has meant that the original plan of extending the RMI to 32 countries is no longer necessary: the program is now open to anyone who can read and write in Spanish.

Enrolled students are both mid-level career professionals, who apply new theoretical frameworks to their work and contribute relevant practical knowledge and views from the field, and younger professionals who now require graduate degrees to pursue their interest in the field. Both groups of professionals are now occupying important positions in non-profit organizations and government agencies. On its website, SCC claims that children throughout the continent are benefiting from improved local and national policies, as well as higher-quality programs that respond to their needs and the needs of their families.  

RMI Coordinator, Juan Enrique Bazán, hopes to see 2100 students graduating from these affiliated programs per year, which would account for 1.5% of professionals in the field and form a well-positioned group of innovating professionals.

Young children working in the fields of Titicaca, Bolivia (UN Photo/Jean Pierre Laffon)
Research for Influence Strategy

Initially, Save the Children directly invested in each of the participating universities, in order to form a body of professionals who could add knowledge to debates surrounding child rights and policies affecting these rights. Universities were free to decide how this money would be used to support and grow their Master’s in Children’s Rights and Social Policies. Some, like the Centre for Higher Studies of the State University in Cochabamba, chose to devote the funds to full bursaries, while others spread them out over partial scholarships, courses, paper honorariums, seminars and exchanges. Although the direct investment was relatively low (less than $2000 per year per enrolled student), RMI Coordinator Juan Enrique Bazán explained that the return was extremely high, considering that a professional trained in one of these programs would work at least 30 years in the field. In 2007 SCC took over the leadership of the project and was eventually left as its sole funder. Unable to sustain direct funding at the same level, SCC instead has contributed more indirectly by supporting and initiating several different interactions with the RMI. Each has been designed to contribute to influencing policies affecting working children, and subsequently their lives. The following four paragraphs address each initiative and illustrate the relationship between each of them, research and change.

Essay Contests

In 2009 SCC launched its first essay contest on the broad theme of Child and Adolescent Participation in Latin America. Open to all students enrolled or graduated from one of the RMI programs, the contest encouraged social investigation and critical analysis of this issue. The yearly contest called for essays on the Relationships between Working Children and School in its second year, and is now looking into the Social Movements of Child and Adolescent Workers. The top finalists, chosen by a multi-institutional committee, are invited to Lima for a seminar in which they share their analyses with each other and the general public. SCC sees these last two contests “as a way to contribute to the rights of child workers, fostering the innovation of knowledge, improving institutional vision, and giving scholars of the issue the opportunity to share with the general public a renewed social thinking with respect to child workers.” This third contest is open to African universities, as well as the European Network of Masters in Children’s Rights and Social Policies (initiated in 2004). It is a very first step to creating a network of networks. Ideally, SCC would like to see regional networks like these in all areas where they work.

Working Groups

With little reliable data and research available on the issue of child workers in many parts of Latin America, SCC initiated working groups of professors and students in all eight of the RMI countries
to produce country-specific information and analyses on the issue. The first four case studies were completed in Peru, Nicaragua, Colombia and Bolivia; currently, work is underway in Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Chile. These case studies will be presented to the Latin American and Caribbean Movement of Working Children and Adolescents (MOLACNATS), as well as to government agencies, civil society, children’s organizations and national child workers groups in each country. Referred to as baseline studies, these analyses are also the first step toward realizing the creation of a Latin American Observatory on Children. Comparative analyses of the first four cases have also enabled members of the RMI to articulate further action points, such as gathering more reliable statistics on the numbers of child workers, specifically on those children who work and study, and researching the effect that work has on a child’s learning and development (Zamudio, 2011, p. 3). Cumulative analyses allow SCC to better understand the situation of working children and to outline possible institutional policies and actions in line with this reality. Although currently focused on one particular area of children’s rights, this initiative lends itself to possibly exploring other themes and issues of concern to SCC.

**Virtual Think Tank**

Linked to the case studies, a virtual think tank was set up for members of the RMI, SCC and MOLACNATS to both analyze the situations of child workers in Peru, Nicaragua, Colombia and Bolivia, as well as discuss gaps in current policies. Flexibility exists to focus discussion on relevant issues related to children’s rights as research is produced. The aim is for this think tank to act as “an interlocutor of governments on children’s issues that can contribute to the development of adequate public policies aimed at creating a more just and inclusive society (Zamudio, 2011, p. 4).”

**Blog**

Beginning in July of 2011, SCC launched a blog, or online space, by convening a group of professionals linked to the RMI and inviting them to collaborate in discussing and writing articles on
child-right issues. The articles reflect on child rights, society, social policies and working children, and are posted twice a month. August 2011’s entries, for example, addressed the theme *Children, Work and Education.* The hope is that postings will be useful to professionals in their work with children. It is a way for SCC and its partners to continue reflecting on these issues, re-thinking conceptual frameworks, institutional actions and social practices. The blog can be accessed at: http://sccsur.org.

SCC is also envisioning holding a congress of the RMI, where professors, graduates and students of each Master’s program would convene to share their work, research, views and exchange contacts. The European Network of Masters on Children’s Rights could also participate. Coordinator Juan Enrique Bazán would also like to see exchanges between students and professors throughout the year, allowing contacts to be made, collaborations to begin, and views and knowledge to be shared. Outside the Masters network, but complementary to its work, SCC is also carrying out research to identify gaps in the legislation systems regarding child work. Once this research is finalized, SCC will publish a regional document for Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru, and present it to key members of civil society and government to make them aware of gaps and limitations in the legislation.

In addition to influencing the development of professionals and the actions of policymakers, all these SCC initiatives also produce knowledge which directly influences SCC’s own programming, helping SCC understand where to focus their efforts and how to work in order to be most effective.

Challenges

Some factors do affect SCC’s overall ability to use research in their strategies to influence change, as well as the effective use of this network to create change. Currently working in 26 countries worldwide, with almost half of these in Latin America, SCC at times finds itself in contexts where research is not given due regard. Therefore, the challenge becomes one of convincing stakeholders of the value of research in general. A recurring comment from professionals working in Bolivia was that research does not have a strong tradition within universities and within NGOs. This relates to a second challenge: once an area has been identified as a key focus for a particular region (essentially a third challenge in itself), there is often very little information available on which to base new research. In Bolivia, SCC soon realized that they would need to create the information that the region needs for their work, policies, and legislation. Research, therefore, is made that much more difficult, and compounded by

“If someone doesn’t see the value of academic research, it’s not easy to impose it on them, so that is a culture we are striving to change.”

-SCC in Bolivia
the ever-present challenge of securing funding for this type of work. In some aspects, their alliance with
the RMI has allowed SCC to overcome this challenge by starting from scratch with a much larger team,
while at the same time generating expectations that will likely require even more funds to be realized. The
RMI could potentially produce hundreds of theses on child workers in the next two years, and provide
professors and graduates the opportunity to share and disseminate their findings regionally, with working
groups in each country. The programs, however, are not operating in sync just yet. Certain universities
do try and dictate general thesis topics, but not all.

