SeeChange

Impact Report 2021 - 2022

seechangeinitiative.org

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Highlights & Reflections

A word from our Executive Director
Reflections on Purpose

After months of intense COVID-19 health response in 2020-2021, we have been reflecting on who we are and what we want to be as SeeChange, seeking insights from our partner communities and organisations. We were swept up in the wave of COVID-19 pandemic response, driven by our humanitarian impulse to reach out and directly support communities who were the most vulnerable during the pandemic and the least served by the weak and inequitable global response. At the same time the impacts of the climate crisis, racism and geo-political conflict on people's lives has been creating entrenched inequities, not least in health, that we feel compelled to address as an organisation.

And so, we find SeeChange sitting at the nexus of direct action and systems change. Everything starts with the communities responding to health crises. Any efforts at system change efforts must begin with the communities who understand what they need and when. Systems change must be anchored in that reality so as to develop the mindset and practical approaches needed to face the conflating crises facing our planet and all its lifeforms. Simply put, our collective future depends on us listening, embracing and giving powerful spaces to the diversity of community voices: therein lie the strengths and assets that can speak for themselves and influence the future of humanitarian action.

Our strategy for managing this action-systems change nexus has emerged from working and learning with communities and the partners in different spaces and places. In seeking a world of thriving, well communities, we aim to contribute and strengthen the movement to decolonise today's humanitarian crisis response system, through promoting a community-led and community-driven approach, an approach we call CommunityFirst. We want to support communities as the agents of their responses to humanitarian health crises and we do this through three clear and interdependent pillars of action: Direct Action, Partnerships and Paradigm Shift.

Today, a new humanitarianism needs to be rooted in the truth of the colonial past of humanitarian action and global health generally. It is time to accept the truth that we can no longer bring aid to the other. Instead we must understand that effective humanitarianism lies in co-creating responses between those facing health crises and those who will facilitate effective support, in an aspect of curiosity and mutual respect of inherent strengths and assets. Humanitarianism needs to create the space where communities can express their strengths, their assets and their realities, and retake their power to make their own decisions and seek the support they need. This means leaving them with the privilege of making mistakes, rather than trying to save them.

After truth comes reconciliation. This is reconciliation not only with those people who have been harmed by processes often unwittingly imposed on communities facing crisis, but also a reconciliation of differing world views. There is a lot of good in the humanitarian system today and there is also a lot of strength and power in the communities facing health crises. At the moment we focus only on the goods of the system, and have ignored the humanitarianism latent in the communities. In decolonising humanitarian action, it is time to bring focus to the strengths of communities and reshape the system and the resources therein to recognise, re-empower and energise the rights of the communities facing health crisis. That is CommunityFirst.

- Rachel Kiddell-Monroe,
SeeChange Executive Director

Highlights
2021-2022

Ongoing action with communities

- Our COVID-19 work continued and our operations expanded significantly in over 20 communities in Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Sierra Leone and Venezuela.

- We restarted our work on tuberculosis in Nunavut and intergenerational workshops in Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq.

- We have been scaling deep in Sierra Leone and working closely with partners in Colombia to develop a project in the Santa Marta region.

CommunityFirst Solutions

- Co-created our CommunityFirst methodology with communities.

- Designed and published the CommunityFirst Framework with academic research support. It includes techniques and approaches of community participatory methodology which we adapted to humanitarian health crisis response.

- We completed full case studies on activities with partners in Honduras and Clyde River.

- We completed our CommunityFirst Monitoring and evaluation Framework.

Institutional Partnerships

- We began our first engagement with an international humanitarian organization as part of our systems change work. With Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders we are working on the ground to adapt the methodology to their standard operating procedure and project life cycle.

- We began our first engagement with an institutional partner as part of our systems change work. With the Population Health Department of the Government of Nunavut, we began supporting their Population Health Realignment Project using our CommunityFirst methodologies to support community health workers and clinical health centre staff to interact more effectively.

- We are working with new funding partners in Canada.

Increased advocacy

- We have been appearing in many venues to advocate for decolonised approaches to humanitarian action, demonstrating our practical Community First approach.

- We organized our first multidisciplinary Decolonising Humanitarian Action course with McGill University Global Health Summer Institutes.

Internal development

- A Decolonisation, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework and Charter have been created for the organisation and validated by the Board of Directors.

- Skills development for staff including on sexual and reproductive health, anti-racism and unconscious bias, gender-based violence, decolonised approaches to health, web3, planetary health, indigenous research practice and participatory community methodologies.

