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# ***CINDI***

## **SMALL GRANTS FUND EVALUATION 2012**

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was made possible through the generosity of Irish Aid.*

*Please feel free to copy and reference this material, with  
acknowledgements to the CINDI Network.*

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  - Friends for Life
  - Lethimpilo CBO
  - LittleBig Creche
  - Mpolweni Child and Family Welfare
  - Mpumelelo Extension Youth Organisation
  - Sinethemba CBO
  - Siyazama Women's League
  - Thadokuhle Health Care Givers
  - Umngeni Gender and Paralegal Centre
  - Zamimpilo Drop-In Centre
  - Zanzeleni Project
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The generosity with which people share their experiences and suggestions made this project a learning process and added valuable perspectives and insights.

## Acronyms

CBO	Community based organisation
CHH	Child headed household
CINDI	Children in Distress Network
CNO	CINDI Network office
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FBO	Faith-based organisation
HBC	Home-based care
HR	Human resource management
IGP	Income generating project
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
OCAT	Organisational Capacity Assessment and Training
OVC	Orphaned and vulnerable children
SA	South Africa
SG	Support Group
SGF	Small Grants Fund
YHH	Youth headed household

## Executive Summary

The Children in Distress Network (CINDI) is a consortium of more than 300 organisations that network in the interests of children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This report is the result of a review of one of the projects of the CINDI Network, the Small Grants Fund. This project of the CINDI Network was generously supported by the Embassy of Ireland, through its Bilateral Aid Programme to South Africa (Irish Aid). The CINDI Small Grants Fund is an initiative to provide direct financial support to smaller, developing organisations within the Network, who are not in a position to access other funding. The project ran for four years from 2008 to 2011.

The evaluation of the Small Grants Fund made use of positive enquiry, in particular a Solution Focused Approach. Consultation was undertaken with the CINDI Network Office and a representative of the donor of the project (Irish Aid), along with field visits and interviews with 10 of the 12 CBOs who were recipients of funding through this project.

The results of the evaluation showed that for many of the participating beneficiaries, this was their first funding ever received. The most significant impact of this funding included:

- An improvement in their organisational governance, especially systems of financial management and reporting
- An increase in technical programmatic skills within the CBOs
- An increase in commitment, confidence and hope within the participating CBOs
- An increase in equipment to promote sustainable development for the future
- An increase in access to other funding and networking by the beneficiary CBOs

Through the project, at least 2115 vulnerable children and 674 caregivers (mainly older caregivers) were assisted. The beneficiaries worked with 46 schools and 16 community gardens, mainly in the greater Msunduzi area, including Mpopomeni, Mpolweni, France, Elandskop and Edendale. The cost efficacy of the programme is considered to be impressive, with an average cost of R 142 per child reached in the project. The split of direct funding awarded to beneficiaries versus programme management, monitoring and capacity building was 52%:48% which is considered positive for this type of initiative.

The following key recommendations were made to strengthen the project for the future:

- To continue offering and even expanding this project within CINDI, for its impact and efficacy in supporting vulnerable children and their families
- To consider widening the geographical focus of the project
- To continue an integrated approach of baseline organisational capacity assessment, capacity development of beneficiary organisational governance and programme skills, which has been a core strength of the project in the past
- To consider offering the project over a three year period, with incremental funding for beneficiaries, based on an analysis of their annual performance, risk and potential capacity to grow
- To make use of the proposed participatory planning processes to ensure a closer alignment of the needs of the communities, CBO partners, CINDI and donor partners in the initial conceptualisation of the project

CINDI has done well in treating the project as a learning process, and has achieved significant changes since its first pilot phase. It is recommended to continue reflexive development of the theoretical underpinnings and model of implementation of the project. It is recommended to continue with a strengths-based approach, whereby further investments and lessons are learnt from what is working well.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to the Small Grants Fund

The following description of the background to the CINDI Small Grants Fund was provided in the project Terms of Reference for this evaluation:

In 2002 Members of the CINDI Network developed a funding protocol to facilitate the sourcing of funds in excess of R500,000 for distribution to Members. The adjudication and allocation of any such funds secured in this way is undertaken by a Funding Panel consisting of neutral members of the community who have a sound knowledge of community development and HIV/AIDS. To date, Irish Aid, Kindernothilfe (Germany) and DFID UK, have been the main donors to have made use of the mechanism of the CINDI Funding Protocol, and CINDI has distributed over R12 million to almost 20 CINDI Members between 2003 - 2011.

However, in 2005, CINDI realised that while the funding conduit model works well for its larger well-established NGO Members, more than twenty CBOs or smaller NGOs do not benefit from the funds raised in this way. Therefore to address their needs and that of communities affected by HIV and AIDS, CINDI established a Small Grant Fund.

What are some reasons for CINDI creating this specialized Small Grant Fund?

1. Provide support for organisations involved in innovative work at a community level;
2. Develop the capacity of Members to fulfill the eligibility criteria (such as 2 years audited financial statements);
3. Develop the skills required to complete more comprehensive proposals;
4. Encourage fundraising capacity/strategic planning rather than crisis-oriented approach to work;
5. Create opportunities for supporting innovative work not covered by existing larger scale programmes (like CBO mentorship).

Smaller, less well-established CINDI Members can apply to the Small Grant Fund for between R15,000 - R50,000 (minimum and maximum amounts) on an annual cycle; they are assisted with their applications; and mentored during the funding period so that accountability is ensured and financial management skills are acquired. In addition, they would be mentored in the implementation of the CINDI M&E requirements. The Small Grants Fund was run by CINDI from 2008 to 2011 (four years).

*“CINDI unequivocally believes that the best way of addressing the crisis relating to children in distress is through building the capacity of community groups to support vulnerable children.” CINDI Funding Proposal*

Eligibility for Funding for CBO Members of CINDI:

- Minimum of 1 year of full voting membership;
- 50% attendance of meetings – networking and clusters - in prior year;
- By the end of the first year of funding from the Small Grant Fund they should:
  - Be in process of applying for registration as an NPO if desired
  - Comply with the bookkeeping requirements of CINDI
  - Put an auditing process in place for the funds used.

CINDI invited tender applications for the conduct of an external evaluation of the Small Grant Fund Recipient Programme supported by Irish Aid with approximately 12 CBO's in KwaZulu-Natal.

## 2. Aims of the Evaluation

### 2.1. Terms of Reference

The following core aims of the evaluation were outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Small Grants Fund Evaluation:

1. The evaluation is being initiated by the CINDI Network to enable it to inform the donors and CINDI Board of the outcomes of the programme as well as provide guidelines for future funding opportunities for CBOs.
2. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the aims of the different phases of the small grant funding process have been achieved and how their capacity to address the needs of vulnerable children in their areas has been strengthened.

It is understood that the key users of the evaluation would be the CINDI Board and management and Irish Aid.

It was requested that the evaluation comment on and assess the following:

- The **relevance** of the programme in providing funding and capacity building for CBOs and thereby enhancing their capacity to address the needs of children in areas served by them.
- The **efficiency** of the approach especially with respect to the utilisation of available resources. Were outputs delivered timeously?
- The **effectiveness** of the programme in achieving the aims of the Small Grant Fund.
- The **outcomes/impact** of the programme in terms of changes that have been instituted in the functioning of the participating CBOs as a consequence of the funding and capacity building.

- The **sustainability** of the programme in terms of the likelihood of the benefits of the programme being maintained within the participating CBOs.

## **2.2. CNO Expectations**

Further to the formal Terms of Reference, the CINDI Network Office (CNO) was interviewed to gain a sense of their expectations of the results of the evaluation. They asked for an analytical report which is presented thematically, not a descriptive account of “who said what”. They requested that the evaluation be a learning process whereby CINDI can grow from the reflections of this experience. It was requested that the evaluation:

- Understands the events of the project within the context in which they took place
- Includes learning stories and stories of hope
- Addresses the questions:
  - Did we have impact?
  - What impact did the project have on developing the beneficiary organisations
  - What impact did the funding of beneficiaries have on the target communities?
- Reflects on the broader question: Is it worth it for CINDI to undertake a project like this?
- Reviews organisational capacity development, community work undertaken and experiences of the project of beneficiaries

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Evaluation Approach**

The consultants made use of approaches encapsulated by positive enquiry. In particular, the approach of Solution Focused enquiry was found to yield meaningful results within a highly participatory, action-oriented research framework. The approach, originating in South America (by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg), produces highly practical recommendations based on the experience of the project participants, with a future-oriented focus. The approach starts with questions about what worked particularly well in the project, then looks at how the project may be further improved by building on the strengths.