The decision to coordinate research produced within the RMI has yet to be taken and relates to a
larger challenge of the RMI: getting students to officially graduate from the programs. Hundreds of
students have completed the required coursework, and have been applying the knowledge, but far fewer
have completed their theses and graduated. Some just cannot find the time, some fear the research and
defense processes; others just do not feel the pressure to obtain the actual Masters title. SCC explained
that students mainly enrol out of a professional interest; their job requires them to have done Masters
studies, not necessarily to have the title. In other words, the demand for the actual degree is just not
there. Individual universities, such as Universidad Externado de Colombia, work to build research
capacity, develop skills and provide undergraduate experience in research in order to try and change this.
Incentives for professors to support and monitor student progress, options for students to finance their
programs from start to finish and ways to instil value in thesis projects are still needed. Hopefully
individual institutions will work to address this issue, so that SCC will continue to see the advantage of
partnering with this valuable network.

If Save the Children takes a real and strong realization of the importance of the Masters network, then it will have a strategic
ally during this century to innovate the knowledge on children’s rights and related public policy. It is really a matter of
strategic alliance and that is a political decision; it is not an academic decision, it’s a political decision. Who will be Save the
Children’s allies this century for the production of knowledge, the generation of new knowledge, for the training of
professionals, for research and specialized technical assistance for the State and Civil Society? It is the universities. The
universities generate all this.

-Juan Enrique Bazán, SCC Consultant/ RMI coordinator
Why it works….

SCC has not devoted huge sums of money to supporting The Latin American Network of Masters in Children’s Rights and Social Policies, but rather has found innovative ways to help capitalize on this network. They have maximized the few resources available to them by investing in key research activities which, if continued, will serve several purposes. As a result of this network and its activities, knowledge on issues related to children and child rights is being produced and applied. Produced, as network members research, discuss and share, and applied as students and graduates alike find or continue their work in schools, NGOs, governments and communities. SCC has direct access to this fledgling school of thought and can use what is arguably a very strategic alliance to ensure that their programming and future work contributes to changes in public policies affecting children. The potential is there for this network to create change for children in the region by functioning both as a collaborative space for knowledge production, debate and analyses, and as a resource for training a well-informed mass of professionals to lead these changes. With continued and increased funding, SCC and the RMI are well-placed to contribute to better lives for the children of Latin America.
Chapter Four: The Role of Research in (Selected) Canadian CSOs’ Strategies: A Comparative Analysis

Oregano farmers in Bolivia, women’s safety audits in Argentina, the effects of armed conflict on Colombia’s indigenous women and blog entries on child work and education are elements which make for a seemingly unfocused and ambitious discussion. Even by honing in on how each case study influences policy and/or practice creates obvious categories amongst the cases. Surely, it is easier to measure influence over practice than over policy. Some might argue that Socodevi, for example, can simply count the number of farmers growing (and profiting) from oregano and assert that this change in improved livelihoods is attributable to their project. The other three case studies focus more on influencing policy and, as such, the only logical assessments of influence are those that seek to measure contribution. All four cases, however, were reviewed through this lens. That is to say, the focus is on how CCSOs work to contribute to change, not direct cause and effect relationships between specific projects/CCSOs and measurable changes in policy and practice. Socodevi is one player in a project that now involves several local co-ops and farmers, participation of their families, the larger coordinating structure, Agrocentral, UNEC, community leaders and even municipal governments who are now forced to respond to demands of their communities with respect to irrigation systems. Therefore, while evaluating these projects for their influence would take on different forms, examining their research-centred strategies for working towards having an influence is one and the same. The following analysis of the cases illustrate: how specific strategies are chosen to maximize both available resources and results; the integrated role research plays in these strategies; and the relationships between the breadth of organizational mandates, research design and these strategies.

4.1 CCSOs Choose Strategies for Influence which Maximize their Resources and Results

Canadian civil society organizations working to influence policy and/or practice in the global South choose strategies that fit with their strengths. This allows them to work within certain constraints (time, lack of financial and human resources, political contexts, funder requirements) and there are several different ways in which CCSOs access or carry out research needed by their larger strategy for influencing policy and practice. There is a relationship between how CCSOs work to access research and how they work to influence policy and/or practice with that research. In this chapter I collectively analyze these strategies to draw out their common components. Namely, CCSOs implement research-centred
strategies for influence which maximize their resources and results or opportunities for influence by a) forming strategic alliances and partnerships, b) identifying and using their organizational strengths and c) paying attention to methodological design.

4.1.1 Strategic Alliances and Partnerships

Understandably each organization aims to affect change in different ways depending on where they work, what resources they have and what their experience has been. According to CCIC in their 2006 publication, “relationship-building – with Southern CSOs and with decision-makers – is an important element of building policy influence (p.ii).” The cases illustrate how relationships with Southern networks and CSOs are part of CCSOs’ strategies for influence. In fact, they are central to the work that they do and the reason behind any perceived influence. Women in Cities International collaborates with four partner CSOs to implement the Gender Inclusive Cities Programme multi-laterally. Rights & Democracy also advises implementing partner CSOs in four countries as they build cases of ethnic and gender discrimination. Socodevi works with Agrocentral, a Bolivian network of cooperatives which monitors and ensures quality oregano production, while Save the Children Canada supports a Latin American network of universities. These collaborations are not a matter of hand-holding.

Working with networks and partnering with well-positioned CSOs allows CCSOs to access a wider body of knowledge and it facilitates the use of this knowledge for influence. A strategic ally or partner, as the case studies show, can not only access local communities more easily, but also brings with them expertise, experience and knowledge which supplement any new research project. These same allies or partners have contacts and relationships that multiply the opportunities for influence. Women in Cities International and Save the Children Canada both chose to support networks (also members of networks themselves). WICI, by partnering with WHN in Argentina, accessed a network of women’s groups working on the issue of women’s safety. This network took up much of the data collection, as well as engaged directly with local officials with whom WHN had previously established relationships. The ally which SCC has in the Latin American Network of Masters on Children’s Rights and Social Policies provides a much greater access to research and expertise than SCC alone could afford. It also directly involves policymakers and those working to sway policymakers in an open collaborative space. The potential to influence policy through this network is high; not only are professionals interacting and learning how the rights of children can/should fit on the political agenda and what social policies affecting children might look like, but a body of knowledge is being developed for those in and outside the network.
to apply, including SCC. Rights & Democracy has partnered with COAJ, whose program activities of leadership training and local capacity building in Jujuy provide an obvious entry point for data collection and whose director is active in wider political circles. R&D’s Colombian partner on the Ethnic and Gender Discrimination project, ONIC, actively engages in policy dialogue and this partnership presents the possibility of inserting their research into this dialogue. By partnering with Agrocentral, a network of coops, Socodevi reduces direct costs of transportation and administration, allowing them to focus more on the research side of the project. This partnership also directly affects the degree to which Socodevi and their alternative crop idea was able to assert influence over local farming practice: acceptance by Agrocentral, an advisor and link to individual co-ops, translates into wider community acceptance. Being strategic about one’s partners can go a long way toward strengthening CCSOs’ research capacity and widening their sphere of influence.

