

6-71 Bank St.  
Ottawa, ON  
K1P 5N2

[www.abacusdata.ca](http://www.abacusdata.ca)

# MEMO

From: David Coletto, Abacus Data  
To: Canadian Council for International Cooperation  
Date: January 31, 2020  
Re: The foundations of opinion on Official Development Assistance

---

## WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE?

## HOW CAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SECTOR BUILD SUPPORT FOR INCREASING CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION?

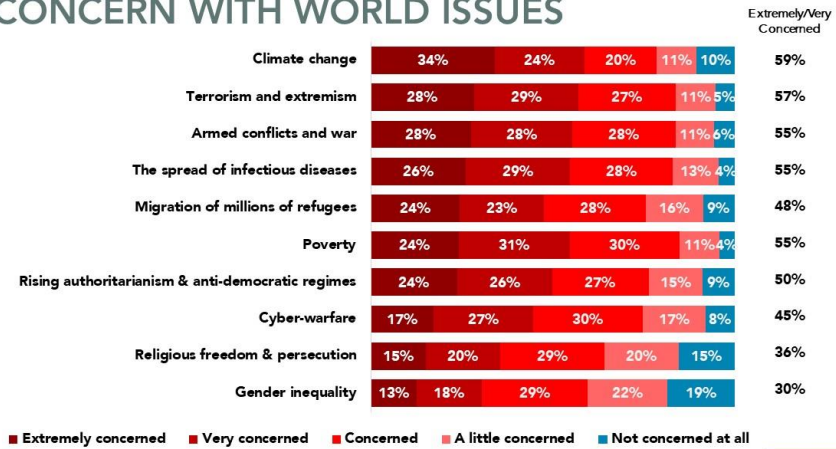
These two questions guided the design of a national survey of 1,500 Canadians we conducted for the Canadian Council for International Cooperation. The survey was conducted online from January 22 to 25, 2020. The sample of 1,500 Canadian adults is representative of the population.

### THE WORLD IS GETTING SMALLER

Across the country, Canadians express deep concern about a range of issues that have a direct connection with ODA. Issues like climate change, terrorism, armed conflicts and war, the spread of infectious diseases, poverty, and the migration of millions of refugees have most Canadians concerned.

These concerns cross demographic and regional groups within Canada, but differences also emerge across partisan and ideological groups. For example, Liberal, NDP and Green supporters are far more likely to be more intensely concerned about climate change than Conservative supporters, whereas Conservative supporters are more likely to express concern about the migration of millions of refugees.

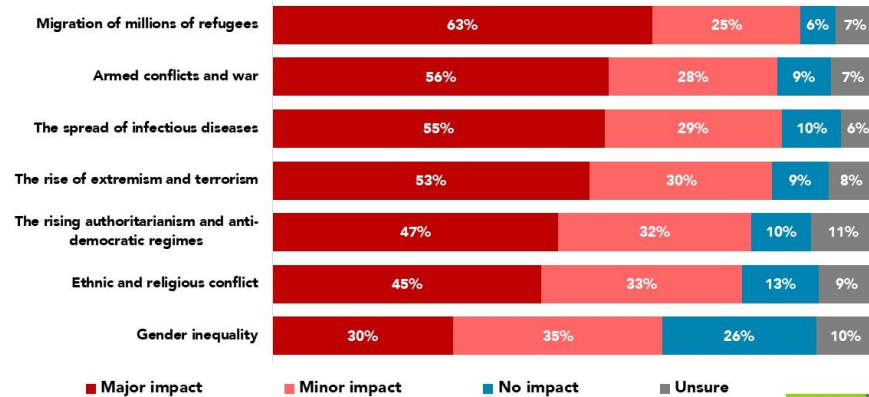
## CONCERN WITH WORLD ISSUES



Thinking about issues occurring around the world, to what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the following?

