



# introducing

## Four Worlds



What characterises the Four Worlds organisation?

Four Worlds is an international network of people and organisations bound together by a common set of principles. These founding principles are based on the traditional teachings of North American tribal peoples combined with the best that western science and technology have to offer. They read as follows:

1. Development comes from within. Others may help and assist, but the driving force for change, healing, learning, growth and progress must come from within the communities themselves.
2. No vision, no development: people need to be able to visualise health and well-being for themselves in order to be able to create it in their world.
3. Individual and community transformation go hand-in-hand.
4. Holistic learning is the key to deep and lasting change.

For over twenty years Four Worlds International has done extensive culturally based, participatory community development work with indigenous communities in North and South America as well as with local and national governments and NGOs in many parts of the world.



What priority areas will Four Worlds focus on in the coming four years?

We believe that issues associated with indigenous community building need to be addressed in a holistic manner moving beyond one-off solutions. Four Worlds promotes a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach that combines a focus on basic needs, with economic development, relevant educational opportunities, healing and personal development initiatives, and leadership capacity building at the grassroots.

To accomplish this it is important to start small and focus on a specific target group of community members. When capacities and experiences grow, we can expand. The initial group then becomes the core for future community development efforts; they provide leadership for the next stages of development. Listening closely to these community voices sets a basis for Four Worlds for tailoring our support efforts to specific community needs.



Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning  
Box 395  
Cochrane Alberta,  
T4C 1A6  
Canada  
E-mail: [anyone@fourworlds.ca](mailto:anyone@fourworlds.ca)  
Website: [www.fourworlds.ca](http://www.fourworlds.ca)



What does Four Worlds consider the main opportunities and threats in achieving its goals in the near future?

The Four Worlds model requires a shift in the way development initiatives are commonly implemented. This shift towards authentic endogenous development may be valued in development discourse, but donors and government partners are rarely prepared to make the necessary, long-term investments that enable this approach to be pursued. Fortunately, we have recently received support to implement our model in a very comprehensive initiative addressing poverty among urban indigenous people in the United States. This opportunity will enable us to demonstrate the real outcomes of our principle-centered, culturally grounded and holistic approach in terms of quality of life.