4.1.2 Identifying and Using Organizational Strengths

Not all CCSOs operate with the same budgets, answer to the same funding requirements, possess the same experience, skills and expertise or have the same contacts. Strategies which CCSOs use to influence policy and/or practice are therefore designed according to their organizational strengths. Socodevi has a network of expertise in Canada, as well as the opportunity to host Canadian interns, which they use to produce the research that they need to implement their project. Women in Cities International uses their network to disseminate the tools and results of their multi-country Gender Inclusive Cities Programme and to access wider audiences for policy influence. Rights & Democracy uses their experience and credibility to help access and interact with Inter-American agencies, while Save the Children Canada can focus work regionally given its multi-country network. These strengths are important in terms of laying out both an influencing strategy and a research strategy. In other words, recognizing what they do well and what defines their organization helps CCSOs access research and disseminate it in ways that contribute to influencing policy and practice.

4.1.3 Paying Attention to Methodological Design

A carefully designed research methodology works to do more than provide research findings. Action-oriented and applied, CCSOs’ research can serve many purposes. As illustrated with the Rights & Democracy case study, it often involves Southern CSOs and institutions engaged in participatory processes, which simultaneously builds local capacity. By designing a multi-country comparative project,
Women in Cities International works to facilitate exchanges between SCSOs throughout the collaborative research process. This sharing of findings as part of the methodology also helps build each organization’s capacity. Designing flexible methodologies which engage local partners not only helps these organizations acquire skills, tools and knowledge, but also builds CCSOs’ organizational capacity as they learn to adapt their design, facilitate exchanges and understand new contexts. In addition, methodologies which avoid as much as possible the subject/researcher paradigm align particularly well with CCSOs’ philosophies and mandates, which add to their credibility. Where academic research is considered sound and credible when its findings are logically drawn from rigorous analysis of adequate evidence, CCSOs’ research needs to be transformative and can only do so if it also involves local people in the process, if it allows research to mix with complementary activities and if the methodology itself addresses power relations. How CCSOs design their research is part of how they aim to influence the policy process or a particular practice. Key stakeholders and audiences are engaged, tools and methods to build capacity are used, and local ownership is encouraged.

4.2 Research is Part of CCSOs’ Strategies for Influence

Rather than understand the term research-centred strategy as a one which counts research as the central and most important aspect of the work, the cases demonstrate that research is central in the sense that it is a part of what CCSOs do. It is in fact a component which is in many instances so integrated into other activities that it cannot always be separated out. Given the multiple purposes which CCSOs’ research serves, there is a higher degree of flexibility in research methods and the research process itself becomes quite entangled with raising awareness, building capacity and implementing new approaches. This allows resources to be maximized and fulfills a wider range of roles and objectives. Not surprisingly, there is no evidence of a completely linear relationship between CCSOs’ research, influence and change. CCSOs’ strategies for influence, therefore, do not anticipate this. Instead, CCSOs are using a number of means to try and influence policy and/or practice with their research. From arranging formal meetings in Washington, to supporting a book publication in Mexico, to encouraging locally active and engaged indigenous groups to incorporate gender perspectives into their work, Rights and Democracy contributes to influence in different ways. Central to it all is their research, which gives credit to their discussions, is the focus of a book and is the nexus of local engagement with the issue.

In addition, this study finds that the research process, and not simply the research findings, is very much a part of a CCO’s strategy for influence. Designing research projects in such a way as to allow for local ownership, as WICI and R&D have done, works to build organizational capacity and in turn
increases the degree of influence which these organizations themselves can exert. WICI incorporated the methodological tool of women’s safety audits into their project and, with implementing partner WHN, brought local government officials into the research process itself. SCC intentionally brought professors and professionals together to carry out analyses, thereby encouraging specific channels of dissemination of these findings, as professors incorporate what they learn into their courses and as students, also working professionals, bring the knowledge directly back to their jobs. Socodevi transferred control of the research to UNEC, a locally staffed and mostly locally owned company. In doing so, not only is local research capacity being built, which will affect the future capacity of UNEC to maintain and expand this agri-business, but the direction of the research is aligned with local community demands, as UNEC becomes accountable and this relationship helps leverage more influence. Stepping back from specific project details, clearly CCSOs take a holistic approach in using research to influence policy and/or practice, be it through how they carry out the research or through how research is accessed.

This blending of research with and within various other activities and roles is important for funders to understand. Not only can it be very difficult to frame a CCSO’s work in terms of a traditional research proposal, but it is also challenging to attribute impacts of a CCSO’s work to specific donor dollars. When asked about the impact of the Gender Inclusive Cities Program in Rosario, WHN director Liliana Rainero explained that it is really the combination of efforts, projects and donor funding that brings about results. Funding a particular piece of research may contribute to change but cannot be entirely responsible for that change. Funders, however, often expect to attribute impacts to specific projects. While recognizing the value and importance of research, CCSOs may not see it the same way as a university would. It may be hard to disentangle research methods from other CCSO activities. When funders say that they fund research or service-delivery projects or do not fund advocacy, CCSOs are not only pressed to choose in which basket to put all their eggs, but they must divide and sort the yolks from the whites, very messy at best! Funders understandably have mandates and want to see that their funds are working to support those mandates. The caution here is simply for funders to acknowledge and account for the fact that specific CCSO activities are often multi-purpose and are undeniably linked one with another.

4.3 CCSOs Design and Collaborate on Research According to the Roles They Play

In addition to examples of CCSOs’ research-centred influencing strategies, interviews with CSO staff both in Canada and the South clarified some of the initial findings from the electronic survey (presented in Chapter 2), specifically with regard to research collaborations and the relationships between organizational mandates and research use.
4.3.1 Research Collaborations

Survey findings revealed a low number of CCSO-CCSO research collaborations. Chapter 2 summarized the possible explanations for this as conscious or unconscious competition for program and project funding, organizational credibility and a voice in Canadian and international policy forums, along with funding terms and agreements, feasibility and logistics. Support for these and other hypotheses were found in conversations with the CCSOs introduced in the case studies. In relation to the type of technical research involved in the oregano project, Socodevi staff explained how collaborating with another CCSO could become complicated. Different CCSOs might share an overall vision, but there needs to be a leader who takes the research down one path. Two heads may lead to disagreement as to what exactly that path is. Roles may not be as easy to define in CCSO-CCSO collaborations. Save the Children Canada agreed in a sense and noted that based on past experience, there is a tendency for each CCSO to take care of their own priorities and interests, making it difficult for a collaboration to grow. Canadian organizations must also be cautious about which organizations they partner with, as certain Canadian funders are less likely to fund advocacy groups. It seems SCSO-CCSO collaborations are somewhat different from CCSO-CCSO collaborations. Roles are easier to define as one organization often has the local networks, contacts and access, while the other provides the funding, technical support and visibility. Priorities combine and complement more easily and the very collaboration itself aligns with CCSO goals of capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Despite some possible explanations as to why their CCSOs did not collaborate with other CCSOs on research, interviewees did not identify any insurmountable disincentives. In fact, the general response was simply that experience takes them to collaborate with certain organizations over others, but they would not be opposed to working with other CCSOs. Not collaborating with CCSOs does not seem to provide any major disadvantage, while not collaborating with SCSOs would undermine both the chance of successful change and the credibility of the CCSO.