### **3.2. Methods and Activities**

Using this approach of positive enquiry, a number of methods were used, including:

- Individual interviews
- Email questionnaires
- Field visits
- Verification observations of CBO documents

The following activities were undertaken during the course of the evaluation:

Table 1: Activities Undertaken During Evaluation

<b>TASK</b>	<b>DETAIL</b>
1. Desk review and contextual research	Review of the documents associated with the project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original proposals</li> <li>• Previous evaluations</li> <li>• Narrative and progress reports</li> <li>• Financial reports and supporting documentation</li> <li>• Financial audit report on Small Grants Project</li> <li>• Results of the Mapping Project undertaken in 2012</li> </ul> Research on any contextual factors which may have had an impact on the project
2. Consultation with CNO	Interviews with CINDI Network Office regarding their own experiences and observations of the project successes and areas for strengthening. A special focus on the efficiency and effectiveness was made at this stage of the evaluation.
3. Field Visits and Interviews	Visits to the 10 CBO beneficiaries to ascertain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their experiences and advice about the project</li> <li>• The systems which they have managed to developed (as outcomes of the project)</li> <li>• A comparison of organisational capacity development, from the results of the CINDI Mapping Project of 2010</li> <li>• The sustainability of the project impact</li> </ul>
4. Stakeholder Interviews	Interviews with relevant community leaders, service providers, Irish Aid programme personnel and other project partners to learn from their experiences of the project
5. Development of Emerging Theoretical Model	Collection of ideas regarding a potential emerging model for CINDI for this type of funding for the future was undertaken through interviews and email questions.
6. Data Analysis	The collected information was analysed and collated

and Draft Reporting	into a draft report, for review by the CINDI CNO and Irish Aid.
7. Final Reporting	The final report will be produced following feedback from the CINDI CNO and other relevant project partners.

The questions which were used during the interviews and email enquiries with the CINDI Network Office and donor partners are attached as Appendix A. The interview schedule for the field visits and verification of documents is attached as Appendix B.

## **4. Results - Descriptive**

### **4.1. Beneficiary Information**

The following is a list of the 12 CBOs who benefitted from the CINDI Small Grants Funding:

- Friends for Life
- Lethimpilo CBO
- Little Big Creche
- Mpolweni Child and Family Welfare
- Mpumelelo Extension Youth Organisation
- Sinethemba CBO
- Siyazama Women's League
- Thadokuhle Health Care Givers
- Umngeni Gender and Paralegal Centre
- Zamimpilo Drop-In Centre
- Zenzeleni Project

#### **Scope of Organisations**

The following is a list of the districts where Members whose data was analyzed in the 2010 CINDI Mapping, operate their programmes or have offices. The areas covered by the SGF beneficiaries are shown alongside these overall figures.

Table 2: Areas of SGF Beneficiaries and All CINDI Members

District, municipality (areas in brackets)	SGF Beneficiaries (n=12)	Number of Members (n= 176)	% of Members
Umgundgundlovu District, uMsunduzi municipality (Edendale, France, Sweetwaters & Elandskop)	7	41	23
Umgungundlovu District, surrounding municipalities: (Areas: Mpolweni, , Mpophomeni, Swayimane)	5	67	38
Ethekwini Metro (Cato Ridge, Camperdown) Ilembe	0	14	8
Uthukela District (Ladysmith)	0	11	6
Umkhanyakude District	0	20	11
Ugu District and Sisonke District	0	3	2
Uthungulu District (Eshowe)	0	4	2
Amajuba District (Newcastle)	0	6	3
Umzinyathi (Greytown)	0	10	7

The results show that the Small Grants Funding concentrated its resources mainly in the surrounding municipalities of the Mgungundlovu district. The highest number of beneficiaries came from Mpophomeni, Elandskop and Edendale.

### Cluster Membership

Each of the CINDI Members is invited to participate in clusters. The clusters have been created on the basis of different types of services offered by the CINDI Member organisations, and meet regularly to share information and work collaboratively on specific issues affecting their area of service delivery (for example home based care). The following table shows to which Clusters the Small Grants Beneficiaries belong:

Table 3: Cluster Membership

<b>Cluster Membership</b> n=12			
Home Based Care	9	Psychosocial Support	8
Community Development	5	Children in Care	5
CBO Cluster	9	None	

Members may belong to more than one cluster. This table demonstrates that Home Based Care and the CBO Clusters are the most commonly attended by the Small Grants beneficiaries, followed by the Psychosocial Support. On average, the Small Grants Beneficiaries belong to four clusters each, with all (100%) of the CBOs belonging to at least one cluster. This is 70% more than the average for CINDI Members, 30% of whom do not belong to any clusters and 19% of whom belong to one cluster.

### Services Offered

The Small Grants beneficiaries were questioned about what services were offered by the organisations to children, and the results are summarised below:

Table 4: Services Offered

<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Number (n=10)</b>	<b>% SGF Beneficiaries</b>	<b>% All Members</b>
Psychosocial support & counselling	10	100%	83%
Home based care	9	90%	78%
Feeding schemes/ food parcels, gardens	5	50%	76%
Access to education	9	90%	75%
Access to treatment	7	70%	62%
Access to school uniforms	8	80%	60%
Child abuse case management	7	70%	55%
Creche or child care	4	40%	44%
Residential care	1	10%	29%

The table shows that the Small Grants Beneficiaries are offering on average six services each to vulnerable children. More services were offered in relation to psychosocial support, home based care, access to education, access to treatment, access to school uniforms, and child abuse case management, when compared with the results of the Mapping of 2010 for all CINDI Members. Less services were offered in relation to feeding schemes, child care and residential care. Feeding schemes and residential care were not supported by CINDI in this fund.

Regarding services offered to caregivers (parents, grandparents, foster parents etc), the results are as follows:

Table 6: Services to Caregivers

<b>Type of Service to Caregivers</b>	<b>Number (n=10)</b>	<b>% SGF Beneficiaries</b>	<b>% All Members</b>
Access to grants	8	80%	74%
Psychosocial support & counselling	9	90%	73%
Vegetable gardening support	7	70%	69%
Parenting skills training	7	70%	65%

The table shows that the SGF beneficiaries are offering more services to caregivers than most CINDI Members (based on the results of the 2010 Mapping). On average the SGF beneficiaries are offering three different types of services each to the caregivers of vulnerable children.

The results show that the CBOs selected for participation in this project offered holistic services to vulnerable children, and that these services were in keeping with CINDI priority considerations. The results may indicate that through selection or funding restrictions CINDI was able to influence the types of services invested in through this grant.

#### **Number of Staff and Volunteers**

Each SGF beneficiary was asked about their personnel, in terms of the following categories: Project staff, administrative staff, unpaid volunteers, and volunteers receiving stipends. On analysis of the data, it was found that there was an overlap between the paid and unpaid project staff, administrative and management staff in many organisations (for example, smaller organisations do not have full time personnel and therefore counted unpaid volunteers as project or administrative staff). Data was thus analysed according to the following categories: Paid staff, unpaid volunteers, stipended volunteers.

Table 7: Personnel Funded by SGF

Type of Staff	SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)	Male	Female	Average for SGF Beneficiaries	Average for all Member organisations
Paid staff	33	1	32	3	11
Unpaid volunteers	57	3	54	6	14
Stipended volunteers	49	4	45	5	10
<b>Total</b>	139	8	131	-	-

The table above demonstrates that the SGF workforce included about 139 people, of which 23% are paid staff, 41% are unpaid volunteers, and 35% are stipended volunteers. (Note: Some of the paid staff might actually be stipended volunteers, as payment levels were not enquired about).

Regarding gender, it was analysed that 6% of the personnel are men, while 94% are female. Of the paid staff and volunteers, the percentages stay the same, indicating that there is not any preference evidence for paying men over women in comparison with the overall figures.

When looking at the average numbers of types of staff for the different sizes of organisation, the SGF beneficiaries are smaller than the average organizational size of the CINDI Network members (from the Mapping 2010 results). This indicates that the SGF did reach its goal of supporting the smaller organizations in the Network.

## 4.2. Number of Community Beneficiaries Reached Through the Project

The SGF beneficiaries were asked about the number of children and families reached through their projects, which may be directly attributed to the SGF. This was verified during the field visit by examining the attendance registers kept by each organisation. The following breakdown was provided of beneficiaries reached through the SGF:

*“A big thank you for laying this foundation. We are now known in Pietermaritzburg because of this grant.”*  
*CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

Table 8: Beneficiaries Reached by SGF

<b>SGF Beneficiaries: Number of Children Reached</b>	<b>Number of girls</b>	<b>% of girls</b>	<b>Number of boys</b>	<b>% of boys</b>	<b>Total number of girls and boys</b>
10 Beneficiaries Visited	1270	61%	800	39%	2115

The SGF beneficiaries worked with 673 caregivers of vulnerable children, most of which seemed to be grandmothers over the age of 60.

The following tables show number of schools and gardens worked with by the beneficiaries thanks to the SGF:

Table 10: Schools Reached by SGF

<b>Number of preschools and schools CINDI Members organisations work with</b>	<b>Creches</b>	<b>Primary schools</b>	<b>High schools</b>
Ten beneficiaries visited	14	15	17

Table 11: Gardens Reached by SGF

<b>Number of gardens</b>	<b>Household and community gardens</b>	<b>School gardens</b>
Ten beneficiaries visited	11	5

The results show that a wide impact was made by the Small Grants Funding, with a range of community structures, vulnerable children and elderly caregivers reached by the project.

