

About the joint review of Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace's international partner organizations

Montreal, March 22, 2021.– On 25 February 2021, a joint press release from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) announced that, after a review of 63 D&P partners, 24 of them would no longer receive funding from CCODP, while 19 others would not be renewed. This follows the announcement months earlier of changes made to the organisation's governance and partner selection process.

The Jesuits of Canada have been privileged to collaborate with the CCODP in furthering the social mission of the Church and look forward to many more years of the same. Over its long history, CCODP has accompanied people working for social change in the Global South, often making the difference between life and death for people who are marginalized.

We are deeply saddened to learn that so many CCODP partners are losing this vital support from CCODP. We regret that the process to arrive to this decision was not marked by the transparency and collaboration that the Church knows are key virtues to witnessing to the Good News and to becoming a synodal Church.

This process has harmed the reputation of some people and organizations, many supported by the local Church, who often risk their lives to defend poor and marginalized people. The impact of this decision may have widespread and long-term consequences for partner organizations in the Global South, threatening their very existence. This would represent a profound loss of the prophetic witness of the Church.

It appears that a review was undertaken with the purpose of judging the partners on their adherence to the Church's teachings on sexual matters. We believe, however that the partners should be viewed with gratitude for their demonstrated and consistent commitment to the core richness of the Church's social teachings. If consulted, lay people and the Religious of Canada, many of whom have worked in the Global South and who personally know many of these organizations and their contexts, could have provided more accurate information on the partners under review.

We also acknowledge with gratitude and hope the many signs of openness to international solidarity that we see emerging among the people of God in Canada. These seem to be signs of the Spirit at work. Along with the rest of the Church, we are being called to healing and transformation, especially with our brothers and sisters in the Global South. We wish to work with groups like CCODP in order to be transformed for the Kingdom of God.

Erik Oland
Provincial Superior
Jesuits of Canada

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For more information:
José Sánchez
Director of Communications
CANcommunications@jesuits.org
514-387-2541 x. 217 (Office)