Although there appears to be a lack of incentives for CCSO-CCSO research collaborations, there do seem to be incentives for CCSOs to collaborate with Canadian universities, centres and professionals. Cultural considerations play a role in this choice. The culture of research is not a universal one. In Bolivia, several informants spoke of the challenge to finding Bolivian professionals, centres and universities which place as much importance on research as they themselves do. Save the Children
Canada’s representative there, for instance, noted the “lack of tradition of doing research” at the regional level, with organizations instead tending to use an experience-based implementation approach. Silvina Santana, of the Rosario Municipal Government, explained that in Argentina “there isn’t a practice of generating data…everyone does, does things, goes here, goes there, holds workshops, but no one systematizes anything…including us.” In cases where Southern universities and centres do have the same mind-set and can offer the same skills, there is often a very small research budget, meaning the CCSO is expected to fund all the research. Canadian universities or research centres, on the other hand, can usually come up with partial funding, thus lowering the costs for the CCSO.

IDRC’s Canadian Partnerships Program (CP) encourages Canadian organizations, CSOs and universities alike, to submit research proposals which include collaborations with other Canadians. Despite the advantages which collaborations of this kind can provide, it is important for CP, and other like-minded funders, to recognize some of the disincentives that CCSOs in particular might face to collaborating on research with other CCSOs. If research is part of an influencing strategy which responds to a particular CCSO’s strengths, it can be challenging to find ways for CCSOs to collaborate in this area. It is still possible to encourage these collaborations but consideration should be given to how best do this, without diminishing the role of the SCSO in producing and collaborating on research. An emphasis can be placed on complementary research, where CCSOs focus their research on different, but related, aspects of a particular issue. For instance, Socodevi is thinking of gathering baseline data from the municipalities just entering into oregano production, in order to monitor and assess how this new practice will be impacting local livelihoods. A CCSO whose strength is agri-business, Socodevi has no immediate plans to investigate the social impacts tied to the introduction of this new crop. They are quite willing to work with a more socially-focused (C)CSO interested in just that. Such inter-disciplinary research projects can benefit from pooled resources, and provide a much more complete analysis of change. It also seems feasible to encourage other types of collaborations amongst CCSOs which are research-related. CP has long supported research-related activities such as conferences, forums and workshops. These types of activities allow CCSOs to share knowledge and disseminate their work to wider audiences. There are also interesting CCSO collaborations that might arise when other research-related activities are analyzed. CCSOs often begin their research with a period of sensitization and awareness-raising, coupled with capacity-building exercises. CCSOs can be encouraged to plan these types of activities together, while actual data collection methods and analysis can be left to each organization.
4.3.2 Aligning Research with Organizational Roles

The idea that a relationship exists between the number of roles that an organization plays (i.e. the breadth of their mandate) and the way in which they use research (the number of purposes) was introduced in Chapter 2. It was concluded that the more roles a CCSO plays, the more ways it finds to use research in its work to influence policy and practice in the global South. This purely quantitatively-based relation reflects a higher organizational level but, as these case studies show, it also manifests itself at the micro project level. A large CCSO like SCC, which indicated it played eight roles, interacts in a variety of ways with research through innovative initiatives with the *Latin American Network of Masters on Children’s Rights and Social Policies*, while the other three CCSOs, who indicated that they play three or four roles, focus more narrowly on concrete and defined research projects. The details of each case study also illustrate how these particular research projects help CCSOs fulfill their roles. Table 4 lists which roles Women in Cities International (WICI), Rights & Democracy (R&D), Socodevi and Save the Children Canada (SCC) indicated they play (in this study’s initial survey) and provides a project-specific example which links research to the fulfillment of those roles. CCSOs surveyed were given five choices (listed on the left), but were able to name others as well. The table focuses on these five as only SCC named more.

In analyzing the cases in terms of how the research works to fulfill organizational roles, there are two obvious connections between research and these roles: information generated by the research is needed to instruct actions through which CCSOs can fulfill their roles, but the research process itself also works to fulfill such roles. For instance, SCC provides technical assistance (information or advice) to their partners, governments, and others. In order to provide this advice, they must be well informed on the issue. Initiating research projects in collaboration with the RMI on child work gives them access to current regional information and allows them to analyze the gaps in information and policies. At the same time, these research projects support local professors and students in strengthening their research capacity, which in turn caters to SCC’s organizational role of capacity building. A second example is found in WICI’s work. By facilitating exchanges among partners regarding the research methodologies as implemented by each partner, they were able to collect information to produce a revised toolkit for future organizations wanting to implement the *Gender Inclusive Cities Programme*. The toolkit allows WICI to contribute technical assistance to other organizations and groups, while the research leading to its production and the facilitated exchanges among partners help build local capacity, as each partner owns the research methods.
This study targeted CCSOs which did not have research as their sole objective, precisely to see how CCSOs with mandates of capacity building, advocacy and service delivery were also using research. Research, it seems, can fit within many mandates and is both a tool and a process to fulfill wider organizational roles.
**Table 4: Examples of How CCSO Research Fulfills their Different Organizational Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>WICI</th>
<th>R&amp;D</th>
<th>SOCODEVI</th>
<th>SCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td>R&amp;D arranges support for local teams in their data collection and background research through their collaboration with CIDDHU students.</td>
<td>An initial two-year research phase points Socodevi to oregano as a viable alternative for local farmers and supports their decision to begin delivering seedlings and other related inputs to individual farmers.</td>
<td>SCC engages key stakeholders in research analysis, giving SCC access to a wider set of concerns which they consider when speaking as a representative authority on child rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery</td>
<td>WICI develops a tool kit for all implementing partners and advises local experts on adapting these to local contexts.</td>
<td>R&amp;D develops a research project in collaboration with SCSO-led teams and a Canadian expert in the Inter-American Court system.</td>
<td>Socodevi hires and works with local advisors who provide technical assistance to farmers, monitor crop yields and engage with UNEC research team.</td>
<td>Knowledge acquired and analysis done by SCC through their initiatives with the RMI feed directly into SCC’s program implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>Local women engaged in the research process advocate for equal access to their cities, based on what they learn through the Gender Inclusive Cities Programme.</td>
<td>R&amp;D’s partners use their knowledge and research experience to strengthen their arguments when advocating against ethnic and gender discrimination.</td>
<td>The tested model Socodevi has developed alongside its partners serves to support advocacy efforts for local ownership and research-based alternative crop introduction.</td>
<td>SCC uses the RMI to access relevant and reliable information on which they base their advice and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Local SCSOs take on full project implementation after WICI training in research methods and tools.</td>
<td>R&amp;D chooses a research methodology which engages local SCOs and their consultants in all phases of the research.</td>
<td>UNEC staff is supported in their research efforts by Socodevi interns, and local advisors are hired and trained in technical aspects of oregano farming.</td>
<td>Regional data collected through SCC’s link with the RMI helps them focus their advocacy campaigns on pressing issues concerning children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SCC initiates working groups where local professors and students develop their research capacity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Key Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Key Findings