### **Project Story: Little Big Creche**

“We were proud of the development of the CBO Little Big Creche – they used their funding to go for Level 4 Early Childhood Development training. They now have added two additional classes so that now there are four. The gardening programme is up and running with vegetables. Leadership is very important and the CBO leader had excellent leadership skills.” CINDI staff member

### **4.3. Small Grants Fund Experiences of Beneficiaries**

The experiences of the ten Small Grants Fund beneficiaries interviewed and visited are summarised and collated to represent collective feedback.

#### **Project Strengths**

When interviewed about the experiences of the Small Grants Fund, the beneficiaries reported the following strengths of the Fund about which they were very appreciative:

- This was their first funding for many organisations
- CINDI even supported them to write the original project proposals, as they did not have previous experience in this regard
- The funding reportedly helped the organisations achieve a lot of project work
- It increased the beneficiaries work in schools and with youth
- It helped them to raise their profile in the community, as they were able to show tangible results of their efforts
- It improved their practical skills which they report that they are still using to this date
- It addressed specific gaps in their work helping communities (for example home based care)
- Their systems of governance have improved
- Their capacity has grown, especially around writing funding proposals, reporting and managing their finances
- They developed infrastructure with equipment purchased (like tunnel farming, fencing, materials for crafts projects)
- They were able to fund specific valuable items, like school uniforms and calculators for orphaned children who needed them for school
- Their volunteers received stipends
- The funding opened other opportunities for

*“We would like to thank CINDI and the donors for this seed funding, which opened our minds.” CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“We are now well known in the schools thanks to the Small Grants Fund.” CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“Thank you to the donors for having faith in us – you gave us courage.” CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“The Small Grants Fund really empowered us.” CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

funding (for example from Department of Health, Department of Social Development and LIMA)

- The funding was used as a reference to access other opportunities and networking
- The funding provided motivation, courage and hope for their work with communities

### **Suggested Improvements**

In terms of their experienced challenges and recommended improvements of the project, the beneficiaries suggested the following:

- More support would have been appreciated in the early stages of the grant reporting (both on progress reporting and financial reporting), as beneficiaries said that they struggled to fill in the reporting forms at first
- Increasing the size of grants and the length of the project period so that they may reach more communities
- Increasing the length of the project period to consolidate their empowerment process
- Diversifying CINDI funding so that they may go on to apply for other grants
- Providing more links to other national and international donors once they show that they have done well with this funding (like CINDI did with LIMA)
- Allowing the beneficiaries to offer stipends for administration and office management as well as project staff
- Having more than one contact person within CINDI, especially someone who understands isiZulu because at times they did not understand the instructions
- Limiting the number of changes in the reporting formats, as at times this led to wasted efforts and confusion
- Providing ongoing transport remuneration for attendance at CINDI meetings
- Providing dates of CINDI meetings for the year ahead earlier in the year
- Matching the needs of the beneficiaries and communities more closely in determining the funding of specific items (like stipends, food parcels and more school uniforms per organisation)
- Providing more training on technical skills of working with children – for example child care, counselling, working with abused children

*“The capacity building training made a huge difference in addressing governance issues – we did not know anything about governance at the start of the project.”*  
*CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“CINDI is our partner in spear-heading the rights of children.”*  
*CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“The process taught us how to work with funding.”* CINDI SGF Beneficiary

### **Relationship with CINDI**

Regarding their experiences of the networking and relationships with the CINDI Network Office during the course of the SGF, the beneficiaries reported the following:

- They said that they worked well with the CINDI staff (many CBOs especially commended the Finance Officer for his assistance)
- There was good accountability and transparency on the part of the CINDI Office regarding finances
- They appreciated the support of everyone at the CINDI office (saying that even the receptionist was friendly)
- They appreciated the support provided
- The CINDI staff were described as humble and respectful, avoiding conflict wherever possible
- They did not feel that CINDI was biased towards some organisations
- They appreciated the efficiency of the transfer of funding (dissemination of tranches), although some organisations reported that the tranches were released a bit too close to their events
- They appreciated that CINDI communicated well and gave them enough notice for training and workshops
- The sms communications were found to be very helpful

*“The process was not easy for us during the early application stages, but thank you to CINDI for being so helpful.”*  
*CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

*“The CINDI staff were humble and respectful, avoiding conflict wherever possible.”*  
*CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

It was observed that there was a high degree of consistency in the comments made by all the CBOs regarding their experiences of the Small Grants Fund.

### **4.4. Beneficiary Capacity Development**

The results of the CINDI 2010 Mapping were compared with the observed organisational capacity development of the beneficiaries who participated in the Small Grants Fund. This was done by comparing the individual organisational assessments to the results of the overall averages of the Mapping of all CINDI members.

## Training Received

The following training received was attributed directly to the Small Grants Fund:

Table 12: Training Received During SGF

<b>Training Topics</b>	<b>Number of organisations</b>
Financial Management	10
Reporting	10
Fundraising	2
Computer Skills	2
Home Based Care or First Aid Training	8
Child Participation	2
Early Childhood Development	2
International Children's Development Programme	1
Counselling	1
Parenting and Child Care	3
How to deal with Child Abuse	1
How to manage ARV treatment	1
Memory Work	2
Beadwork	1
Tunnel Farming	1
Conflict Management	3
Leadership Skills	2
Project Management	1
Monitoring and Evaluation	1

The training shows that a combination of organizational capacity development and technical programme skills training was received by each participating organization. The technical skills span quite a diverse range and shows that

these courses were selected by the beneficiaries themselves, according to their project and community needs.

### **Reported Impact of Capacity Development**

Apart from the specific skills gained, the changes seen in their organization thanks to the training included the following:

- Increased staff commitment
- More staff maturity and leadership
- Improved filing
- Safer governance systems and structures
- Greater accountability and transparency
- Greater independence (for example in not having to buy vegetables)
- Improved profiling of the organization
- Improved working relationships with clients, such as schools and parents
- More differentiated internal structures with clearer roles
- More diverse sources of funding
- Increased networking with other organisations

### **Organisational Governance**

During the field visits to the CBOs, the following systems were verified. The results are compared to the overall results of the CINDI Mapping of all CINDI Members, done in 2010.

Table 13: Organisational Governance of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Financial Management</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Cheque account in the name of the organisation	8 (80%)	66%
Detailed list of all income and expenditure, with supporting documentation	9 (90%)	81%
Audited Annual Financial Statements	6 (60%)	Unknown

Two beneficiaries reported that they did have a cheque account, but that it was recently closed because of lack of funds. This finding suggests that not all of the beneficiaries went on to access other funding, but it indicates that the majority (80%) did.

Table 14: Governance Structures of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Governance structures</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Organisation has board / committee of management (n=176)	10 (100%)	94%
The board or committee is made up of independent people	7 (70%)	45%
The board/ committee meet regularly	9 (90%)	47%

All of the beneficiaries reporting having an independent Board of Management, but when verified it seemed that 3 organisations still have the original founding member as a staff member and board member.

Table 15: M&E Capacity of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Capacity</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Minutes of meetings are kept	10 (100%)	96%
Some monitoring records of the work are kept	10 (100%)	80%
Reports on the work are written	10 (100%)	74%

It was noted that one organisation, while keeping minutes of meeting, monitoring records of the work and producing reports, needs a lot of assistance in this regard, as the quality of the documentation was quite poor.

When comparing the results of this visit with the beneficiaries own reports from the 2010 Mapping visits, it can be seen that the SGF beneficiaries have much better systems of financial management, governance, reporting and monitoring compared to most members of the CINDI Network. This may in part be due to the selection criteria for the Small Grants Fund applications, but it also likely to be thanks to the investment of energy in these aspects of the organisational capacity by CINDI during the SGF.

### Organisational Policies

The table below shows a comparison of the SGF beneficiaries which have these organizational policies, compared with the overall membership of the network:

Table 16: Organisational Policies of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Organisational Policies</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Organisation has any policies	5 (50%)	38
Financial management policy	5 (50%)	28
Child safety policy	3 (30%)	14

The SGF beneficiaries have 10 – 20% more organisational policies than the average CINDI Network Member. They did not seem to have Human Resource Management policies, Gender Equality or Environmental Sensitivity policies and this could be a focus for the future.

### Sources of Funding

All CINDI Members were asked who funded their organisations during the Mapping in 2010, and the SGF beneficiaries were asked the same question in this review. The information was analysed as follows:

Table 17: Funding Sources of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Funding sources</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Organisation has no source of funding or only Membership fees or 'paying from their own pockets'	0 (0%)	31
Organisation has 1 source of funding	3 (30%)	28
Organisation has 2 or 3 sources of funding	2 (20%)	20
Organisation has more than 3 sources of funding	5 (50%)	21

Once again the table shows that the SGF beneficiaries are in a better position regarding access to funding, relative to most other CINDI members. This is especially significant since several of the SGF beneficiaries said that this was their first funding ever received.

