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# The Geneva Federation for Cooperation and Development (GFCD)

From a round table of a dozen associations involved in development cooperation at its foundation in 1966, the GFCD (FGC in French) has grown to become the umbrella organization of around 50 Geneva-based (METTRE LIEN MOTEUR DE RECHERCHE ASSOCIATIONS) local associations, grouping tens of thousands of concerned citizens functioning mostly on a volunteer basis. Very diverse in perspective, structure and activities, they have chosen to give up some of their autonomy and decision-making power to work together towards sustainable global development, based on social justice and human dignity. The GFCD offers its members a forum for the exchange of experiences, a public platform for the discussion of key North-South issues, a lobby to promote international solidarity, and a channel for the funding of [development and information projects](#). [Priority areas](#) are education and training, rural and urban development, employment, health, environmental conservation and rehabilitation, and the support of indigenous cultures.

The Geneva associations work with local grassroots organizations and NGOs in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, thus seeking to ensure that activities respond to real needs and use appropriate technology, local know-how and resources, and are replicable. Special attention is paid to the full participation of women as programme protagonists and beneficiaries. Empowerment is also essential if local populations are to bring about change in their social, economic and cultural living conditions. [Click here to consult our PROJECT SEARCH ENGINE \(METTRE LIEN MOTEUR RECHERCHE PROJETS\)](#)

The GFCD is a private non-profit organization but its institutional and [programme funding](#) comes from public sources : the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC or [DDC in French](#)), the [State of Geneva](#), the [City of Geneva](#) and a certain number of municipalities of the Canton .

It offers its funding partners a thorough [project screening process](#), prior to approval, and regular financial and narrative reports. It encourages collaboration amongst its member associations working in certain geographical and thematic areas and fosters information and educational work with the Geneva public, both on specific projects and on wider international issues.

The GFCD is run at low cost on a combined voluntary-professional basis. Approximately 35 persons, elected by the General Assembly of member associations, provide some 5,500 hours of voluntary work annually as members of the [Board](#), [Technical](#), [Information](#) and [Financial Control](#) Commissions. A small [Secretariat](#) of six salaried, part-time staff

(3.8 posts) coordinates the work. Five other cantons, [Vaud](#) , [Jura](#) , [Ticino](#) , [Fribourg](#) and [Valais](#) now have federations based on the model of the GFCD.

## Our funding partners

### *The State of Geneva*

Since 1967 the [State of Geneva](#) has allocated an annual budget to development cooperation. The Geneva Parliament also votes special credits for humanitarian aid as needs arise, generally for the Swiss Red Cross or the International Red Cross Committee.

Of its annual development cooperation budget, two-thirds is channelled through the GFCD and the other third spent on scholarships for students from developing countries and a number of development projects run by organizations outside the GFCD family.

### **Drug monies used for a good cause!**

In 1994, after a campaign led by concerned politicians, the GFCD and a group of Geneva social institutions, a new law was passed by the Geneva Parliament, whereby part of the illicit monies confiscated as a result of drug trafficking and money laundering should be used for the prevention of the production and consumption of drugs. Half of this fund is for use by NGOs in countries producing drugs, mainly channelled through the GFCD, and half for public health work in the State of Geneva, primarily with young people. The GFCD has been able to support 17 projects from 1995 to 2000, for nearly 4 million Swiss francs.

[www.geneve.ch/solidarite](http://www.geneve.ch/solidarite)

### *The City of Geneva*

The [City of Geneva](#), one of the 45 local authorities of the Canton, earmarks around 0.5% of its annual budget for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. In June 2000, it decided to progressively increase this percentage to 0.7% over the next few years. For the major part of the development budget, the City works in close partnership with the GFCD, supporting both development and information projects. It has also developed direct links with local authorities in other parts of the world.

<http://www.ville-ge.ch/>

### *Other Geneva municipalities*

The following Geneva municipalities work with the GFCD :

In 2004:

Bardonnex, Bernex, Carouge, Chêne-Bourg, Chêne-Bougeries, Collex, Genthod, Grand-Saconnex, Jussy, Lancy, Meinier, Meyrin, Onex, Perly, Plan-les-Ouates, Puplinge, Thônex, Vernier, Versoix, Veyrier.