Based on initial survey responses and case field analysis, this study has explored how Canadian civil society organizations are using research (producing it, disseminating it, learning from it) and how that research is part of their strategy to influence policy and/or practice in the global South. Its key findings are:

1. **CCSOs work in a variety of ways** to achieve their many, yet complementary, objectives and research plays an important role in their ability to effectively fulfill these. Research used in this way increases opportunities for influence and the chance of producing ‘results’-often required to guarantee future and further funding.

2. This study focused on CCSOs which do not declare research as their main objective, however, for these CCSOs, research is an integrated component of their work to influence policy and practice; it is combined with other related roles such as capacity building, awareness-raising and technical support.

3. There is a relationship between the number of roles that a CCSO plays and the range of purposes for which it uses research: the more roles a CCSO says that it plays, the wider the range of ways it finds to use research in its work to influence policy and practice in the global South.

4. Research helps CCSOs fulfill their many roles in two main ways: research is needed to work toward fulfilling roles (i.e.; collect data to understand the issue, then use this knowledge to plan an awareness campaign) AND the research process itself allows certain roles to be fulfilled (i.e.; engage local women as survey takers so they gain certain skills and establish key relationships thereby building capacity).

5. Even though the CCSOs studied do not have research as a declared focus of their mandate, they do generally retain a degree of control over the research process, either carrying out research themselves or in collaboration with others.
6. By working this way CCSOs can ensure that research complies with their mandates, philosophies and resources; that they can be flexible and adapt research questions, methods, etc. as needed along the way; and that the research process serves to build capacity (of their partners, but also their own organizational capacity).

7. There is relatively little CCSO-CCSO collaboration for research.

a) This is explained by the incentives of other types of collaborations:
   - collaborating with SCSOs works to build capacity and is seen as more credible; and
   - collaborating with Canadian universities is feasible (in terms of access and available funds), and strategic (seen as credible sources of research).

b) This is also explained by disincentives to collaborating with other CCSOs as well; these are not insurmountable disincentives, however:
   - roles are harder to define than with SCSO-CCSO collaborations, where the collaboration itself aligns with CCSO goals of capacity building and knowledge sharing;
   - CCSOs with different mandates have different priorities and may be penalized for working with certain types of groups (advocacy groups for instance); and
   - there is competition for a space within certain dialogues on particular issues, both in Canada and internationally.

c) Also, CCSOs tend to draw their partners from established networks on the basis of local contexts, resources and experience; the strategic choice to collaborate based on experience and practical reasoning tends to create more CCSO-SCSO research collaborations than any other.

   - Research from various sources is used for a variety of defined purposes to influence policy and/or practice in the developing countries where CCSOs work with local partners; CCSOs recognize the value of multipurpose research and/or multiple research uses.
8. CCSOs can rely on **limited range of sources of research for a wide range of purposes**: 

   a) using limited sources of research therefore does not reflect a lack of access to such sources or a CCSO’s greater ability to produce the research needed; 
   
   b) using limited sources of research for a wide range of purposes is one of a variety of CCSOs’ strategies for influence; and 
   
   c) CCSOs with large research capacity benefit more by resorting to few, rather than more, sources as compared to CCSOs with small research capacities.

9. CCSOs choose strategies for influence which **maximize their resources and opportunities for influence** by:

   - forming **strategic alliances and partnerships**- Being strategic about partners/alliances can strengthen research capacity and widen the sphere of influence; 
   
   - identifying and using their **organizational strengths**- Recognizing what they do well and what defines their organizations helps CCSOs access and disseminate research in ways that contribute to influencing policy and practice; and
   
   - paying attention to **methodological design**- How CCSOs design their research can be part of how they aim to influence the policy process or particular processes.

10. CCSO research should be seen as **sound and credible** if it is transformative and as such involves local people in the process, if it allows research to mix with complementary activities and if the methodology addresses power relations.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study bear implications for funders and CCSOs alike. Given the multi-purpose nature of CCSOs’ research, it is important for funders, CCSOs and their partnering organizations to have realistic expectations for projects designed to contribute to policy influence or changes in practice (local, institutional and organizational). Generally, local CSOs seem to have realistic expectations of what they can accomplish in terms of influencing policy and practice; however, despite CSOs on the ground being realistic about what to expect, those further removed (sometimes the Canadian coordinating organization, or the funder) often have different ideas. It is important that expectations are shared and discussed prior to
and throughout any project and that consideration is given to how this influence will be measured. These are not always contributions that can be easily measured. A positive change for WICI is that local women in Rosario are questioning why the public green space has yet to be cleaned up by city officials. Years ago, no one looked at this space as something that prevented their free movement and affected their sense of security. Similarly, Rights & Democracy’s partner in Argentina, COAJ, has recorded a demand for further awareness workshops and has responded by providing local women leaders with materials to continue them. In certain communities, these women have taken up recording changes that have arisen, such as more women now standing up to their husbands or men in the community. These acts may not be directly related to double discrimination, but they are signs of improved self-esteem and a questioning of the status quo: two important conditions for recognizing discrimination and working toward ending it. Of course being realistic about expectations, being open to unexpected outcomes and trying to capture non-quantifiable indicators of change is not new advice, but hopefully the examples analyzed here serve to support these recommendations and reiterate their importance.

A key point to keep in mind when looking for CCSOs’ research “results” is that they are not only found at the end of a project, but that the research process itself can be designed in a way that brings about positive change, regardless of what data is collected or what is found through analyzing data. Funders may wish to support more adaptive and open methodologies, if the potential exists to allow further organizational roles to be fulfilled. They may want to help CCSOs design their research so that this attends to their organizational roles and strengths, as well as allows them to engage key stakeholders in it.