Canadians do see a clear link between ODA spending and improving outcomes in developing countries. For example, our research found most people see a link between poverty and lower living standards of those in developing countries and several the global issues they are concerned about, including mass migration, armed conflicts and war, and the spread of infectious disease. Advocates and government need to reinforce those views.

## IMPACTS OF POVERTY AND LOWER STANDARDS OF THOSE LIVING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON...



To what extent, if at all, do you think poverty and lower standards of those living in developing countries have an impact on...

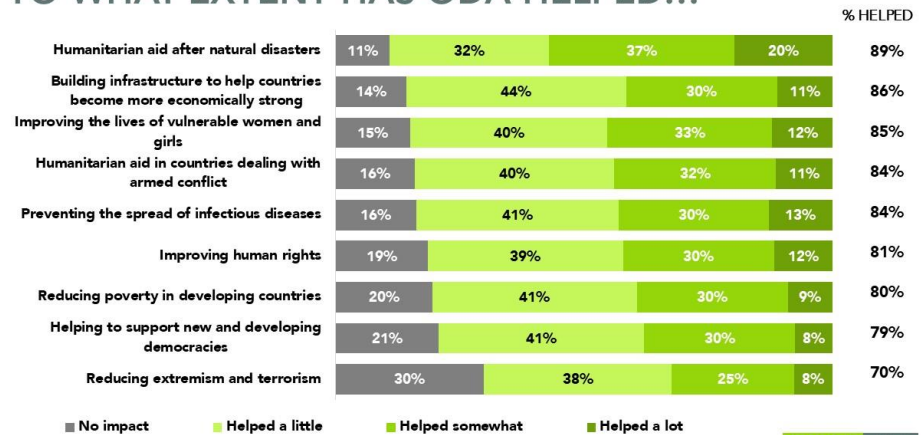
Canadians feel the world is smaller than it once was, and issues impacting people in other parts of the world can and do impact domestic concerns – especially when the consequences of poverty, climate change, and conflict encourage migration, terrorism, and the spread of infectious diseases. **As the world becomes less secure and the world feels smaller, the case for ODA and international cooperation becomes stronger.**

## MOST CANADIANS FEEL ODA IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

While most Canadians are worried about a range of global issues and feel poverty and insecurity in developing countries is a major cause of those issues, many also recognize that ODA supplied by developed countries like Canada has helped on several fronts.

The effect of ODA spending on humanitarian aid after natural disasters is most widely recognized, but many also see ODA helping to build infrastructure to support economic growth, improving the lives of vulnerable women and girls, and preventing the spread of infectious disease.

### TO WHAT EXTENT HAS ODA HELPED...



Over the past decade, to what extent do you think Official Development Assistance supplied by developed countries like Canada has helped the following?

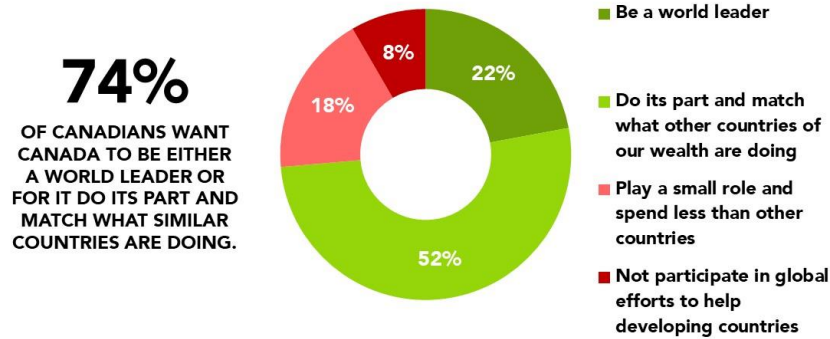
The sector and government should continue to demonstrate impact and reinforce perceptions that ODA is making a difference as support for ODA spending is related to the belief that it is helping to solve many of the problems people are concerned with.

