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Home

Welcome to the site of the Canadian Bahá'í International Development Agency (CBIDA). This site provides information about the vision and approach with which CBIDA engages in development practice. The site also includes summaries of the projects, past and present, that CBIDA has been involved with. Finally the site provides access to a collection of learning materials and references to relevant research on our projects.

We've changed our name. To better reflect its mandate and mission, the Canadian Bahá'í International Development Services (CBIDS) has changed its name to the Canadian Bahá'í International Development Agency. This new name strengthens the identity of the organization as an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada and its role to accompany and collaborate with Bahá'í-inspired organizations around the world.

Training youth in Africa

In 2006, CBIDA will begin to explore the implementation of FUNDAEC's "Promoters of Community Wellbeing" programme to develop the capacities of junior youth and youth. Specifically, this component of the Preparation for Social Action programme will develop the youth's capacities for sustainable social and economic development. Building on the success of the **SAT** programme in Colombia and Honduras, and with the financial assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the first fifteen modules of the training programme are now available in English, and ready for use in Zambia.

ABOUT

Canadian Bahá'í International Development Agency (CBIDA)

CBIDA is the international social and economic development agency of the Bahá'í Community of Canada that supports local and sustainable social and economic development activities initiated by agencies around the world. CBIDA provides local partners with access to funding; technical assistance for programme and project development, administration and evaluation; and helps build organizational capacity.

CBIDA does not consider unsolicited requests for funding.

Structure

In 2003, the CBIDA management approach to guide and develop the agency changed. An appointed voluntary Board of Directors was named to replace a national committee structure in place since 1981 and a fulltime Executive Director was hired.

The current Board members for 2006-2007 are:

- Michael Power , Secretary
- Cynthia Farrell, Chairperson
- Bill Edgar , Treasurer
- Gita Badiyan
- Benoit Girard

CBIDA staff

Duncan Hanks , Executive Director

Vision

The mission of CBIDA is to foster and support social and economic development learning and action as part of the Bahá'í International Community's commitment to building a more unified, equitable and ever-advancing global civilization.

Focus

CBIDA is mandated to work anywhere in the world. Potential partner organizations exist in over 170 countries and regions. Currently CBIDA works in Central and South America, and has worked in Africa, India and the Caribbean in the past. Through its twenty years of experience, CBIDA has developed several core competencies. With a demonstrated track record in education, health and rural development, CBIDA has gained specific capacity in the following areas:

- basic & secondary education; lifelong learning

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- integrated rural development;
 - primary health care;
 - management training;
 - organizational capacity building;
 - community consultation;
 - gender equity;
 - youth empowerment
 - collaboration with governments and their extension agencies.

Approach

Approach to Development

CBIDA engages in activities that have long-term benefits and are likely to continue after the project cycle is completed. CBIDA takes great care to ensure that it operates in a manner that strengthens the self-determination, self-reliance and collective action of its partners and their communities. CBIDA respects that as Bahá'í-inspired individuals, agencies and groups initiate community development projects, their capacity evolves over time to take on more complex activities where CBIDA's participation may no longer be necessary or beneficial.

CBIDA-supported projects involve and benefit all community members irrespective of their religious, political or ideological affiliation. CBIDA and its partners are committed to learning, ensuring spiritual and material progress, ethical practice, a human-rights based approach, local participation, gender equality, making a positive contribution to social cohesion, and respecting and appreciating cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity.

Lessons Learned Learnt

Over the years there have been many lessons learned from Bahá'í approaches to sustainable social and economic development. The following six dynamic processes summarize these lessons and serve as guiding principals for CBIDA' work:

1. Growth and change is organic and emerges from the grassroots;
2. Sustainable development is enhanced through authentic participation and a commitment to gradually build individual and organizational capacity;
3. An attitude of learning is required to apply scientific method and spiritual principles to community challenges through application, reflection and consultation;

4. Human resource development is a lifelong commitment;
5. Development activities must benefit all of humanity and contribute positively to the advancement of society as a whole; and
6. Simple and achievable activities gradually lead to the capacity to take on more complex sets of activities and integrated development practices that ensure sustainability.