Also, it is important for CCSOs to take a step back and review the work that they are doing and reflect on how knowledge production fits or should fit in. Questions to ask might be: How do we know what we know? Is it purely experience-based? It may be, but is there a way to systematize that experience? How can more accurate data be collected on what we have done and lessons be incorporated into what we doing or plan on doing? How have we reflected on what we know? Do we learn from others and have we shared our knowledge with others? These questions are important for CCSOs of all sizes and capacities to ask themselves. Research does not need to be your niche, nor your main goal, but if what you are doing bears a resemblance, it may be worth taking the time to sort out what the role of this research is and how to present your work in a way that might open the doors to more funding opportunities and further strategic collaborations.
A choice to focus on influencing policy and practice in the global South was made as a singular way to narrow the domain of this study. It is apparent, however, as CCIC writes, that “many of the factors that contribute in the South are rooted in the policies of the North in areas such as trade, investment and the environment, as well as diplomatic, security and aid relationships” (2006, p. 2-3). A related but separate focus for future studies is to look at how Canadian civil society organizations use research to influence Canadian foreign policy and practices here in Canada which stands in the way of development processes in the global South. What do these strategies look like? How are the challenges different? What types of strategic collaborations work well in this context? What role does research play in engaging Canadians on issues? USC Canada, for instance, actively works to contribute to policy influence in Canada in the area of food security through policy dialogues, coalition work and dissemination of information. Further exploration of their work, and other CCSOs like them, could provide useful insights to complement this study and uncover what strategic choices CCSOs working to influence policy and practice in Canada make, and how these compare with their strategies for influence in the global South.

Another area in need of further exploration is the extent to which this study’s findings extend to Southern civil society organizations. An examination of SCSOs and their strategies for influence would help illustrate this and be useful for CCSOs working towards building SCSO capacity and supporting SCSO research. Further research on CCSO coalitions could also help CCSOs in their work. An examination of these groups may help shed light on how effective they are in promoting and building partnerships which lead to CCSO-SCSO research collaborations. It would also be interesting to further explore what channels exist for CCSOs to share their results with the larger CCSO community. That is, what opportunities are there to share findings of research in areas of concern to other CCSOs and how can CCSOs go about accessing the outcomes of projects or initiatives with research components, in order to speed up learning and prevent any unnecessary duplication of research?

5.3 Conclusion

Canadian civil society organizations working in international cooperation for development are doing more than delivering services and assistance to the global South. Through local, often participatory, actions they are working to influence policy and practice. Although very much action-orientated, CCSOs whose research is not central to their role recognize and address the need for their actions to be evidence-based and respond by incorporating research into their work. CCSOs’ research is based on the ground, it involves Southern perspectives, it is adaptable and flexible and it is in no way an end in itself. Although
often maintaining a certain degree of control over the research process, CCSOs examined in this study place high importance on local SCSO engagement and ownership. CCSO research is not always (though can often be) as systematized and rigorous as university-based research. In many aspects, it is messy in that research activities cannot always be separated from awareness-raising, capacity-building or implementation activities. How research is accessed and used by CCSOs is ruled by their strategies for influence. These strategies must account for certain constraints; they face a lack of funds, time, personnel, and sometimes expertise. Therefore, CCSOs must also find ways to maximize their funds, time and influence, expand their capacity and access certain knowledge and skills. This is done by forming strategic alliances and partnerships, identifying and using organizational strengths and paying attention to methodological design. CCSOs use both the research findings and the research process itself to try and contribute to influence over policy and practice. CCSOs’ strategies and contributions for knowledge creation and distribution support the claim that these groups are making research relevant, and are using it to engage in policy-making processes and broaden their impact.
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CISCSA (2010) Las mujeres trabajando por un Distrito Noroeste sin miedos ni violencias: Cartilla de trabajo, Distrito Noroeste, Rosario. Project dissemination materials prepared by CISCSA.


Synergos. (2008). A practitioner’s guide to influencing policy: Learning from the senior fellows annual global meeting. (IDRC project # 105486).


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**Endnotes**

1 For this study civil society organizations are defined as organizations which operate outside the private sector the home, or the government. Universities, think tanks and research centres were not included in the general CSO survey as it was assumed that their research capacities were larger than other CCSOs’.

2 Research is understood as the process by which knowledge is produced. It is defined as such to be inclusive of many types of activities, including but not limited to, surveys or questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document review, participant observation, pilot projects and trials, and evaluations, accompanied by analysis.

3 The sample also includes international organizations with headquarters or main branches in Canada.

4 The list of CCSOs to be surveyed was built by adding names to an initial list of Canadian IDRC grantees. Sources which were used in order to do so included member lists of CCIC and other provincial/regional councils for international cooperation; websites of professional associations and CIDA’s International Youth Internship website. This provided a list of well over 300 organizations, which was narrowed down by visiting each CCSO’s website and eliminating any which did not work primarily in international cooperation.
for development, did not engage in the global South, provided only humanitarian relief or had research as their sole and main objective.

5 For more details on how the sample of 62 CCSOs which this study’s findings are based on compares with the wider sample of the 129 CCSOs surveyed, see Appendices A and B.

6 The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), as part of a three-year project undertaken between 2003 and 2006, published a collection of resources and reflections under their Building Knowledge and Capacity for Policy Influence project with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

7 Unless otherwise noted, all facts and information referenced in this case study are based on interviews with staff of local women in Rosario, Argentina, on July 28, 2011; WHN staff in Córdoba, Argentina, on July 29, 2011; and WICI staff in Montreal, Canada, on September 27, 2011.

8 This information can be found on the Women and Habitat’s Network’s website. Refer to bibliography under author CISCSA for full site address.

9 This information is based on interviews with Silvina Santana of Rosario’s Women’s department and staff at WHN in Córdoba, Argentina, carried out from July 27-30, 2011.

10 This quote was translated by the author and can be found on the Women and Habitat’s Network’s website. Refer to bibliography under author CISCSA for full site address.

11 This information is from a document developed by WHN and CISCSA. To request this document, visit www.redmujer.org.ar for the organization’s contact information. Full details are in the bibliography under, Las mujeres trabajando por un Distrito Noroeste sin miedos ni violencias.

12 All quotes attributed to WHN staff have been translated from Spanish to English by the author.

13 Unless otherwise stated, all quotes and facts in this section are from Indigenous Women of the Americas: Double Discrimination by the Continental Network of Indigenous Women, The International Clinic for the Defense of Human Rights of the Université du Québec à Montréal, and Rights & Democracy.

14 Unless otherwise stated, all information in this section is from the Rights & Democracy 2008 project proposal.

15 The information on Canada’s Aboriginal women is from a collective statement of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas North Region at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May, 2011.

16 This quote is from p.25 of Indigenous Women of the Americas: Double Discrimination presented by the Continental Network of Indigenous Women, The International Clinic for the Defense of Human Rights of the Université du Québec à Montréal, and Rights & Democracy.

17 All information and quotes in this section are based on Rights & Democracy’s 2008 project proposal and interviews with R&D staff in Montreal, Canada, on September 29, 2011.

18 Unless otherwise stated, the information and analyses presented in this section are based on interviews with staff of COAJ in San Salvador de Jujuy, Argentina, from August 1-4, 2011; ONIC in Bogotá, Colombia, on August 19, 2011; and R&D in Montreal, Canada, on September 29, 2011.