Members visited during the Mapping 2010 and SGF beneficiaries visited in this evaluation were asked “Which other organisations do you regularly work with (at local and national levels and with government departments).

Table 18: Networking of SGF Beneficiaries

<b>Local networking</b>	<b>Number &amp; % of SGF Beneficiaries (n=10)</b>	<b>% of All CINDI Members</b>
Network with one organisation/ structure	-	23
Network with two organisations/ structures	-	25
Network with three organisations/ structures	-	41
Network with more than three organisations/ structures	9 (90%)	68
Does not network	1 (10)	11

The results again show that the beneficiaries of the SGF show more networking than the average CINDI member. Several of the beneficiaries interviewed were networking with between 6 and 10 other organisations, which included government departments.

#### **4.5. Small Grants Project Experiences of CINDI Network Office and Irish Aid**

The experiences of the CINDI Network Office in relation to implementing the Small Grants Fund were heard during interviews with the management and project staff.

##### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the Small Grants Fund was to enable more developed CBOs within the CINDI Network to access funding opportunities. It was found that less developed organisations were managing to access Masihambisane project funding and capacity development opportunities, while larger and well developed organisations were managing to access bigger funding opportunities through the CINDI Network.

*“We wanted to give CBOs a chance to apply for funding in a safe environment, so that they could then be able to access more funding.” CINDI Director*

There was, however, a gap where medium sized developing organisations were being left out of funding and capacity building opportunities at CINDI.

The vision was that the Small Grants Fund would be less intensively focused on capacity development, compared to the Masihambisane Project, but that it would still allow small and medium sized CBOs to develop their organisational systems and track record to allow them to access other funding opportunities in future.

### **Development of the Project**

The project developed fairly organically, using some of the concepts and policies of other CINDI funding projects. The CINDI staff described how the standard of entry applications was reduced during each consecutive call for proposals, but that the monitoring and support (especially financial management support) was increased over time.

### **Project Strengths and Innovations**

Despite the challenges inherent in this type of development work in under-resourced communities, the CINDI Network Office seems to be passionate and deeply committed to developing the capacity of CBOs. This has come through during all interviews with the CINDI staff and beneficiaries.

CINDI did not have a dedicated programme manager for this project, and the management largely fell to the finance team. This seems to have worked to the advantage of the project, since the capacity of the CBOs financial systems appears to have been strengthened significantly during the course of the project, and this seems to have been implicitly one of the main purposes of the project.

From the CINDI staff descriptions, there seems to have been an increase in direct feedback, closer monitoring of expenditure of the CBOs, with increased mentorship (both in terms of visits to the CBOs and assistance in the office and telephonically). The CINDI staff described moving from a “soft and somewhat patronising” approach to a clearer and stricter attitude which demanded professionalism but at the same time gave ready assistance. This change seems to have led to positive results, with improved delivery of reports and well substantiated expenditure on the part of the CBOs.

*“The major learning experience from a Funder or International Development Partner’s perspective has been that, NGOs/CBOs require both financial and Technical Assistance (TA) - support in order to address their growth and development and ultimately become effective, efficient and sustainable.” Tamara Matebulu of Irish Aid*

*“I take my hat off to Kevin, who managed things, with the help of Zano.” CINDI Director*

The following systems were implemented during the course of the project implementation:

- Clearer policies on eligibility, proposal formats, reporting formats and criteria
- Monthly reporting, which was described as strenuous for the CBOs, but which assisted the CINDI staff to keep abreast of the project developments and track implementation
- Mentorship and verification visits with a checklist format used to track progress
- Written letters were sent when reports were not submitted on time
- Stricter appointment times with the project staff
- Increased focus on helping the CBOs to develop realistic budgets on how they actually wanted to spend the money
- Weekly meetings within the CINDI team to identify problems early
- Regular collective briefing meetings with all beneficiaries

*“We allowed for stipends, and that made things a lot easier, – people became more responsive to the programme, and they weren’t trying to get money in other ways.”*  
CINDI staff member

A practical change which was said to improve the project was to allow the CBO members to receive stipends in their grants. This meant that they had legitimate ways of claiming for their own costs and time in the project. It was also seen to be a more respectful way of recognising the professionalism of the people involved in the work, rather than expecting them to remain volunteers.

*“The funding has opened a lot of doors for the CBOs – lots of them are now getting funding from LIMA and other donors. They know how to write proposals and manage some finances.”* CINDI staff member

Irish Aid commended the project for the following:

- Evidence of the absorptive capacity of the SGF by some sub-partners
- Trainings and capacity building efforts were achieved
- Improved systems for planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Baseline data collection, research and documentation were done by sub-partners for improved planning and programming.

### **Future Recommendations**

The CINDI Network Office recommended the following in order to strengthen the project:

- Clearer conceptualisation of the project, theoretically – they recommended developing a model of CBO funding and capacity

- building, based on evidence-based practices found successful by other organisations and networks
- Conceptualise the programme as a three year intervention in order to see meaningful results
  - In conceptualising the project, come together as partners, plan it together, be clear about our roles and direction
  - Clearer adjudication processes and policies (which have been developed over time)
  - Organisational capacity assessment at the start of the project
  - Focus on specific communities, with a programme-oriented and joint partnership approach towards effecting change in one area for the benefit of all vulnerable children in that community
  - Capacitate organisations before they are given money, or it can lead to conflict and the destruction of CBOs
  - Do regular mapping and more verification visits to find out who is really committed to working with children (as part of the selection process)
  - Offer initial training and see who is passionate and committed to the work even before funding is awarded
  - Get the CBOs to do a peer management system – get the CBOs to manage the funds, hold each other accountable
  - Facilitate monthly management meetings with all beneficiaries, who are treated like project partners
  - Keep communication open by meeting regularly to discuss what is going on, plan how to intervene, learn and document lessons
  - Offer training specifically on how to implement financial systems (like petty cash) before funding is awarded
  - Increase funding offered to CBOs, but make this incremental over the three year project period
  - Fund what CBOs are already doing, rather than getting them to adapt their mission and budgets to suit what CINDi is funding
  - Build in mentorship and verification visits throughout the project, with a greater focus on planning, rather than retrospectively correcting mistakes
  - Treat organisations as professional entities, which includes demanding accountability, while also funding CBO staff members' work time
  - Limit changes in project policies, procedures and formats, or this opens the door for blaming and excuses
  - Have a dedicated programme officer, finance officer and monitoring and evaluation officer

*“Donors should invest in OD activities and allow the process to take its course (not to be rushed). They should ensure that the model for this growth to take place, the approach to OD should be flexible and adaptable (not a one –size fits all OD model).” Tamara Matebulu of Irish Aid*

- When funding is received, clarify that the relationship shifts to one of “donor and recipient”, keeping the Network membership relationship separate
- Further develop the internal systems and internal ethos and ethics relating to CBO funding and capacity development
- Conceptualise the project as a learning process

### **Project Story: Drug Awareness Campaign**

“That area is very badly affected by drugs. The CBO used funding from CINDI to address that issue. They have a relationship with the high school and the principal didn’t know what to do with the issue of children on drugs. The CBO did an awareness to reach the whole community about the message of drugs. One day I found a boy at the CBO and he was doing gardening to keep him off drugs.” CINDI staff member

## **5. Thematic Analysis**

The themes coming out of the Small Grants beneficiaries own experiences of the project, the experiences of the CINDI Network staff, and the document review are summarised in this section.

### **5.1. Theoretical Approach**

The previous project evaluations and the CINDI Network office staff themselves spoke several times of the need to found the project on a stronger developmental theory. However the evaluators observed that while this may not have been explicitly named, the project draws on several key theories of community development, whose values and principles seem to be embraced and encapsulated in the project, and appear to be integral to the success of the project. These include the participatory empowerment approaches of community development and action research, for example expressed by Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and David Korten’s People Centred Development (1990). Good use also seems to be made of Dependency Theory (Smith, 1985).

*“Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.” David Korten, 1990*

Therefore it seems to the evaluators of this project that there is not a lack of theoretical grounding for the project, perhaps rather a need to make explicit the seemingly appropriate theories which form the foundation of this work within CINDI.

## **5.2. Selection of CBOs**

A theme which also came from the CINDI Network Office themselves and the previous evaluations of similar projects, was the need to develop more specific criteria for the selection of CBOs. It would seem that the selection criteria have been continually “lowered” or made less stringent as the project progressed. However the evaluators found that the concrete selection criteria, based on the required documentation were quite explicit, clear and appropriate. Therefore it seems that the references being made to improve selection criteria were more about the intangible, less visible aspects of the organisation’s capacity. In particular these attributes seemed to be about the following core criteria:

- Proven track record of dedicated efforts to assist their community
- Clear commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children and their families
- An indication that the organisations are not “one-person-shows”, controlled by a founder member who is not willing to invest in the development of the capacity of other organisational partners
- Trustworthiness, especially around a genuine commitment to use the resources of the organisation for the benefit of others

These are difficult criteria to assess from early and brief encounters with potential beneficiaries. It is therefore recommended that CINDI takes more time getting to know its members before offering funding to any particular beneficiaries. The evaluators deem that it is also appropriate to build on the strengths of previous beneficiaries, and that the CINDI Network need not shy away from increasing its support to organisations which have proven the above-mentioned criteria, or reducing funding from organisations which initially seemed genuine and trustworthy, but who did not deliver up to the expectations or show positive changes.