- Launching an Anti-Racism Book Club for the team and regular lunch & learn sessions on different topics.

- Approving SeeChange Strategic Directions Framework 2022-2024.

- New staff hires (Intercultural health advisor, grant writer, fractional Chief Financial Officer).

- Our first Board and Staff Retreat in 2022..

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Timeline

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Spring & Summer 2021

April
- SeeChange becomes a Charity
- Presentation at the Humanitarian Leadership Conference, Sydney, Australia (Apr 28-29)
- Presentation at MSF Scientific Days International 2021 (May 18-21)

June-July
- Launch of the CommunityFirst COVID-19 Relief Fund to support our partners on the frontlines of mobilising the COVID-19 response in Reitoca, Honduras
- Internal Lunch & Learns on Planetary Health and Humanitarian Action, on Two-Eyed Seeing and on Holacracy & Sociocracy.

Fall 2021

September-October
- 1st SeeChange Staff Retreat, Montreal
- CommunityFirst Latin American Activators Meeting
- CommunityFirst Committee Meeting in Sierra Leone
- Women's Empowerment Workshops in Reitoca, Honduras

November
- Presentation to the MSF Scientific Days Latin America
- SeeChange Keynote Panel at the Canadian Conference on Global Health (Nov 25-26)
- CommunityFirst Emotional Wellness Workshop

Winter 2021-2022

January
- Launch of the CommunityFirst Transformational Investment Capacity project with Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors without Borders
- Visit to Guatemala, Colombia & Honduras (Visit to Reitoca, Honduras: Workshops (Leadership, Mental Health Youth, Mask & Soap) & Visit to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala)
- Community First Presentation to the Government of Chile

February
- CommunityFirst COVID-19 Omicron Sessions at Ilisaqsivik in Clyde River, Nunavut

Spring-Summer 2022

March-April
- Visit to Clyde River & Intergenerational TB Workshop
- Presentation at Canadian Global Health Conference
- Presentation at the Glasswing International Mental Health Conference

June-August
- McGill-SeeChange Summer Institute on Decolonising Humanitarian Action
- Launch of the Decolonisation, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion project
- Aug 2022: MSF CommunityFirst TIC pilot #1: Madre de Dios, Peru

Fall 2022

September
- Visit to Arviat, Nunavut
- SeeChange 2nd Staff Retreat, Montreal
- SeeChange 2nd Spotlight public event, Montreal
- SeeChange 1st Board and Staff Retreat, Montreal

October
- Visit to Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq for TB Empowerment Workshops

Winter 2022

November-December
- MSF CommunityFirst TIC pilot #2: Tonkolili, Sierra Leone
- Visit to Iqaluit, Nunavut
- MSF CommunityFirst TIC pilot #3: Venezuela

Initiatives

1 Canadian Initiatives

SeeChange has been operating projects in Nunavut, Canada since 2019.

CommunityFirst Tuberculosis Empowerment Project

In partnership with the Pathy Family Foundation and the Ilisaqsivik Society of Clyde River, Nunavut, SeeChange runs a program based on trauma-informed Tuberculosis (TB) empowerment workshops. Community members who participate in the workshop report feeling a sense of healing, empowerment and increased agency related to their health and health of their community. Alongside having greater knowledge about TB and how to prevent it, participants also report an increased willingness to visit their local health centers if they have TB symptoms.

Other communities in Nunavut and Nunavik are interested in adopting this approach to TB. Additionally, the content of these workshops has been expanded to include COVID-19, as both respiratory diseases are high-risk to the community.

Key impacts:

- Establishing an integrative, trauma-informed and community-led approach to TB and beyond.
- Strengthening institutional and local collaborations for paradigm change.
- Empowering Community TB Advocates: Other than workshop participants, these advocates include the former and current TB Project coordinators, workshop facilitators, translators and counselors. We have trained an estimated 25 community leaders as TB and COVID-19 knowledge-holders.
- Nurturing women's wellbeing and mobilising women's leadership in times of crisis and to eliminate TB in the community.
- Advocating for a paradigm change for philanthropy in the North towards longer term funding horizons in Inuit communities where the trauma of their history, plus the realities of life, impact the momentum and cadence of the initiatives.

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CommunityFirst Population Health Teams Realignment Project

SeeChange is supporting the The Government of Nunavut's Department of Health Operations to re-organise their population health teams at the community level to empower community members' ownership of their health outcomes. Since April 2022, the SeeChange team has traveled to two pilot communities in Nunavut.