19 This quote was translated from Spanish to English by the author.

20 The information and analyses presented in this section are based on interviews with staff of COAJ in San Salvador de Jujuy, Argentina, from August 1-4, 2011; ONIC in Bogotá, Colombia, on August 19, 2011; and R&D in Montreal, Canada, on September 29, 2011.

21 The information on challenges is based on the author’s observations and interviews with R&D staff in Montreal, Canada on September 29, 2011.

22 This information is from internal Socodevi documents forwarded to the author in May, 2011.

23 This information is based on interviews with Socodevi staff in Sucre and Tomina, Bolivia, from August 10-12, 2011.

24 Unless otherwise stated information in this section is based on interviews with Socodevi and UNEC staff in Sucre and Tomina, Bolivia, from August 10-12, 2011.

25 This quote is from paragraph 6 in an article on the Canadian International Development’s Website entitled, Lifted from Poverty by Oregano. This article can be found at http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acid/cida.nsf/eng/NAD-111-793011-JZW.

26 All the information in this section is from internal Socodevi documents forwarded to the author in May, 2011.
This information is from internal Socodevi documents forwarded to the author in May, 2011.

This information is based on interviews with Socodevi staff in Sucre and Tomina, Bolivia, from August 10-12, 2011.

Unless otherwise stated, facts, quotes and figures on child work in general in this section are Child Rights Information Network and can be found at: from http://crin.org/themes/ViewTheme.asp?id=3.


This information is from Save the Children Canada’s website under What we do, Child protection. The exact page can be found at: http://www.savethechildren.ca/page.aspx?pid=432.

This information is from the project description of Securing Children's Rights to Protection, Education and Survival found on CIDA’s project browser at: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/cpo.nsf/vLUWebProjEn/E8BF7086CEDAB8DB8525793 A0036B987?OpenDocument.

This information is from the Spanish language site of the Masters Network: http://foros.externado.edu.co/portal/html/modules.php?name=redmae.

This information is from Save the Children Canada’s website under Where we work, Bolivia, Master’s program on child rights. The exact page can be found at: http://www.savethechildren.ca/page.aspx?pid=411.

This quote is from http://foros.externado.edu.co/portal/html/modules.php?name=redmae and has been translated from Spanish to English by the author.

This quote has been translated from Spanish to English by the author.

This information is from the July 2011 blog entry found at: http://sccsur.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=36:blog&Itemid=65&layout=default.

This information is based on focus group interviews with graduates from Lima’s Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima, Peru, on August 14, 2011.
Appendix A: Distribution of Sample Surveyed and Responses to Survey by CCSO Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSO Types</th>
<th>Responses to survey (#)</th>
<th>Responses to survey (%)</th>
<th>Sample surveyed (#)</th>
<th>Sample surveyed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>diaspora group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-partisan organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social movement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth-based organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>union</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>council</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faith-based organization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>network</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional association/organization</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/non-profit</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Distribution of Sample Surveyed and Responses to Survey by CSO Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSO Areas</th>
<th>Responses to survey (#)</th>
<th>Responses to survey (%)</th>
<th>Sample surveyed (#)</th>
<th>Sample surveyed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>urban sustainability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>peace and conflict</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
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Appendix C: Survey Sent to Canadian CSOs

Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) believes that civil society organizations are important actors in the field of international development.

In 2010 IDRC’s Canadian Partnerships Program completed a study of knowledge-related collaborations between Canadian universities and Canadian civil society organizations. This study has already influenced the shaping of the Canadian Partnerships Program for the 2010-15 period.

This year, we are turning our attention to Canadian civil society organizations and their use of research to influence policy and practice in the Global South. The study focuses on the ways in which Canadian CSOs use research, the origin of that research and the purposes of its use by CSOs. Your organization has been identified as one which may have insight to share on this topic.

We would greatly appreciate your input in this research in order for Canadian Partnerships to better understand and support the work of organizations like yours in the future.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following seven questions in the body of this email and return it directly to Stacie Travers stravers@idrc.ca. If you have any questions on the survey, please call Stacie at 613-696-2237. Please reply as soon as you are able.

Organization overview:

Name:
Contact Person:
Contact information:
Area(s) of Interest:
Defining characteristics:

1. What role or roles does your organization play? (Check all that apply)

( ) representation (acts as a voice for a particular group of citizens)

( ) advocacy (raises awareness and defends or promotes positions on particular issues)

( ) technical assistance (provides information or advice)

( ) capacity building (supports the improvement of skills, competencies, systems in other CSOs, including funding)
(    ) service delivery (implements development projects or provide services)

(    ) other (please specify):

2. Does your organization use research as part of its strategy to influence policy and practice in the Global South?

Please take note that, for this study, research is understood as the process by which knowledge is produced. It is defined as such to be inclusive of many types of activities, including but NOT limited to surveys or questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document analysis, participant observation, pilot projects and trials, and evaluations.

3. If so, who carries out the research which your organization uses? (Check all that apply)

Research carried out:

(    ) By own Canadian CSO staff

(    ) By own CSO interns/volunteers

(    ) By other Canadian CSO staff or interns/volunteers

By (    ) or in collaboration with (    ) CSOs in countries where you work

By (    ) or in collaboration with (    ) Canadian universities

By (    ) or in collaboration with (    ) universities in countries where you work
By (     ) or in collaboration with (     ) Canadian councils (what are these?)

Please specify:

By (     ) or in collaboration with (     ) other Canadian research organizations

By (     ) or in collaboration with (     ) other research centres in countries where you work

By (     ) or in collaboration with (     ) other Canadian institutions, agencies, centres

Please specify:

By (     ) or in collaboration with (     ) other institutions, agencies, centres elsewhere in the world

Please Specify:

By other (     ) (please specify):

4. For what purpose(s) does your organization use research? (Check all that apply and clarify where possible)

(     ) To identify priority issues

(     ) To identify key stakeholders

(     ) To inform public awareness campaigns

(     ) To enhance organizational credibility

(     ) To formulate alternatives

(     ) To pilot service delivery projects
(  ) To evaluate our organization and our projects

(  ) To monitor ongoing projects

(  ) To build local capacity

(  ) To lobby decision makers

(  ) To attract international/media attention

(  ) To confirm and support understandings of an issue, idea or problem

(  ) To provide feedback to local communities or governments

(  ) Others (please specify):

5. Do you have ongoing or recent projects which you feel illustrate how your organization uses research, as part of its strategy to influence policy and practice in the Global South?

If yes, provide a brief description of one (or more) of these projects (or attach an existing brief document):

6. Do you know of any other Canadian civil society organization(s) that should be considered for their input(s) on this topic?

7. Would you be willing to talk more to Stacie on your organization’s use of research via a phone call or meeting in the near future?

This survey is part of a research project supervised by Dr. Luc Mougeot in Canadian Partnerships at the International Development Research Centre.