In 2005:

Carouge, Chêne-Bourg, Plan-les-Ouates, Onex, Bernex, Meinier, Meyrin, Vernier, Collex-Bossy, Veyrier, Jussy, Confignon, Perly, Le Grand-Saconnex, Chêne-Bougeries, Thônex, Bardonnex, Puplinge et Lancy

### ***Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/DDC)***

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC, or in French: DDC), part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, is in charge of development cooperation, assistance to Eastern Europe and humanitarian aid. Of its 1,1 billion francs budget, 32.6% is being spent for multilateral aid and 67.4% to bilateral aid. 45% of its bilateral cooperation is earmarked for 18 target countries and regions. Some 127.5 million francs of bilateral cooperation (27%) is allocated to Swiss development NGOs, including 4.2 million francs for projects approved by the GFCD; an amount that has to be matched by 50% raised by the GFCD from Geneva sources."

<http://www.ddc.admin.ch/>

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## **The Geneva Federation for Cooperation and Development (GFCD)**

### **Statement of principle**

The Geneva Federation for Cooperation and Development (GFCD), founded in 1966 by 12 associations, had fifty member associations by 2003.

After fifteen years of accumulated experience in Geneva, Switzerland and abroad, the GFCD had already in 1990 considered it necessary to update a Statement of Principle agreed on in 1975.

After a full and lengthy consultation carried out during 2001/2002, a further revision of the Statement of Principle was approved by the General Assembly of 10 June 2003 - thereby defining a revised context for all GFCD activities.

#### **Preamble**

1. Situations of socio-economic inequality, domination, violence, violation of human rights and the rights of peoples, cultural standardization, environmental degradation and the squandering of natural resources are on the increase - both locally and world-wide. Switzerland is part of the economic and political system that is, to a large extent, responsible for these problems.

2. Development strategies may evolve over the years, but the basic problems remain.

## **The goals of the GFCD**

3. The GFCD has two main objectives:

- to contribute to the elimination of the above problems;
- to contribute towards increasing the freedom of choice of societies in their quest for economic, social and cultural well being.

4. A broad spectrum of local and regional and global measures can be envisaged to attain these objectives, ranging from humanitarian assistance and the defense of human rights to structural changes at the international level. The GFCD has chosen to concentrate on two forms of action which seem most appropriate for it:

- international development cooperation, with the South:
- information, development education and debate, in the North.

## **Partnership**

5. Development cooperation, being more than a one-way transfer of funds or technological know-how, is also a flow of exchange of all kinds between partners. It should encourage the people concerned to assume responsibility for their own development.

6. The partners in the South of GFCD association member's are primarily the following:

- NGOs
- federations or groupings of NGOs
- NGO support organizations
- peoples' organizations (local communities - at neighborhood or village level - and other groups such as women, etc.)
- peasant and minority organisations
- cooperatives
- trade unions
- public and local government services with participatory operating methods that enable the population to express its needs and priorities and assume its responsibilities.

## **Principles of Action**

7. The member associations shall:

- analyse and take account of the macro-economic impact of projects on the society within

which they are integrated;

- make every effort to integrate their activities within a coherent overall strategy;
- support the promotion of human rights - including economic, social and cultural rights;
- take account of gender perspectives and promote the access of women to social power;
- promote economic solidarity and food sovereignty;
- take account of effects which programmes may have on the environment;
- study the effects of projects on micro-economic systems; and
- encourage the practice of self-evaluation of programmes;

### **Fields of Activity**

8. In the South, cooperation programmes destined for the less favoured may cover many fields. The GFCD has decided to give priority to the following, in order of importance:

- culture
- rural development
- urban development
- education and training
- employment
- health
- environment
- strengthening of civil society.

9. In the North, information, development education and public debate on the problems raised by different levels of development concentrates on ways that member associations can contribute to remedy this unbalance. Such activity aims at the same time to reach a wider public within civil society and with political and economic responsibility so as to contribute to the debate on these issues.

### **Methods of Work**

10. In development cooperation, the member associations of the GFCD work in the following ways:

- programmes

- projects
- financial measures to re-enforce partners autonomy
- institutional support to partners in the South
- exchanges and profiting from experience

11. The GFCD and its members' work in information, development education and the promotion of public debate takes the following forms:

- training trainers and educators
- supporting institutions specializing in information
- publications and audio-visual productions
- use of the media
- participating in/ or organizing public events
- information and experience-sharing between member associations, their partners and the GFCD
- regular contacts with elected political representatives
- public statements on current issues

12. The Federation's member associations shall abide by the above principles and commit themselves to ensuring that their members share them and reflect them in their projects and spheres of influence.