Approach to Capacity Building

Attention to these key processes facilitates a learning dynamic that gradually increases the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to take concrete steps to promote their spiritual and material well-being. This process of capacity building involves a global enterprise of Bahá'ís from virtually every cultural and ethnic background working to apply the methods of science and the moral and spiritual insights found in the Bahá'í teachings to their particular local conditions. It is a process of action, evaluation, and adjustment; one in which local communities gradually improve their ability to define, analyze, and meet their own needs. Such an approach respects that religion can be a compelling force that shapes human motivation, gives confidence, inspires sacrifice, and is a constant source of encouragement.

Perspectives

Bahá'í International Community

The **Bahá'í Community of Canada** is part of a global community who share a common vision and commitment to build a better society based on world peace, the oneness of humanity, the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, the equality of women and men, and a commitment to serve all of humanity. Since 1949 the **Bahá'í International Community** maintains consultative status at the United Nations and is involved in more than 2000 development initiatives worldwide. On a global scale Bahá'í communities are involved with hundreds of social and economic development activities, such as operating small clinics on the Honduran coast, tutorial schools in Africa, or women's literacy programs in rural India. The vast majority of these activities are designed and managed by their respective national or regional Bahá'í administrative agencies.

Specific statements and articles on Bahá'í approaches to development are available at the official web site of the **Bahá'í International Community**. More information on development initiatives and projects of various local and national Bahá'í communities is available [here](#).

The Bahá'í International Community has produced the following texts which synthesize insights learned and outline an emerging conceptual framework guiding Bahá'í development work. For a brief description point over the images below. Full-text versions of these documents can be accessed by clicking on the images.



“For the Betterment of the World”, BIC (OSED), 2005

An analysis of the learning process taking place in Bahá’í development approaches, which has been facilitated by fostering and supporting action, reflection on action, consultation, study, the systematization of experiences, and training.

“Turning Point for all Nations”, BIC, 1995.

A statement on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations that calls on world leaders to take bold new steps to strengthen the United Nations' capacity for global coordination to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War world.

Religion & Development at the Crossroads: Convergence or Divergence?” BIC, 2002

A statement presented at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development that addresses the role the world's religions can and should play in fostering peace and unity.

Prosperity of Humankind”, BIC, 1993.

A statement presented at the UN World Summit on Social Development that examines prevailing assumptions and views of development, and explores a vision of human prosperity in its broadest sense.

“Valuing Spirituality in Development”, BIC, 1998.

A concept paper presented to the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, UK. The paper focuses on the importance of creating measures to assess development processes through the perspective of spiritual principles.

PRACTICE

With Bahá’í and Canadian government funding, CBIDA has supported community radio in Ecuador, facilitated primary health-care projects in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Uganda, helped a rural development project introduce greenhouse technologies in the Bolivian highlands, fostered an integrated approach to rural development in Haiti, supported literacy and vocational training programmes in India, and in the past decade accompanied its partners in Honduras and Colombia with the ongoing refinement and deployment of an innovative educational programme to empower rural youth in farming communities. A complete summary of CBIDA’s experiences can be found [here](#).

Current Initiatives

FUNDAEC (Colombia)
Asociación Bayan (Honduras)
Wildfire Dance Theatre (Canada)
Moral Education Centre (Costa Rica)

FUNDAEC

Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (transl. Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences) , is an NGO based in Cali, Colombia. CBIDA and CIDA are supporting FUNDAEC's alternative rural secondary curriculum through the "Empowering Rural Youth – Colombia" project. The project's objectives are to upgrade, translate and consolidate selected components of SAT its tutorial learning system (tr. Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial [**SAT**]). the Ministry of Education in Colombia recognizes and accredits the SAT methodology which has trained over 50,000 rural Colombian youth. FUNDAEC implements its current SAT programme to over 30,000 students through 400 tutors supported by a network of 30 NGOs.