Thank you very much for your participation!
Appendix D: Guide for Interviews with CCSOs

Interview guide for CCSO interviews (September, 2011)

Area 1: Interviewee/organization/project background

• Introduce yourself and your background

• Describe the organization

• Do you have a board? What is the board’s position on research?

• Describe the context of this particular project

• Describe the development of the project (how it came together, funding, partnering, stakeholders, setbacks)

• Describe the objective(s) of this particular project (is it to influence policy? If so, which policies? Is it to influence specific practices? If so, which practices?)

Area 2: CSOs as knowledge producers and intermediaries

• How important is research within your organization and within the context that you work?

• Do you think there are any misconceptions about CSOs doing research?

• Your organization indicated (in response to the questions whose research do you use?) that you use your own staff among other sources. This was quite a common response with close to 84% of CSOs surveyed saying the same. What are the reasons to have your own staff conduct the research? Is it a choice? What determines this? What advantages are there to conducting your own research? Are there advantages to using other sources?

• Is your organization required to use or produce more research than before?

• Do you need to collaborate more with universities and others for this?
• Are there any barriers/disincentives to collaborating with certain groups (i.e. universities, research centres, larger NGOs…)?

• Preliminary findings based on the responses of 66 CCSOs indicate that for each broad source of research (university, research centre, CSO…) there is a tendency to use research produced in the Global South more often that in Canada. What would you hypothesize are the reasons for this general trend?

• Why do you think there is relatively little use of research generated by other Canadian CSOs, and when this is used, what are the facilitating conditions for CSOs to do so?

• What are some ways in which you operate to gain access to research which you need, when you cannot produce all of it yourselves?

• Do you see a relationship between where the research your organization uses comes from and what you can use it for? In other words, why do you rely on x number of sources of research for x number of reasons? Is there a link? Do these numbers reflect your research capacity?
  
  o SOCODEVI: Your organization indicated that it uses limited sources (3), for limited purposes (5). Do you feel you could use these same numbers of sources for a larger number of purposes? Why or why not?

  o FEMMES ET VILLES: Your organization uses a medium number of sources (4) for a wide number of purposes (11). How are you able to do that?

  o SCC, R&D and USC: Your organization uses a large number of sources (15, 13, 9) for a wide number of purposes (13, 13, 12). Do you view a relationship here? If you do can conduct your own research, why also use research from all these other sources?

• How much do you depend on SCSOs for accessing/developing knowledge? For knowledge mobilization? Political influence?

• Where does your organization fit in with in local SCSOs work (are you there to help them access knowledge, to guide their actions, to disseminate their own know-how more broadly)?

• How do you share knowledge/disseminate your findings with other CSOs? Are there any forums/networks/events which facilitate this?

• How do you know you are not duplicating research? Who else is involved in this research?
• How do you get funding for research? What are the challenges to securing this type of funding?
• What, if any, (other) challenges exist to using research in your work?
• Do you have advice for other CSOs who are thinking of using research in their work?
• How has this particular project made use of research (in other words, what was the purpose of the research incorporated into this project)?
• How has this particular research/ how is this particular research being complemented by third party research?
• In the context of this particular project, do you feel your organization is contributing to the knowledge/debate/discussions surrounding this particular issue?

**Area 3: CSO and their theory of change**

• How do you see change happening? Where does this particular research (or research in general) fit into these theories of change? What role do you perceive this research to have in relation to influencing policy and practice?
• What tools do you have (want/need) to try to get this research to influence policy?
• What actors have you engaged with (and how has this engagement happened) in order to influence policy? Do you work with intermediaries who can access government and policy makers more easily (boundary partners)?
• What role(s) do your partners play? Do you depend on them for anything? Do they depend on your for anything?
• How do you understand research communication for policy influence (do you see this as a matter of disseminating research results at the end of a project?) What has been done to communicate preliminary findings (or final results) with others to bring about change?
• Who have you/who will you feed the results of this research to?
• What attempts have been made to engage with policy makers or other key people throughout the project? Why these people (connects to your theory of change), and why at these moments?
• What has worked to date? What has not? Why or why not? (context, luck, skills, experience…)

• What are the reasons and challenges of playing 3+ roles and using research for 6+ purposes? (does not apply to SOCODEVI)

• What does it take to be effective in using research to influence policy and practice? Is more better? Is there a worry of spreading yourselves too thin (trying to do too many things with the research)?

• What is the most effective strategy you have found (if there is one) to have influence or create change when it comes to using research as part of that strategy?
Appendix E: Guide for Field Interviews with CCSOs’ Partner Organizations

Guide for Field Interviews (July 25-August 26)

Area 1: Interviewee/organization/project background

- Introduce yourself and your background
- Describe the organization
- Describe the context of this particular project
- Describe the development of the project (how it came together, funding, partnering, stakeholders, setbacks)
- Describe the objective(s) of this particular project (is it to influence policy…which? or specific practices…which?)

Area 2: CSOs as knowledge producers and intermediaries

- How did your organization (the SCSO) come to be involved with this CCSO? With this project? Particularly, how did your organization come to be involved/in charge of the research portion?
- How important is research within your organization and within the context that you work?
- Do you more often use research which you produce yourselves, or research produced by others? How often do you collaborate on research? With whom? PART OF SURVEY
- Are there any barriers/disincentives to collaborating with certain groups (i.e. universities, research centres, larger NGOs…)?
- What enabling conditions exist or would need to exist in terms of collaborations with SCSOs and other bodies for research?
- Is your organization required to use or produce more research than before, say 5 years ago?
- Are you required to collaborate more with universities and others for this?
- Are required to share more of your knowledge with others?
- Do you have more or less resources to do all of the above?
- What, if any, challenges exist to using research in your work?
- What are some ways in which you operate to gain access to research which you need, when you cannot produce all of it themselves?
• How has this particular project made us of research (in other words, what was the purpose of the research incorporated into this project)?
• How has this particular research/ how is this particular research being complimented by third party research?
• Who have you/who will you feed it to?
• In the context of this particular project, do you feel your organization is contributing to the knowledge/debate/discussions surrounding this particular issue?

**Area 3: CSO and their theory of change**

• How do you see change happening? Where does this particular research (or research in general) fit into these theories of change? What role do you perceive this research to have in relation to influencing policy and practice?
• What tools do you have (want/need) to try to get this research to influence policy?
• What actors have you engaged with (and how has this engagement happened) in order to influence policy? Who are your boundary partners?
• What role(s) does CANADIAN PARTNER NAME play here? (provision of tools, advice, requiring policy influence as a goal, acting as knowledge brokers/champions…)
• Are there other roles you would like to see your CCSO partners playing? Why?
• How do you understand research communication for policy influence (do they see this as a matter of disseminating research results at the end of a project?) What has been done to communicate preliminary findings (or final results) with others to bring about change?
• What attempts have been made to engage with policy makers or other key people throughout the project? Why these people (connects to their theory of change), and why at these moments?
• What has worked to date? What has not? Why or why not?