It is therefore recommended that the CINDI Network considers developing four categories of beneficiaries, with consequences for each, allowing fluidity of movement as time reveals these hard-to-assess characteristics of beneficiary organisations:

1. New, relatively unknown organisations which may be high risk but on initial impression seem to have potential to develop positively
2. Known organisations who have received funding and who have not delivered on expectations (and who should be discontinued from the funding until radical changes are evidenced)
3. Known organisations who have received funding and who have delivered on some expectations, but who require more investment in

order to develop up to the expected level of functioning (and who may be recommended for a similar level of funding in order to be given a second chance to prove themselves)

4. Known organisations who have received funding and who have delivered well on the expected levels of delivery (who may go on to receive increased funding)

On the basis of the discussions undertaken during this evaluation, the CINDI Network Office staff was quite apologetic about their “strictness” and forthright manner with the CBOs. However, the CBOs did not mention this as a negative experience and seemed to respect the demanded accountability. It seemed to increase their trust in the financial accountability and transparency of the CINDI Network itself. Therefore it may be possible for CINDI to be increasingly clear about delivery or lack of accountability and differentiate the CBOs in an open and direct manner in future.

### **5.3. Governance Capacity Building**

One of the key strengths of the project has been the focus on organisational strengthening, especially developing systems of governance of the beneficiary organisations. CINDI was commended for providing intensive support from the beginning – since the call for applications, through to the planning and reporting. Although organisations struggled at first to understand the requirements, all reported a dramatic increase in their ability to access funding, utilise it effectively and account for it appropriately. The changes in organisational capacity, especially governance, were not just reported, but were observed and verified during the field visits to the beneficiaries. This showed that the project did not just lead to knowledge in someone’s head, but to concrete organisational systems which may extend beyond the life of any one individual in the organisation.

*“This was our first experience of funding and we have grown thanks to this experience.” CINDI SGF Beneficiary*

### **5.4. Programme Capacity Building**

Much of the training undertaken by the beneficiaries related to their specific programmatic focus areas. All beneficiaries reported an increase in their technical skills and a strengthening of their programme content. The only reported difficulty in this regard related to the transfer of skills to other members in the organisation. A few beneficiaries reported success in this regard, and attributed this to selecting the right people to attend training (who had the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to others) and building in time explicitly for this transfer of skills after the training. This could be a focus for the future to ensure that the programme capacity development does not invest only in specific individuals.

## 5.5. Fundraising and Profile

For many CBOs this was their first grant – and it was described as “an eye opener”. This experience had positive benefits for their organisation, raising their profile in the community and outside of the community, increasing their networking with other organisations and enabling access to other funding.

## 5.6. Reporting

The beneficiaries describe that thanks to the SGF, they are able to structure their reports, and to “report properly on their work”. They especially appreciated the support of the CINDI Finance Officer who mentored them on their reporting. They reported feeling empowered to be able to report to other donors and government – for example Department of Social Development and the NPO Directorate.

*“It was fulfilling to see people trying their best with little resources.”*  
*Consultant of this evaluation*

However, they expressed concern about the reporting formats which keep changing and they recommended more consistency. The CBOs were very disheartened when on the day of submission they were told that something is no longer needed, which frustrated them because they spent a lot of time and resources producing these results which were initially required but not eventually needed.

## 5.7. Basic Resources

An observation which can be made from the responses of the beneficiaries, is that their focus is still very much on material aspects of the work – for example on delivering food parcels for children, securing equipment for income generating projects, transport money, stipends, physical care of children. Much of their success of the project is measured in terms of how much they as CBOs were able to offer the community in tangible and concrete terms. This was a theme coming from the 2010 Mapping project too, and may be a consequence of the extreme poverty which the CBO members face on a daily basis in their communities. However it is noted that gradually the Small Grants Beneficiaries have started reporting more on organisational capacity development and governance. There is a shift in some CBOs towards preventive and strategic impact, for example recognising that investing in equipment such as tunnels, fencing and sewing machines, has a long term impact on their ability to provide for the children in their community in the longer term. This is an important shift in dependence and sustainability.

*“The CBO field visits were a reminder of the work that still needs to be done. The stark contrast between the two worlds we live in South Africa and the visible poverty is disheartening.”*  
*Consultant of this evaluation*

In fact the consultants of this evaluation were themselves shocked by the poverty evidence in many of the communities selected by CINDI for this project. This shows that CINDI is cognisant of the areas of greatest need and has undertaken informal assessment of the communities where a focused investment of resources may have a maximal impact.

*“In one of the CBOs that I visited I ended up giving them two loaves of bread that I had bought for my family. These gogo’s touched my heart because they hadn’t had anything to eat.”*  
*Consultant of this evaluation*

Although CINDI is commended for keeping to a strategic developmental approach to funding, which avoids dependence and over-reliance on concrete materials, it is nonetheless recommended that CINDI maintains a focus on the extreme poverty and material needs of its partner communities and the members of the beneficiary organisations themselves. For example, subsequent to the end of the SGF, beneficiaries are struggling to attend CINDI meetings (both Network and Cluster meetings) because they simply do not have the transport allowances to travel to these meetings. Appreciation was expressed that during the SGF they were given transport fees to come to the office and they could use their funding to give reports and make follow up visits to government departments. This made their work quite effective. Now that they don’t have money for transport, it is impeding their effectiveness. It is recommended that where resources permit, the CBOs should be given transport money to attend CINDI meetings. This would further allay the bias towards more centrally located members of the CINDI Network.

Still on the matter of material needs, there were several requests made to increase the number of school uniforms allocated to each organisation. It was reported that this has really helped to boost the confidence in children, especially amongst those who do not have anyone to look after them and who are being teased in schools.

### **5.8. Financial Management by CINDI**

The CINDI Small Grants Fund and the finance reports of each beneficiary was subjected to a financial review by Warmington Inc in July 2009. The results of this review were positive. Warmington Inc commented that “it appears that all funds have been recorded accurately and utilised in the manner intended by the funder and the fund contract.”

The CINDI Network Office showed a detailed and well organised set of financial reports for the Small Grants Fund, from 2008 to 2011. There appears to have been an increase in hands-on reporting, organised systems of financial tracking of the expenditure of the beneficiaries, and quicker follow up of delayed financial reports and emerging challenges with regarding to

budgeting, expenditure and reporting of beneficiaries. Regular verification visits were conducted by the CINDI Network Office to the projects to ensure that expenditure took place according to budgeted amounts. The visits were formally recorded in a standardised field visit form. This indicates an increase in experience and capacity of the CINDI Network Office to manage the financial aspects of the Small Grants Fund in a responsible and responsive manner.

The tracking systems of financial monitoring were recorded in a very individualised manner for each beneficiary, as well as being collated into clear quarterly budget-expenditure comparisons which made it easy to review the bigger picture of the project progress. Thus while the implementation of this improved financial management has been thanks to the dedicated efforts of the CINDI finance personnel, it would also appear that thanks to the finance team's organised documentation, organisational systems have been developed which contribute to the institutional capacity even beyond the efforts of particular individuals.

The only minor criticisms which could be thought of in relation to the financial management systems are:

- In future to consider including sporadic verification of service providers used by the beneficiaries (for example phone calls to catering companies, transport agencies, schools etc to verify the accuracy of information on the submitted receipts)
- That the programme management by a finance person meant that while this was a strong point of the project, it may have led to a stronger focus on financial development systems and reporting than technical project skills development and implementation

However the internal focus of CINDI from financial accountability "outwards" to project activities and impact seems to have been a key strength of this recent phase of the Small Grants Fund, and has strengthened the financial management capacity of the beneficiaries significantly.

### **5.9. Cost Efficacy**

The phase ending in 2008 of the Small Grants Fund allocated grants to 7 beneficiaries, with the average grant size being roughly R 25,000 per organisation, and a total funded amount of R 178,160. In the phases ending in 2009 AND 2010, the Small Grants Fund allocated grants to 5 beneficiaries, with an average amount of R 40,000 each, totalling R 200,000 in grants awarded. In 2011 the grants decreased in size to an average amount of about R 35,000 per beneficiary for 5 beneficiaries, totalling R 176,570.

Table 19: SGF Funding per Year

<b>Funding Phase Ending</b>	<b>Number of Beneficiaries Funded</b>	<b>Average Amount per Beneficiary</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
2008	7	R 25,000	R 178,160
2009	5	R 40,000	R 200,000
2010	5	R 40,000	R 200,000
2011	5	R 35,000	R 176,570

A total amount of R 754,730 has been distributed to the CBO beneficiaries in the past 4 years through the Small Grants Fund.