The SAT programme provides a core educational curriculum designed specifically for rural youth. The programme fosters a commitment to spiritual transformation and active community service, and engages youth in activities that strengthen self-esteem, promote the creation of local social and economic structures, and mobilize local and regional financial resources.

The SAT programme has also been implemented in Honduras (CBIDA supported), Guatemala, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Colombia. With the translation of SAT texts to English, Bahá'í-inspired NGOs are experimenting with the programme in Zambia and other African nations.

Asociación Bayan

The **Bayan Association** is a Bahá'í-inspired NGO working in Honduras. Bayan has over twenty-five years of experience managing projects in rural development, the environment and rural health, including a hospital in the remote area of Palacios to serve the Miskito and Garífuna indigenous populations. The success of the SAT model in Colombia led Bayan to consider its application in the least accessible regions of Honduras. CBIDA and CIDA provide funding assistance to Bayan for the cultural adaptation of materials and strengthening of Bayan's organizational capacity for SAT implementation. SAT Students work with a tutor from their village and study math, science, literacy, agriculture and social studies with a focus on service to the community. Hands-on training activities include small-scale animal husbandry and pilot plots for agricultural experimentation. In 2003, the first three-year SAT expansion projected was successfully completed. CBIDA is currently exploring additional co-funding from CIDA to expand SAT implementation into western Honduras.

Wildfire Dance Theatre

As part of its public engagement and development education activities, CBIDA supports the Wildfire Dance Theatre (WDT), an agency of the [Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute](#) working out of London, Ontario. The Wildfire Dance Theatre is a non-profit social and economic development project that uses the arts as a means of inspiration to ignite positive moral and social change in schools and communities around the world. WDT uses artistic performances as a component of its world citizenship curriculum that engages youth, students and teachers in interactive discussion and activities in classrooms and communities that seek solutions to these pressing social issues.

With partial funding from CIDA's Global Classroom Initiative and technical assistance from CBIDA, WDT is developing new materials for use in high schools that complement the artistic performances the troupe presents on relevant social issues. The dances and corresponding curriculum explore numerous international cooperation themes outlined in the United Nations [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs) such as inclusiveness, gender equality, poverty, racism, AIDS, and global turmoil. This "head and heart" approach encourages participants to not only identify with the issues, but to understand them more fully and act. In this way, every one of the youth participants is a part of Canada's contribution to meeting the MDGs. The project also aims to redesign and update the WDT information package for schools, promotional brochures, and organizational website, and create a new evaluation and assessment tools for measuring learning outcomes.

The project also supports the development and translation of all of its materials into French, so that the troupe can broaden its reach to French-speaking communities in Canada and around the globe.

The latest lesson plans of the world citizenship curriculum that focus on international cooperation issues can be downloaded [here](#).

Asociación Centro de Educación Moral

After two years of working experience with Moral Leadership Training in the Talamanca area of Costa Rica, the [Asociación Centro de Educación Moral \(ACEM\)](#) was founded. ACEM carries out its training activities through an alliance with the AVINA Foundation, ANAI Association, The Nature Conservancy and OSED. ACEM offers moral leadership training in rural communities to organizations and individuals that are actively engaged in community development and in particular environmental stewardship. ACEM's combines its training with widespread community awareness programs through community theatre and local radio. The theatre and radio programs highlight the collective need for moral solutions to society's problems by engaging people in a dynamic process of conflict resolution,

guided by moral values. CBIDA is currently exploring how to assist the strengthening and expansion of ACEM's work.

Previous

CBIDA first began its collaborative endeavours in development in the 1980s, when it secured matching funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to support [Radio Bahá'í Ecuador](#). The purpose of this project was to help the Radio with its plans to augment cultural and agricultural programming, which resulted in the highly successful “people’s radio” techniques that were shared and used successfully at six other Bahá'í radio stations.

Since that time, CBIDA has successfully negotiated funding and supported project initiatives of numerous partners around the globe. CBIDA aided the introduction of greenhouse technologies in a rural development project in the Bolivian highlands, contributed to integrated rural development projects in Haiti, and facilitated literacy and vocational training programmes in India.

