

Why this strategy?

Effective development: Best practice development recognises long term positive results are achieved when communities generate and implement their own development solutions. A community's confidence and capacity to undertake development is enhanced when: there is *real* community control over decision-making; *leadership* is local; and the community *fully participates* in development activities using its own skills, knowledge and resources. Lessons learned are kept within the community and sense of pride and independence is facilitated when objectives are achieved. A community-based, non-government organisation is one of the most effective mechanisms to achieve this community ownership and build capacity.

Development needs and gaps: Established by highly motivated volunteers, NGOs often require small amounts of catalytic seed funding, access to management support and some funds to cover operational expenses in the early stage of development. However, it is extremely difficult for these organisations to access finance or relevant and appropriate technical assistance: they are too small (and the financial request is too small) for large agencies to consider; they do not have an established track record; and they have no 'voice', having few, if any, national or international networks. This significant financial gap in the spectrum of development assistance is what IF seeks to reduce.

IF experience and capacity: IF has been established for two years. Over this time, it has supported four NGOs and developed skills and systems to support small, newly established, organisations. IF has drawn heavily on the experience of its Management Committee, which has expertise in international development, program management and capacity building. IF is a small organisation with limited funds and all work is undertaken on a voluntary basis. Providing support to NGOs is an effective and efficient approach to development that maximises IF's time, resources and skills.