The number of beneficiaries reached in the last year of the project included at least 2115 vulnerable children. In a crude cost analysis, this means that an average of R 142 was spent per child on this project, including the amounts used by CINDI for project management and capacity building. In terms of the impact on individual children, their caregivers, the schools, vegetable gardens and CBO capacity development, this seems to be an extremely cost effective project.

The costs of facilitating the project by the CINDI Network office in 2011 were R 143,847, compared to the R 157,477 awarded to beneficiaries. This means that almost 50% of the overall funds were utilised on capacity building and project management. The breakdown of these expenses was shown as follows:

Table 20: Utilisation of Small Grants Funds: August 2010 – October 2011

<b>Item</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
CBO Development Coordinator	R 47,456	16%
Evaluation of Masihambisane II Model	R 19,635	7%
Management, monitoring and capacity development of Small Grants beneficiaries	R 76,756	25%
Funding awarded to beneficiaries	R 157,477	52%
<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>R 301,324</b>	<b>100%</b>

The percentages are shown in the pie chart below:

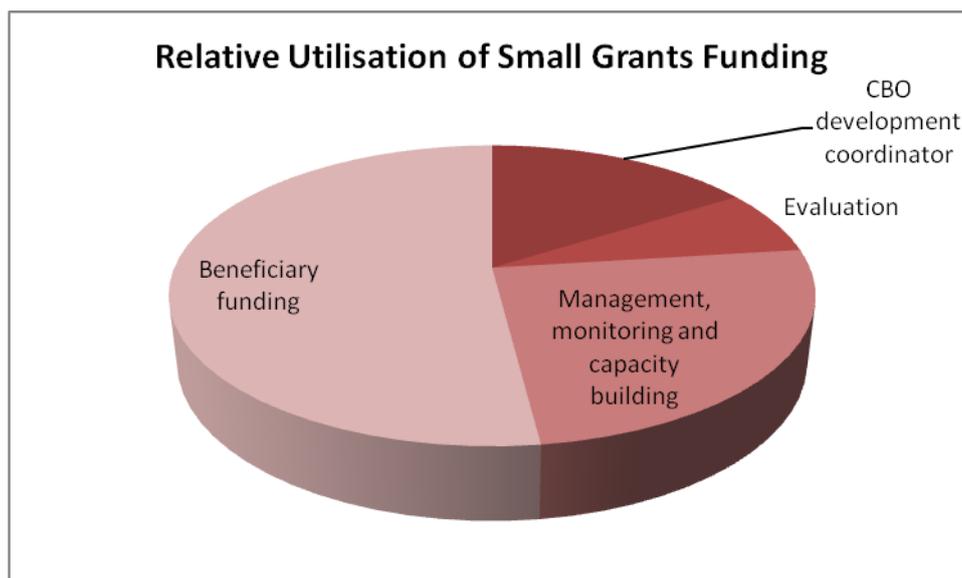


Figure 1: Relative Use of Expenditure for Small Grants Funding 2010 - 2011

Of the capacity building and project management costs, 25% of the expenses were spent on management, monitoring and capacity development of Small Grant beneficiaries. This line item aggregates both project management and capacity development, making it difficult to ascertain the exact amount spent on actual training. However, with the emerging model of increased hands-on and individualised capacity building through mentorship, as opposed to joint training workshops, this makes sense. In other words, although some workshop costs are included, the main costs of both capacity development and project management were personnel costs, in terms of time spent with beneficiaries. Nonetheless, it is recommended that the costs of capacity building be more clearly delineated from project management and administration if possible in future.

Overall, the figures show that the project has been cost-effective in terms of the percentage spent on project management versus direct funding of beneficiaries. As recommended by the CINDI Network Office staff themselves, the cost of the introduction of full time programme managers could be offset by increasing the number of beneficiaries and grant sizes in future, in order to maintain this proportional balance of direct funding and project management costs.

### **5.10. Comparison to Results of Previous Project Evaluations**

The Masihambisane and Small Grants Fund are two projects within CINDI which have developed organically in response to the needs of the CINDI Members and the experiences of implementing the project. Two previous evaluations were conducted on the developing CBO projects within CINDI.

## **Masihambisane II Project Evaluation**

The Masihambisane Project was evaluated by Suzanne Clulow and Phindile Mkhize in February 2011. The evaluation commended the project for the following reasons:

- Flexible adaptation of the original terms of reference to the varied needs of the CBO beneficiaries
- The relevance of training topics
- The efficiency of the approach

It was described that as a result of the Masihambisane II training:

- CBOs felt they understood their role better
- had improved focus
- worked more collaboratively as a group
- had increased confidence in their work
- had improved financial management skills
- and were better able to face their challenges

It was assessed that all of the CBOs felt that the programme had improved their capacity to support vulnerable children – either through an increase in resources or through programme skills gained.

The areas for suggested strengthening included the following recommendations:

- Increased participatory planning, based both on a review of other CBO development models in the sector and a thorough baseline assessment with the participating beneficiaries
- Tailor-made capacity development interventions to suit the various needs of the CBO beneficiaries
- Increase personnel within CINDI, especially a dedicated programme officer to manage the project
- Ongoing support and mentorship of the beneficiaries
- Synthesis of the Masihambisane and Small Grants initiatives

## **CINDI CBO Review**

The CINDI CBO Review by Zamo Hlela and Tim Houghton in 2009 gave similar positive feedback, especially on the impact of CBO capacity building in ultimately benefiting vulnerable children. They gave the following recommendations to strengthen the CINDI CBO capacity development projects:

- Analyse the costs of CBO capacity building relative to the funding being given directly to CINDI CBO beneficiaries, as the capacity building component outweighed the direct funding
- Differentiate more between different levels and types of CBOs rather than treating CBOs as homogenous entities
- Increased feedback mechanisms and transparency around funding

- Strengthening of the CBO cluster
- Increasing CBO participation in the CINDI Network through decreased reliance on understanding of English in the Network meetings
- Increased clarity about the approach to CBO capacity development (engagement strategy), roles and responsibilities of the CINDI Network Office staff and policies around funding

### **CINDI Responses to the Previous Evaluation Recommendations**

In terms of the recommendations made in the two previous evaluations, it would seem that a number of the suggestions have been addressed in this latest phase of the Small Grants Fund and in the CINDI Network development in general.

Regarding focusing roles and responsibilities within the CINDI Network Office for CBO development, although there was not sufficient funding to have a dedicated programme manager for CBO development, in particular it seemed that the finance team within CINDI increasingly took on the role of programme management. By all reports, they offered hands-on support and ongoing mentorship to the beneficiaries from within the CINDI Network Office. This also addresses the concern raised about insufficient funding transparency and the need for greater feedback regarding use of funds, as there were more individual meetings between CINDI and the beneficiaries, especially around financial management.

The recent phase of the Small Grants Project did not have pre-determined training topics, but responded reflexively to the needs of the beneficiaries, especially with more hands-on mentoring, demonstrations and practice than packaged training. This addressed both the comment on reducing the cost of training relative to direct funding, and not treating all CBOs as homogenous with pre-determined training topics.

With regard to participatory approaches and avoiding exclusion of CBOs through language, there has been a dramatic positive increase within the CINDI Network. The CBO cluster has been meeting regularly and has become a voice for the CBO members within the Network. All Network meetings have included both English and Zulu, with translation between the two languages, such that all members are able to participate actively. This has been successful to the extent that in recent meetings CINDI members have argued to do away with the distinction between CBOs and NGOs. Within the Small Grants Fund project itself, much as there was patience and dedicated effort, some of the organisations struggled when the mentorship was in English. People saw the English mentorship as a positive growth opportunity, but would have appreciated more support in isiZulu because at time they didn't understand the instructions, even when they were willing to follow them. This was similarly suggested by the CINDI Finance Officer himself.

The flow between the Masihambisane and Small Grants Fund projects does not seem to be matching the idealised model that was envisaged. Only two CBOs who received Masihambisane funding went on to receive Small Grants Funding. Instead, it seemed that the two sets of fund were suited to different types of CBOs, from less developed to more advanced.

The ongoing development of the model of CBO funding has been undertaken, with adaptations integrated into the proposal of the most recent phase of the project. However the need for a stronger theoretical model and conceptual approach came up again from the CINDI Network Office in this evaluation as requiring ongoing review and further theoretical development. This is to the credit of the CINDI Network Office as it shows a genuine interest in continuing to improve and develop in a self-reflective manner.

The results of this evaluation, and the comparison with advancements made by the CINDI Network in its CBO development since the two previous evaluations, have led to the following set of recommendations for further growth of the project.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1. Impact and Relevance**

The consultants of this evaluation concur that the funding of CBOs to improve the conditions of vulnerable children in their families is one of the most effective and relevant ways of promoting development in South Africa. CBOs are ideally placed to effect change, being in a position to identify the most vulnerable people in the community, provide direct holistic assistance and link such people to government, leadership and NGO services. CBOs often emerge as endogenous responses to real needs from the community up, before such projects are initiated, and are a sustainable means of investing specialised support into a community which can effect change in the conditions and resources available to many people in the community for many years even beyond the project period. It is therefore recommended CBO development and funding initiatives continue to be a core and valued aspect of CINDI's work to change the lives of vulnerable children.