With the collaboration and support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CBIDA has facilitated primary health-care projects in Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda, a rural development project introducing greenhouses in the Bolivian Altiplano, an integrated approach to rural development in Haiti, and literacy and vocational training programmes in India.

CBIDA collaborated with the [New Era Development Institute](#) (NEDI), a training centre for rural youth in Panchgani, India. NEDI's primary focus is to offer unemployed rural youth vocational skills that allow them to establish a business or find employment. NEDI combines technical training with a core curriculum of spiritual self-examination to help youth define their purpose, transform their lives, and serve as role models in their communities. With CIDA funding, CBIDA facilitated the strengthening of its programs and infrastructure over a four-year period.

As part of its approach to integrated community development, CBIDA has supported local partners in Africa with a variety of health and education initiatives. Three of CBIDA's projects in support of the Canadian International Immunization programme (Phase II), were funded by CIDA through the [Canadian Public Health Association](#) (CPHA). Projects in support of improving maternal-infant health, immunization, public health education and the prevention of childhood diseases have been carried out in partnership with the Canadian Public Health Association. One initiative supported the [William Mmutle Masetlha Foundation](#) in Zambia to offer primary health care education in support of the Zambian government's “Expanded Programme for Immunization,” a component of the country's plan to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000. The “Zambia Bahá'í Primary Health Care Project” identified and trained a cadre of volunteer Community Health Educators (CHE), to facilitate community-based primary health activities and educate their communities about basic hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention (emphasizing HIV-AIDS and malaria). The project helped to increase the level of immunization coverage and integrated primary health care into a broad range

of development-related training programs.

This initiative also provided ongoing training and refresher courses for the community health educators. Winning praise from local government authorities and the Ministry of Health, in 1992, this project was extended as part of Phase 2 of the Canadian International Immunization programme (CPIIP2), in a multi-country initiative in Africa.

In Kenya and Burkina Faso, project activities centred on primary health education, and in Uganda they focused on preparing and implementing a middle-level management training programme for health practitioners. In each project, the overall approach supported the sustainability and capacity building of local partners in the areas of health, education, rural development and administration, with gender equality being an integral component of each project.

Throughout its history, CBIDA and its partners have learned and served together. In the past decade, CBIDA has placed great emphasis on this learning, and with its local partners has introduced a variety of innovative educational programs designed for rural farming communities.

From direct support of schools and regional training institutes in India to larger scale programs supporting a tutorial learning system designed specifically as a secondary school curriculum for rural youth in Colombia, CBIDA remains committed to education as a key component to sustainable development.

As the international community strives to meet its commitments for poverty reduction articulated in the UN Millennium Development Goals, governments and NGOs are accelerating the pace to scale up successful and sustainable models and practices. CIDA has been assisting the CBIDA to implement a successful tutorial learning system developed by FUNDAEC, the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences Foundation, in Colombia. The tutorial learning system, or “sistema de aprendizaje tutorial” (SAT), is a formal and flexible secondary educational system that holistically integrates diverse aspects of community development. The approach emerged out of a desire for a curriculum that is not only appropriate for rural communities but which simultaneously creates alternatives for primary and secondary agricultural production, social organization, micro economic development, and the creation of conditions for community wellbeing.

Since 1974, FUNDAEC has been engaged in an ongoing process of experimentation, reflection and consultation, examining viable approaches to create prosperous conditions in rural and agricultural communities. FUNDAEC has successfully implemented SAT in Colombia through an NGO network working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, benefiting over 35,000 student participants in rural communities. The success of the SAT model has prompted CIDA and CBIDA to support the ongoing refinement of the SAT texts, and the organizational capacity building for SAT programme delivery in Honduras and Colombia.

The SAT programme has gradually attracted the attention of the international community, and FUNDAEC received the European Expo Jury Verdict Award (2000) and the Club of Budapest “Change the World Award” in 2002. CIDA funding has enabled the ongoing revision, adaptation and translation to English of the first fifteen of seventy-four SAT texts that correspond to the latter years of basic education. Additional materials that use the same approach and delivery system designed for youth aged 11—15 are already in use.