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CommunityFirst Wellness & Empathetic Leadership Project

Lululemon's social impact program funds our work in Canada to integrate movement and mindfulness in our programming. With these funds, we are developing Leadership and Wellness toolkits that integrate mindfulness and movement practices to support self-care among women and youth leaders in crisis situations.

Since November 2021, we have been holding interviews with members of several vulnerabilised communities about their self-care practices through the pandemic in order to develop a truly 'CommunityFirst Wellness' toolkit. Building on this knowledge and on our existing programming around community-led responses to the TB epidemic in Nunavut, we hosted the first well-being workshop in Clyde River.

In parallel, we have been consulting with an Empathy Specialist to develop our Empathetic Leadership toolkit for youth and women in times of crises.

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2   Global Initiatives

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, we have extended our work to respond to the pandemic and beyond:

CommunityFirst Transformational Investment Capacity Project

In October 2021, SeeChange was invited to become an implementing partner of MSF Latin America for their Transformational Investment Capacity project. The project goal is to adapt SeeChange's CommunityFirst framework to the MSF context.

Building on and complementing already existing Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders (MSF) community engagement initiatives, we are working to create a model for MSF that meaningfully involves communities at every phase of the project cycle, including handover and emergency preparedness.

In line with the many recent recommendations and calls within MSF to transform the way the organisation works with vulnerabilised communities, this program aims to demonstrate the "how" by piloting the CommunityFirst approach with MSF projects. By increasing the community's sense of ownership over the response to the health crises they are facing, more sustainable community-led responses are possible. We are doing so by piloting the CommunityFirst framework in MSF projects in diverse contexts. By the end of the incubator year, we will develop a toolkit of resources for MSF projects that will support project teams to implement CommunityFirst.

Key impacts:

- CommunityFirst Framework has been shared throughout MSF
- Three pilot projects underway in Peru, Sierra Leone, Venezuela
- CommunityFramework adapted to two distinct contexts:
  - Human trafficking and situations of sexual & gender-based violence (SGBV)
  - Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health in rural areas
- CommunityFirst adapted to and tested at two different phases of the project cycle
  - Exploratory mission
  - Existing project

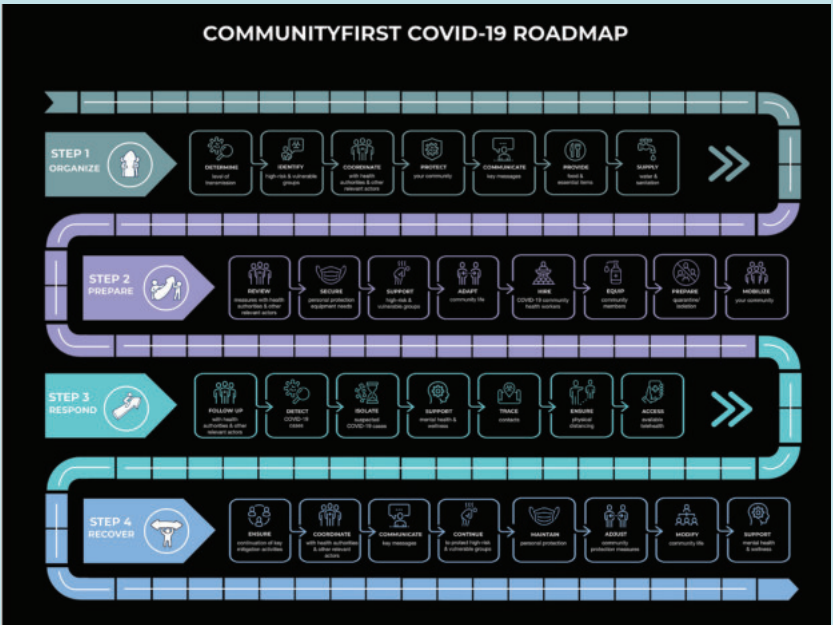(c) SeeChange Photography

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CommunityFirst Roadmap Project

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CommunityFirst COVID-19 Roadmap was created to support vulnerabilised communities in organising, preparing and responding to COVID-19 as part of the emergency response and preparedness. The Roadmap was translated into six languages and formed the basis of an emergency response led by communities with on demand support from humanitarian actors.