## **6.2. Geographical Focus**

The results show that the Small Grants Funding concentrated its resources mainly in the surrounding municipalities of the Mgungundlovu district. Should resources permit in future, it is recommended that consideration be given to increasingly rural and under-resourced areas of the province. It should be borne in mind that this is likely to increase the resources needed for monitoring and supporting the beneficiaries. The need for isiZulu mentorship should also be built into the project from the outset.

## **6.3. Alignment of Needs**

Thanks to the collaboration between CINDI, its donors, CBOs and community the impact of the project was likely to be much higher than funding any single organisation. This means that the project has a potential to benefit many thousands of vulnerable children and their families. In order to focus the limited resources even further, it is recommended (as suggested by CINDI themselves) to align the needs of the communities, CBOs, CINDI priorities and donor priorities more closely. When there is a mismatch between what the funding is intended to be used for, versus what the organisations are naturally doing in their work, the complications in relation to implementation reporting and accountability are likely to be worse.

One area where this may require further discussion relates to the practical and material needs of communities severely affected by poverty. For example feeding schemes are not considered strategic and sustainable means of development and risk leading to more dependency. However, given the distress that CBOs face in working directly with children and families who are suffering, provision of food could be considered as a temporary measure to alleviate hunger (while not alleviating poverty) where there is evidence of lack of food security. There would need to be strategies of how to overcome this in the long term. As the consultant involved in the field visits of this evaluation observed: "I was quite impressed with one project in Swayemani – they have a feeding scheme, but through the Small Grants they developed tunnel farming, which is quite rapid in terms of producing food. So now they are no longer dependent on CINDI to provide food. Through the Small Grants Fund they were helped to develop a strategy on how to feed themselves for the future."

Similarly, where resources permit, it is recommended that CINDI considers paying for the transport costs of its beneficiaries to CINDI Network and Cluster meetings. This would allow even very under-resourced CBOs and CBOs in rural areas to develop their capacity and demonstrate their commitment to networking. The idea of district clusters may also address some of these concerns in the future. However, as explained by the CINDI

Director, this is not feasible for the current membership of more than 400 CINDI members, and may need to be confined to allowance of transport budgets within funding applications like the Small Grants Project.

Regarding the use of funding to pay for CBO members stipends – it seems that CINDI was providing stipends, but for some reasons this was discontinued. This has really affected the CBOs. The CNO themselves also recommended including stipends, especially for those whose main services are accomplished by volunteers. “We want them to be professionals. It is an old fashioned notion to not want to pay NGOs salaries.” The payment of stipends is therefore recommended for the future, and this may be in alignment with the expressed CINDI philosophy of treating CBOs as professionals. In this sector it is expected that a significant portion of resources should be allocated to human resource costs, since these are service delivery organisations. In this way CINDI may support the provision of quality services.

#### **6.4. Continue with Capacity Building**

The development of organisational capacity, both in terms of systems of governance and technical programme skills, was one of the greatest successes of this project. It is therefore recommended that this aspect of the work be continued in the future. As recommended by those interviewed in this evaluation, this should be in line with the needs of the organisations, together with the assessment of CINDI about where they are in terms of governance and programme needs. Trainings should be tailor made to their needs and participants should be specifically selected to attend certain trainings. Earlier standardised training may be offered to beneficiaries at the outset of the project to ensure that they understand the accountability requirements of the project.

Where resources permit, there could be more monitoring of skills transfer – as sometimes it was deemed that the transfer effect of training is not being optimised. It is noted though that this is a general challenge in the sector, not specifically relating to CINDI. However CINDI could build on the observed strengths in this project, where some CBOs managed this transfer of capacity well because they sent people who had the ability to train others and they created the time for this to happen. CINDI could develop a more structured programme to support this transfer of skills to happen.

In order to fulfil this capacity development role more effectively, it is recommended that the CINDI Network Office itself have dedicated staff to manage and implement this project.

## **6.5. Incremental Funding**

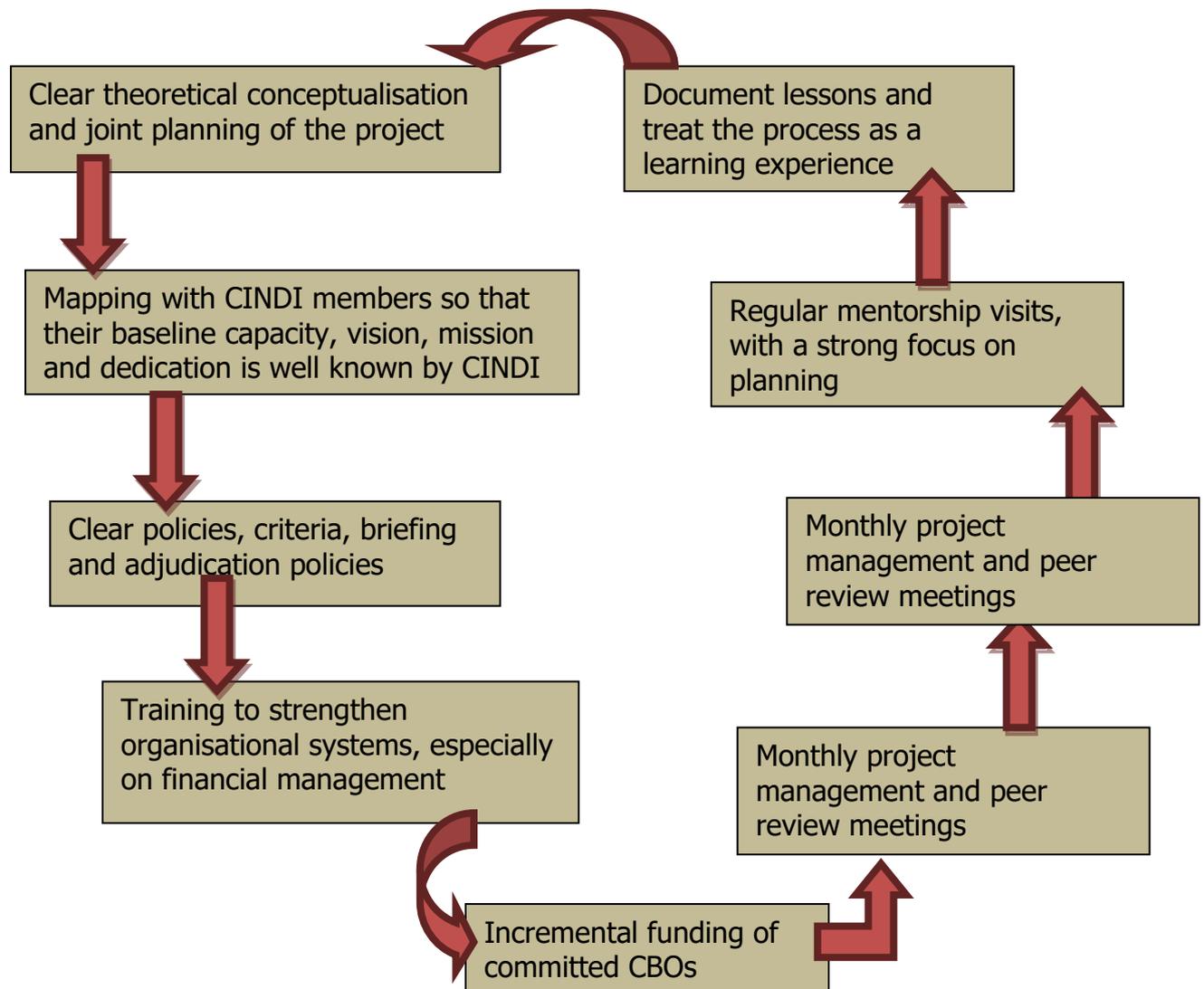
It is recommended that the beneficiaries who do well with initial small grants should be prioritised for bigger grants in subsequent project funding. "It is quite evident that they are well established organisations which can make a significant impact" said the consultant involved in the organisational visits for this review. Incremental funding may be a helpful model as a way of incentivising people – "if you do well, you stand to benefit more". This should not be done at the expense of those who need to be properly groomed and mentored, although at the same time CINDI does not want to see "good money thrown at people who do not show the potential to develop". Proper assessment of those who have done well, those who have potential and those who need to be excluded or given more time to grow may be built into every phase of the project.

It is recommended that the project period be extended to at least three years, with incremental funding on the basis of performance leading to higher grant sizes. This may still be a low risk approach, based on proven efficacy and accountability before bigger grants are awarded.

Even if the project is run over a longer period, it is recommended that the reporting formats and procedures are not changed much during the project period, to avoid frustration and to consolidate learning.

## 6.6. Development of Ideal Model Flow

The following idealised flow of the project conceptualisation and implementation is drawn largely from the experiences and recommendations of the CINDI Network Office. It is recommended that the overall project implementation process is done over three years.