CBIDA is now planning to introduce SAT related programs for training junior youth capacities for sustainable development in Africa.

Partners

CBIDA partners with NGOs, Bahá’í agencies, Bahá’í-inspired agencies, and the communities they serve around the world. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Canada and the Bahá’í World Center’s Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) approve CBIDA partners. Partner agencies normally have some prior experience and can demonstrate their capacity to administer their development activities.

CBIDA, together with its partners, explores: a) innovative funding options for their activities; b) any technical assistance needs; c) project and programme development, monitoring and evaluation requirements; and d) other needs and services.

CBIDA enjoys an active relationship with the Partnership Branch of the [Canadian International Development Agency](#)

Development Education

As part of its commitment to promote an understanding of the aims and objectives of the Bahá’í approach to international social and economic development, CBIDA facilitates workshops, organizes activities, and publishes articles and case studies ([see resources](#)). In addition, CBIDA can facilitate access to international consultants in a variety of development related fields to interested NGOs and agencies.

CBIDA collaborates with other agencies of the Canadian and International Bahá’í Community, as its mandate complements many facets of Bahá’í community life. Community development is an integral aspect of Bahá’í efforts to create a pattern of living that releases and develops individual potential and simultaneously promotes the collective good.

The Bahá’í commitment to human rights, social and economic advancement, the upliftment of the

status of women and moral development are expressions of faith in action. To this end, CBIDA participates in local, national and international conferences, fora, symposia and other such events on issues of human rights, the advancement of women, moral education, the environment, global peace, and social development. Recent examples include the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Earth Summit plus 5, Habitat II in Istanbul, the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen), the NGO Forum and World Summit on Women in China, the International Conference on Human Rights in 1994, and the World Conference on the Environment (UNCED) in Brazil.

RESOURCES

Research

Below is a short collection of articles, essays and scholarly research done on and related to the projects that CBIDA works with:

CBIDA, "Building Sustainable Livelihoods through Agriculture in Honduras." unpublished article. [electronic copy](#)

Honeyman, C. (2004). An orientation towards human progress: Developing social responsibility in rural Honduran youth through the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial. Unpublished Bachelor Thesis, Harvard University. [electronic copy](#)

International Development Research Centre, Ed. *The Lab, the Temple and the Market*. Ottawa: IDRC. [electronic copy](#)

Leggett, M. (2006). As drops become waves: A case study of Education and Transformation with the Sistema Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) in Rural Colombia. Unpublished Thesis, University of Guelph, Ontario. [electronic copy](#)

Murphy-Graham, Erin. (2005). "Para Seguir Adelante: Women's Empowerment and Education in Honduras" Center for Latin American Studies, University of California. [electronic copy](#)

Learning materials

Below is a brief list of some of the materials that have informed the work of CBIDA and its partner agencies, and outcomes resulting from that collaboration.

1. Materials on Bahá'í social and economic development:

- [For the betterment of the World \(pdf\)](#)
- [Bahá'í International Community documents](#)

2. CBIDA powerpoint presentations:

- ["Baha'i Perspectives on Development"](#)
- ["Ending Gender Disparity through Education"](#) (*from CIDA's International Development Days*)

3. Wildfire Dance Theatre - [World Citizenship Curriculum](#) exploring the following themes: human rights, gender equality, poverty, HIV-AIDS, and global turmoil.

4. Video Production: CBIDA video on the Bayan Association's introduction of the SAT programme in Honduras (28min, bilingual). ([available upon request](#)).

Links

Below is a list of organizations CBIDA has partnered with or whose work is closely associated with CBIDA's:

[Asociación Bayan](#)

[Bahá'í Community of Canada](#)

[Bahá'í International Community](#)

[Bahá'í World News Service](#)

[Canadian International Development Agency](#)

[Canadian Public Health Association](#)

[Centro de Educación Moral](#)

[Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural](#)

[Development Learning Press](#)

[Equinox Development Learning Group](#)

[FUNDAEC](#)

[New Era Development Institute](#)

[One Country Magazine](#)

[William Mmutle Masethla Foundation](#)

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