

Guiding Principles of CIDA's ACE Strategy

Our ACE Strategy vigorously promotes key guiding principles of CIDA programming and development approach worldwide. These include:

- **Gender Equality:** Special efforts are needed if women and girls are to achieve their full human rights in governance and civil society. The challenges and constraints to women's participation and active citizenship are stronger than those facing males. To treat all persons without discrimination may not suffice to remedy the current state of gender inequality in governance and decision-making in Egypt. The ACE Strategy shall strongly advocate and advance women's full representation and participation in governance, civil society leadership, and the capacity strengthening of public institutions. The Strategy seeks to build strong institutions that are inclusive, actively consult with women and girls, and have the vision, administrative and professional capacities to support the achievement of gender equality in Egypt. Initiatives under this Strategy will closely follow the Gender Equality Strategy of CIDA's Egypt Program.¹ Gender equality is a top concern of the ACE Strategy for institutional capacity strengthening for good governance and active citizenship in Egypt.
- **Good Governance – A Pillar of Poverty Reduction:** Globalization and high birth rates both demand faster economic growth to improve livelihoods and public services. Yet growth in Egypt remains below potential, dampened by weak governance and deteriorating public services. Improved governance leads to higher standards of living and poverty alleviation. As World Bank research now shows, “improved standards of living are in fact the result of improved governance – and not the other way around.”² CIDA defines poverty reduction as “recognizing and developing the potential of the poor; increasing their productive capacity; and reducing barriers limiting their participation in society. Poverty reduction must focus on improving the social, economic and environmental conditions of the poor and their access to decision making [emphasis added].”³ Good governance is essential to achieving and sustaining poverty reduction. The ACE considers good governance synonymous with democratic governance. But in the current Egyptian context and in Arabic translation, “democratic” governance is too narrowly associated with political representation and participation.
- **Human Rights – A Pillar of Good Governance:** Good democratic governance is broadly participatory and inclusive of all citizens, defends citizen rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association, maintains peace and security, and affirms the legitimacy of a diversity of citizen opinion and views. The ACE Strategy firmly regards all Egyptians as citizens and active rights-holders – not “clients” or “beneficiaries” – with protected rights of citizenship and basic human rights, without discrimination or inequality. The essential principles of human rights embraced by our Strategy include:

¹ *Gender Equality Orientation Package: CIDA Egypt Program*, 2005.

² World Bank, *Better Governance for Development in the Middle East and North Africa*, MENA Development Report, 2003, Foreword, p.xiii.

³ <http://www/acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida>

1. Participation and Inclusion: Citizen’s voices and interests shall be heard in public policy choices and allocating resources, and in the monitoring of public service delivery and public spending.
2. Equality and Non-discrimination: Policies, programmes and practices shall neither exclude nor discriminate – intentionally or unintentionally – any group, nor reinforce social, political or economic inequalities.
3. Accountability and Transparency: Public institutions and authority shall be accountable to the rule of law and answerable to citizens for the observance of human rights. Citizens shall be informed of governance policy and actions so as to exercise and defend their rights.
4. Indivisibility and Interdependence: All human rights are equal in status and inherent to the dignity of every human being. Moreover, human rights are often inter-related, such that progress towards fulfilling one right requires progress on other rights.

CIDA’s Egypt Program shall integrate concern for human rights into its project investments, strategy, and knowledge development. Our commitment to human rights throughout our programming, from the problem analysis through results statement, attention to the poor, budgeting and management practices, is explicit. This, the Human Rights Approach to Development (HRAD), is a key guiding principle of our ACE Strategy.

- ***Decentralization***: In democratic societies, the *local* level is the principal locus of citizen and CSO participation in governance. By devolving authority and responsibility for planning and implementing services and allocating resources to local levels, decentralization facilitates citizen participation and CSO partnerships with government, and more responsive public institutions. Where problems are addressed close to their sources, services are better aligned to needs. And citizens using these services then share with government accountability for the results. The ACE Strategy supports progress towards decentralization in Egypt as an important step towards better communication and dialogue between citizens and public institutions, increased opportunity for CSO participation in alliance with government, and enhanced public institution accountability for performance.

“Egyptians realize that excessive centralization is retarding national development and that the cost of not decentralizing is heavy.

Decentralization promises to unleash fresh energies, capacities and contributions from the local level. By building the appropriate policy and *institutional* frameworks [emphasis added] decentralization should inject dynamism into social and economic development and create, at the local level, a form of governance which will be able to better respond to the demands for more efficient and better quality services, while making decision-makers more accountable to the people.”

Egypt Human Development Report, 2004, Institute for National Planning and UNDP, p.ix.

- ***Results-Based Development:*** A results-based approach to development, with improved monitoring and evaluation of program investments, is a key principle of CIDA assistance worldwide.⁴ CIDA is committed to achieving results with the ACE Strategy. The design, planning and management of program investments will include results targets to be achieved within specific time frames, the use of performance measurement and results frameworks, and the monitoring and evaluation of results achievement with particular focus on the sustainability of these investments.

⁴ *Canada Making a Difference in the World: A Policy Statement on Strengthening Aid Effectiveness*, September 2002.