## 7. Conclusion

In terms of the criteria outlined in the original TOR of the evaluation, the following comments may be confidently asserted by the evaluation team:

- The CINDI Small Grants Funding programme is highly **relevant** in providing funding and capacity building for CBOs and thereby enhancing their capacity to address the needs of children in areas served by them.

- The **efficiency** of the approach, especially with respect to the utilisation of available resources, can be commended. Outputs were delivered timeously and in a cost-effective manner.
- The **effectiveness** of the programme in achieving the aims of the Small Grant Fund may be commended, especially in relation to the reach of beneficiaries and sustainable development of the capacity of the CBO beneficiaries.
- The **outcomes/impact** of the programme in terms of changes that have been instituted in the functioning of the participating CBOs as a consequence of the funding and capacity building included:
  - Increased staff commitment
  - More staff maturity and leadership
  - Improved filing
  - Safer governance systems and structures
  - Greater accountability and transparency
  - Greater independence (for example in not having to buy vegetables)
  - Improved profiling of the organization
  - Improved working relationships with clients, such as schools and parents
  - More differentiated internal structures with clearer roles
  - More diverse sources of funding
  - Increased networking with other organisations
- The **sustainability** of the programme in terms of the likelihood of the benefits of the programme being maintained within the participating CBOs is considered to be high and the model is commended for its progressive developmental approach.

The evaluation team has no reservations in recommending this programme for the future, and sincerely thanks the CINDI Network and the Embassy of Ireland, through its Bilateral Aid Programme to South Africa (Irish Aid) for the work that has been done to improve the lives of vulnerable children and their families.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Interview Questions for CINDI Network Office and Donors**

#### **CINDI EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE SMALL GRANTS FUND**

**Interview with CNO  
Monday 14 May 2012**

1. Please will you tell us a bit about the background to the Small Grants Fund
2. Starting very broadly, what were your experiences of the Small Grants Fund?
3. What worked well – what were you especially proud of?
4. Can you tell us about some particular moments or stories that you found inspiring or touching during this process?
5. What were some of the challenges you experienced, and how did you overcome these?
6. What were the key learnings for you from this experience?
7. What would you do differently next time?
8. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the least successful and 10 is the most successful level, where would you say you are now in terms of the Small Grants Fund implementation?
9. What makes you say you are at an X and not an X-1?
10. What would you need to do to get to level 10?

11. Imagine yourselves, in 5 years time, having implemented another Small Grants Fund, which was a very successful initiative – what did you do to get to this high level of success?
12. Specifically, what did you do differently to get to this successful level?
13. What advice would you give to someone else trying out a project like this?
14. Is there any particular model you would advocate for this work within CINDi in the future?

### **Development of a Prospective Model for Small Grants Funding**

15. What should be the ethics, principles or theoretical framework for the new model, which will form the foundation of the planning and intervention?
16. What do you suggest as the phases of the Small Grants Funding process?
17. What specific steps should be followed
18. How should any challenges be handled (eg non-delivery of reports)
19. Is there anything that we should avoid doing in future?
20. What will make this model unique compared to what other organisations are doing?

## Appendix B: Field Visit and Verification Schedule

### CINDI SMALL GRANTS EVALUATION 2012 CBO FIELD VISIT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Interviewer:    \_\_Mdu Molefe\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

#### MEMBERSHIP

Full Voting Member		Affiliate Member		Date of Membership	
Cluster Membership					
Home Based Care		Psychosocial Support			
Community Development		Children in Care			
CBO Cluster		None			

#### ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Name of Organisation:			
NPO No:		Copy of certificate seen Date of issue	Yes No
Municipal Ward where office is based:			
Telephone Number:		Fax Number:	
Email:			
Website:			
Contact Person:			
Position:			
Cell No:			
In which areas are you working?	Districts & Municipality:  Specific communities & wards:		

Do you have a computer?	Yes / No	Do you have internet access?	
Is there anyone in your organization who can use:	Ms Word: Yes / No Excel: Yes / No Email and Internet: Yes / No		

#### STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Type of Staff	Total	Male	Female
Project Staff (Implementers)			
Admin / Management Staff			
Volunteers (unpaid)			
Volunteers (stipends)			

#### SERVICES OFFERED

4.1. Services offered directly to children as a result of the Small Grants Fund	Home based care		Psychosocial support & counseling	
	Access to treatment		Child abuse case management	
	Feeding schemes		Creche or child care	
	Access to education		Access to school uniforms	
	Residential care			
	Other:			
4.2. Services offered to caregivers (parents, grandparents, foster parents etc) as a result of the Small Grants	Parenting skills training		Psychosocial support & counseling	
	Access to grants		Vegetable gardening support	
	Other:			

Fund	
4.3. Services offered to others (please specify – eg leadership)	
4.4. What is it about your project that you are really proud of?	
4.5. Please describe some of the local challenges in the areas where you are working.	
4.6. Please describe any successes you have accessing government services in the area where you are working.	

## SMALL GRANTS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

<p>5.1. What was your experience of the CINDI Small Grants Project?</p>	
<p>5.2. What did you especially like about the Project?</p>	
<p>5.3. What would you suggest should be done differently or better in future?</p>	
<p>5.4. What would you like to say to the CINDI Network Office staff about the Small Grants Project?</p>	
<p>5.5. What would you like to say to the donors who funded this project?</p>	

## CAPACITY DEVELOPED THROUGH SMALL GRANTS

QUESTION	TOPICS COVERED
<p>6.1. What training have you and/or members of your organisation had during this Small Grants Fund? (on capacity building, working with children etc)</p>	
<p>6.2. What has changed in your organization thanks to the CINDI Small Grants Project?</p>	
<p>6.3. If you think of a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the newest, least developed organization and 10 is a highly developed, well functioning organization - where would you say you were before you received the CINDI Small Grants Funding?</p>	
<p>6.4. And still on the same level from 1 to 10, where would you say you are now thanks to the CINDI Small Grants Funding?</p>	
<p>6.5. What makes you say you are at a X and not a (X-1 – say one number below what they said they are now)?</p>	
<p>6.6. And what would make you move up one level to a (X+1 – say one number higher than what they said they are at now)</p>	

6.7. What help would you need from CINDI to move you up even higher on this scale?	
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#### ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

CAPACITY	ALREADY HAVE / NEEDED	VERIFIED (Observed during field visit?)
7.1. Does your organisation have a cheque account in the name of the organisation?		Yes / No
7.2. Does your organisation keep a detailed list of all income and expenditure, with supporting documentation?		Yes / No
7.3. Does your organization have audited annual financial statements?		Yes / No
7.4. Does your organisation have a board / committee of management?		Yes / No
7.5. Is your board or committee made up of your own staff or volunteers or are they outside (independent) people?		Yes / No
7.6. a. Where and how often does your board meet? b. Where and how often does your staff or organization meet?		Yes / No
7.7. Does your organisation keep minutes of their meetings?		Yes / No
7.8. Does your organisation keep records of all the work undertaken? (Please make a note of what type of M&E records they keep)		Yes / No
7.9. Does your organisation write reports on its work? (please make a note about what type		Yes / No

of reports)		
7.10. Does your organisation have any written policies in place? Which of these were developed thanks to the Small Grants Fund?	(Try to listen out for the following) Child safety policy Environmental impact policy Financial management policy Gender policy Human resource management policy Any other policies?	Yes / No
7.11. From which other sources does your organisation receive funding? (list of donors, membership fees, people paying out of their own pockets, government stipends etc)		

## NETWORKING

8.1. Which other organisations do you regularly work with? (local and national and government departments and Local AIDS Council, ward level committees) Who are you contact people in each of these organisations? (If possible please get the phone number of this person)	Local:  National:  Government Departments:
8.2. What role did children play in your projects funded by the CINDI Small Grants? (listen out for child participation)	

NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES REACHED (Through Small Grants)

The beneficiaries should be those who were in projects funded by the Small Grants Fund.

6.1. Do you have a list of all the names of the children that you work with in the CINDI Small Grants Fund?		Yes / No	Seen it?
6.2. How many children did you work with in the past year thanks to the CINDI Small Grants Fund?			
6.3. How many boys and how many girls?	Females / Girls		
	Males / Boys		
6.4. How many children of each age group?	0-6 years		
	7-13 years Primary School		
	14-18 High School		
6.5. How many care givers of children (eg parents, gogos) did you work with in the past year?			
6.6. How many of these caregivers were aged 60 years or older			
6.7. What was the gender of caregivers you worked with?	Number of female caregivers		
	Number of male caregivers		
6.8. How many households did you visited this past year?	First visits		
	Follow up visits		
6.9. How many child headed households (responsible person is aged under 18 years) did you visit?		How many youth headed households (responsible person is aged 19-25 years) did you visit	
6.10. How many schools did you work with this past year?	Creches		
	Primary schools		
	High schools		
6.11. How many vegetable gardens did you support this past year?	Community or family gardens		
	School gardens		

Any of your own comments or observations: