

Construction for Change — TEW Foundation Application

Organization's history and goals

Construction for Change is a nonprofit construction management company founded by three students from the University of Washington in 2007. Our organization was built upon the belief that the value and service we provide is meant for others. By partnering with other nonprofit organizations, we build spaces where people around the world can improve their health, education, and economic mobility. Our nonprofit partners provide life-changing resources, yet have outgrown their current facilities or identified a need in expanding the services they offer. We leverage the pro bono work of world-class design firms ensuring our buildings meet the needs of the people who use them. Our volunteer construction management professionals collaborate on the ground and on the build site with skilled local labor to see the process through to completion. This model allows us to streamline costs without compromising quality, saving our partners an average of 23% off the direct construction costs alone. Construction for Changes aims to continue expanding our resources and services so we can move from 4-5 projects per year to 20 projects completed per year, meaning that we hand over the keys and step back allowing the communities to begin utilizing their new facilities.

One of our many recent local projects has been undertaken through our health initiative – the 30/30 Project—a five-year healthcare partnership. The goal of the 30/30 Project is to build 30 medical facilities and improve overall healthcare accessibility—of which 17 have been completed three years into the initiative. Our current partnership with the Seattle YWCA aims to renovate and improve an entire wing of their downtown building that houses the BABES Network, which provides HIV-related services in Seattle.

In addition, Construction for Change works on a global scale—ensuring that our organization brings change to various underserved communities apart from the ones in the United States. We have recently completed a two-part project with the healthcare organization Integrate Health in Togo, West Africa. The United Nations has voted Togo three times as the saddest place on earth, with low access to healthcare and high maternal mortality rates are significant contributing factors. Phase one focused on the construction of The Adabawere Maternity Ward, which has since witnessed an increase in prenatal visits by 38 percent. The second phase consisted of renovations to the Djamde, Kpindi, and Sarakawa clinics. This included extensive repairs to the plumbing, electrical, and air circulation systems and establishing an improved water source at each location. In the first year since the renovations were completed, patient visits at each clinic have increased as much as 140 percent. Perhaps the increase in access to high-quality healthcare is best explained not by a statistic, but by the Djamde village chief: “Even the deaf and blind can feel the change in the community.”

Exact purpose of the project and grant request

At Construction for Change, we share the belief that every person—regardless of where they live—should have access to well-built spaces. Having the right office infrastructure and facilities at our home base is crucial in our mission of improving the overall conditions of the communities we serve.

Construction for Change recently launched a four-year campaign called Built to Last. We designed it specifically to increase the organizational capacity of our operation's structure and model. Built to Last focuses on increasing staff positions, consultants, equipment, technology, travel, and training. The campaign will enable us to grow our organizational infrastructure over the next three years—ensuring sustained growth and the ability to expand our services to our global partner organizations. This growth will give way to essential access to education, health care services, and economic empowerment around the world. Although our three-year plan estimates a completed 20 projects a year, our work will encompass 30-40 in-progress projects annually from planning, design phase, construction, and close-out.

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The impact of the Built to Last Campaign will not only result in the capacity to build more structures with greater efficacy, it will also provide Construction for Change with the resources needed to maintain—and exponentially expand—our services on a local and global scale. By caring for our volunteers, managing partnerships, cultivating strong relationships with our donors, and inviting others to support our mission, we can be punctual in delivering world-class buildings to our partners. Support from the TEW Foundation will enable the continued funding for our Built to Last campaign.