Key impacts:

- the Roadmap has been accessed by communities in over 100 countries spanning every continent
- Over 7,000 unique visitors to the site
- 12 communities in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Kenya and Sierra Leone that requested support were accompanied by SeeChange in the direct implementation of adapted Roadmaps
- Nearly 300 community leaders trained
- In 2022, SeeChange worked closely with three communities in Central and Eastern Sierra Leone, accompanying them virtually to adapt and implement their Roadmap

COMMUNITYFIRST COVID-19 ROADMAP

STEP 1 ORGANIZE
STEP 2 PREPARE
STEP 3 RESPOND
STEP 4 RECOVER

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CommunityFirst Solutions Project in Reitoca

SeeChange received a grant from the Canadian Embassy in Honduras to support Indigenous women's networks in the Reitoca region to strengthen their leadership skills in health crisis response. Specifically the project aimed to strengthen and empower women leaders in Reitoca to improve the community's COVID-19 response and recovery. In Reitoca, women play a critical role to implement COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures.

Key impacts:

- Community to access verified health information; adapt emergency planning tools to organise, prepare for and sustainably respond to the pandemic; and develop COVID-19 vaccine confidence.
- Spurred the creation of the Network of the Organised Women of Reitoca
- 50 women activators were trained in health crisis leadership
- The Network created a health action plan to respond to their COVID-19.
- With our partners, workshops were held on COVID-19 response, women's leadership, mask-making, soap-making, mental health and self care with youth and women.
- Women in the Network have become more confident in their leadership role and are supporting their community to become more self-reliant and resilient in the face of future health crises.
- By playing a key role in advocating for the health needs of the community, the Network members are empowering themselves and developing a sense of ownership over their own health and wellbeing.
- The Network is now developing alternative economic opportunities to support their health crisis response work

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3 Frameworks Initiatives

Over the past 18-months, we have been consolidating our CommunityFirst framework methodological guide with support from our academic partners at the University of Toronto, York University and ISGlobal

CommunityFirst Research Projects

The CommunityFirst research fellowship with the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health at York University contributes to the global health and humanitarianism research agenda. The goal of this fellowship is to investigate, research and develop a solid evidence base for SeeChange Initiative's innovative CommunityFirst approach in humanitarian projects. This is done by developing CommunityFirst tools, publishing articles, delivering seminars and investigating applied methods such as Community-Based Participatory Action Research.

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness has created two CommunityFirst Fellowships with SeeChange (See Publications & Articles Section for full papers).

CommunityFirst COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Impact Grant Project

The COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Impact Grant Program (Co-RIG) with the University of Toronto Department of Family and Community Medicine, is a research grant to investigate the outcomes of the CommunityFirst COVID-19 Roadmap with the objective of creating a CommunityFirst Toolkit for Indigenous communities in Canada to adopt and adapt
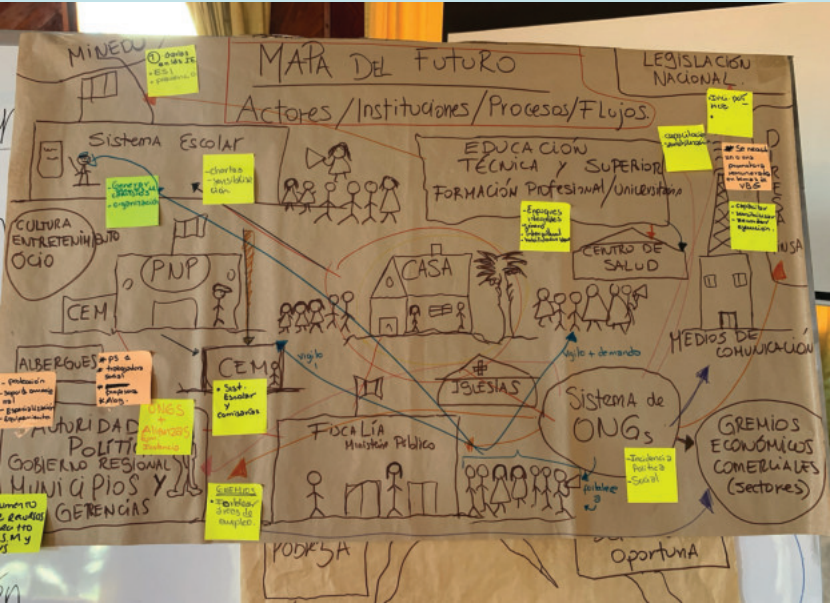
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CommunityFirst Decoloniality, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Framework and Charter Project

The MITACs Business Strategy Internship (BSI) supports students to develop innovative projects designed to help an organisation thrive. As part of a Master's student was granted two grants (summer and fall 2022) to support the creation of an innovative approach to DEI at SeeChange.