### CANADIANS WANT CANADA TO DO ITS PART ON ODA

Our research finds that most Canadians (74%) want Canada to be either a world leader in ODA spending or at least do its part and match what similar countries are doing.

This sentiment is particularly strong among Liberal, NDP, and Green Party supporters and cross all demographic and regional groups in the country but is particularly strong among younger Canadians.

## WHAT ROLE SHOULD CANADA PLAY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR ODA?



What role do you think Canada should play when it comes to international development assistance or ODA? Do you think Canada should...

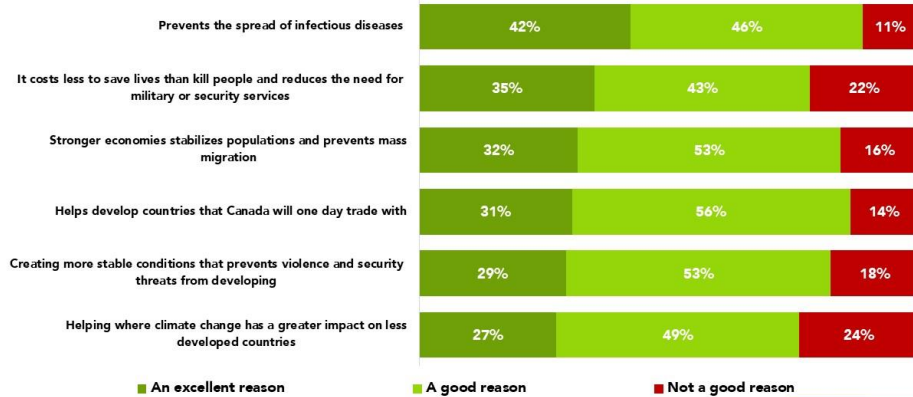
As part of the research, we tested several arguments in favour of increasing Canada's ODA commitment. Most of the arguments tested well with all audiences, but five were particularly appealing to respondents.

Framing ODA to prevent the spread of infectious diseases had the widest appeal and not surprising given the attention Canadians are paying to the outbreak of the coronavirus in China.

But Canadians also responded well to arguments that offered clear material benefits to Canada or helped prevent outcomes they were particularly worried about, including:

- **The cost-effectiveness of ODA spending in preventing problems that are more costly to solve.** Specifically, it costs less to save lives than it does to kill people. Investing in preventing the cause of conflict and war simple costs less was a very effective argument.
- **Linking ODA with Canada's long-term economic interests.** ODA solves two problems at once – it reduces inequality, creates economic opportunity for those in developing countries, while also creating economic opportunities for Canada. Using South Korea is a powerful example – a country that the world helped to rebuild is not an economic power that we do billions of dollars worth of trade with every year.
- **Creating stability prevents violence and security threats from developing in the first place and the need for migration.** People understood the link between the two and thought it was an effective argument, especially for Conservative-oriented voters who may otherwise be more resistant to spending on ODA.

## ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF CANADA INCREASING ODA ALL CANADIANS



Below are some arguments in favour of Canada and countries like Canada increasing the amount of money it spends on international development assistance or official development assistance. For each one, tell us whether you think it is an excellent reason, a good reason, or not a good reason to support increasing foreign aid.

Canadians look around the world and recognize that climate change, poverty and inequality, and conflict are creating conditions that are not only harmful to those living in those places but pose a threat to Canada. Terrorism and mass migration are top of mind concerns. The spread of infectious disease makes the world feel so much smaller than it is.

At the same time, Canadians recognize the upside to investing more in ODA. Not only do they feel it is the right thing to do, but they see economic opportunities for Canada in the long term.

Framing ODA as both a moral imperative and a smart, strategic investment for Canada connects with different audiences and can build support for more ODA spending. Articulating the return on investment, using simple yet powerful examples of past success, and linking ODA with the concerns people have will help build support for increased ODA spending.

Canadians want Canada to do its part. We don't have to be the world leader, but learning that Canada trails other G7 countries in ODA spending disappoints some and embarrasses others.