Given the limitations of many contemporary, traditional DEI initiatives, the CommunityFirst Decoloniality, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D-DEI) framework was developed to serve as an innovative, theory-backed, and practical approach to fostering DEI within the organization and with our partners. By introducing the concept of 'decoloniality', the D-DEI framework aims to tackle the root cause of the power imbalances plaguing the field of global health (coloniality). It was constructed based on an interdisciplinary literature review, Jasmine's autoethnography, and continuous feedback and reflexivity on behalf of the SeeChange team and Board.

Key Impacts:

- Co-development, adoption, and advocacy on the CommunityFirst D-DEI Framework.
- Creation of a D-DEI Charter, approved by Board of Directors in September 2022.
- Unconscious Bias workshop held during Board Retreat in September 2022 2022.
- Creation and implementation of a practical one-year D-DEI Roadmap for the team.
- Hosted a spotlight public event "A Night for the Inuit Nunangat" highlighting two Inuit female leaders who discussed the impacts of Canadian colonialism in Nunavut. Over 100 people attended.

Partners

CommunityFirst TB Empowerment Project, Nunavut, Canada
SeeChange-Ilisaqsivik Society-Pathy Family Foundation
2019-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Population Health Teams Realignment Project, Nunavut, Canada
SeeChange-Government of Nunavut, Department of Health
2022-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Transformational Investment Capacity Project, Latin America
SeeChange-MSF Latin America
2021-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Roadmap Project,
Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Kenya and Sierra Leone
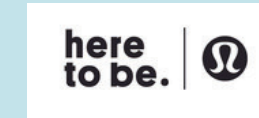SeeChange
2020-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Decolonising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (D-DEI) Project, Canada
SeeChange-Mitacs
2022-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Women Leadership Project, Reitoca, Honduras
SeeChange-Lenca Women of Reitoca-Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
2020-2022

CommunityFirst Wellness and Leadership Development Project, Canada
SeeChange-Lululemon
2021-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Research Project, Canada
SeeChange-Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research, York University
2021-Ongoing

CommunityFirst Monitoring and Evaluation Research Project, Canada
SeeChange-University of Toronto
2021-Ongoing

Other Collaborators

In the News

Publications & Articles

- Rachel Kiddell-Monroe's linkedin posts and blogs
- CommunityFirst solutions for COVID-19: decolonising health crises responses (The Lancet Planetary Health, 2021)
- Walking the talk: 10 ways to decolonise global health partnerships (Canadian Conference on Global Health, 2021)
- YWCA Women of Distinction Awards – Stories to change the world (La Presse, 2021)
- Decolonising the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout (WHO Health Ethics and Governance, 2021)
- Placing Communities First in Health Crisis Responses (Samuel Center for Social Connectedness, 2021)
- CommunityFirst Literature Review: A mapping of CommunityFirst practices in Canada (2021)
- Inuit communities can beat COVID-19 and tuberculosis (The Lancet Public Health, 2020)
- COVID-19 underscores need for community-led approaches to health (Medium, 2020)

Podcast

- SeeTheChange Podcast

Conferences & Seminars

- Family Summit of Minds (Banff, November 2022)
- Samuel Center for Global Connectedness Global Symposium (October 2022)
- Cooperation Canada International Futures Conference (Ottawa, October 2022)
- Philanthropic Foundations of Canada (Montreal, October 2022)
- Social Discourse Laboratories at C2 Conference (Montreal, September 2022)
- CommunityFirst Humanitarian Response (American College of Epidemiology Conference, 2022)
- Decolonising Humanitarian Action (McGill Summer Institutes of Global Health, 2019-2022)
- CommunityFirst Solutions (Médecins Sans Frontières Latin America Regional General Assembly, 2022)
- CommunityFirst Solutions for Isolated Communities in Colombia (University of Los Andes, January 2022)
- Applying a CommunityFirst Approach in Global Health (York University, 2021-2022)
- CommunityFirst Solutions to COVID-19 (Humanitarian Leadership Conference, 2021)
- CommunityFirst COVID-19 responses in Latin America (MSF Scientific Days, 2021)
- Committing to Antiracism & Decolonising Global Health Partnerships, (Canadian Conference on Global Health, 2021)
- The CommunityFirst COVID-19 Roadmap (Union Conference, 2020)

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