

# Canadian International Assistance Fact Sheet

April 2025

## 1. What is Canada's aid budget?

- In 2023/24, Canada's overseas development assistance budget was \$10,172.96 billion, representing **0.35% of Gross National Income (GNI)**. If you remove in-donor refugee costs, which refers to the expenses Canada incurs in providing for refugees within its own borders, the budget was \$7.531 billion or 0.26% of GNI. This means for **every \$100 Canada earns as a country, it spends just 26 cents** on overseas development assistance outside Canada.
- Canada spends over \$475 billion on domestic programs annually. This means Canadian international assistance is **less than 2% of federal spending**.

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## 2. What does Canadian international assistance do? What is the impact?

- Canadian international assistance supports humanitarian assistance, health, education, food security, climate action, gender equality, economic development, human rights and democracy.
- Every dollar spent on international development assistance can generate up to \$7 in global economic benefits.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Canadian international assistance has helped:
  - **vaccinate millions of children**, preventing diseases like measles and polio
  - **support women and children's health** and **strengthen women's rights and economic participation**
  - **support sustainable agriculture, reducing hunger, improving food security** and **building resilience** to climate shocks
  - **strengthen global and regional stability** by addressing the root causes of conflict, displacement and insecurity

[1] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2023). The Economic Impact of Development Aid. Paris: OECD Publishing.

### 3. How is Canadian international assistance monitored and regulated?

Canada's international development efforts are rigorously monitored and evaluated to ensure accountability and results. Here is how:

- The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) is a federal law, passed in 2008, that sets the rules for Canada's official development assistance (ODA). It ensures that aid:
  - contributes to poverty reduction;
  - takes into account the perspectives of people living in poverty;
  - is consistent with Canadian values and foreign policy.

The ODAAA also requires public reporting, so Canadians can see where the money goes and what it achieves. The government publishes an annual report to Parliament under the ODAAA, detailing where the aid goes, how much is spent, and what results are achieved.

- Canada reports to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), for international comparison.
- All Canadian international assistance projects are available to be viewed online through the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) project browser.
- Canada's international assistance is guided by strong anti-terrorism laws and protections.
- In addition, Canadian humanitarian assistance and international development charities are audited rigorously and regulated through the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA).

## 4. Why should Canada invest in international assistance?

- Canada’s investment in international assistance reflects our values of compassion and responsibility — and it delivers real impact both globally and at home. Here are some reasons why Canada should invest in international assistance.
  - **Responsibility, security and mutual benefit:** Canadian aid improves lives overseas while contributing to a more stable, secure, and prosperous world — outcomes that directly communities around the world, and Canadians.
    - Global challenges like conflict, food insecurity, and pandemics don’t stop at borders. International assistance reduces long-term costs by addressing root causes of challenges around the world before they escalate, and before they reach Canada. Contributions to global health initiatives like vaccine access and pandemic preparedness help protect Canadians.
    - **Economic stability and opportunities:** A thriving Canadian economy depends on stable global markets.
      - Aid supports education, healthcare, and infrastructure around the world, creating future trade partners and new markets for Canadian goods and services.
    - **Global influence:** International assistance strengthens Canada’s strategic partnerships and global leadership, giving us a voice in shaping international policy and cooperation.

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## 5. Do Canadians care about international assistance?

- According to an Abacus Data poll conducted in 2024, Canadians do support Canada’s global engagement, including on international assistance. For example, 81% feel it’s important for Canada to contribute its fair share to solving global problems and 79% support the federal government’s provision of Official Development Assistance, or international assistance.

## 6. What are some examples of Canadian international assistance in action?

- Canadian international assistance projects are funded through a range of different sources, including support from the Canadian government, Canadian individuals and Canadian philanthropies and foundations.
- It's easy to get lost in budget lines and policy debates but Canada's international assistance isn't just an abstract line in the federal budget. It is a lifeline. It makes a difference. It's a powerful expression of Canadian values in action. Here are some examples:
  - Humanitarian assistance: In moments of crisis, Canadian aid responds swiftly. In 2024 alone, [Islamic Relief Canada](#) implemented 60 emergency relief projects in 18 countries, reaching over 2 million people with life-saving support.
  - Education: In Mali, Canadian-funded efforts through the [World University Services Centre](#) (WUSC) [PASCOFI project](#) are increasing school enrollment, retention, and academic performance, especially among girls. In Goundaka, more girls enrolled in school in one year than in the past five years combined, transforming futures and entire communities. As a local school director said, "The seeds we are planting today will grow into something extraordinary tomorrow."
  - Food security: Canadian cooperation organizations like [SOCODEVI](#) are delivering measurable, lasting results supporting food security. Supported cooperatives have multiplied their assets thirtyfold, increased farmers' incomes by 35%, reduced poverty by nearly 10%, and improved women's empowerment scores by 30% in just one year, demonstrating that aid is not charity, but a smart investment.
  - Maternal health: Through the Canadian Association of Midwives, in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 3,810 women gave birth with a trained medical professional by their side, drastically reducing the risk of devastating delivery complications.
  - Ukraine: In Ukraine, Canadian aid supports a large de-mining initiative, to remove Russian landmines, is supporting Ukrainian lawyers to prevent and respond to sexual violence and providing emergency medicine, food and shelter to civilians.

- Disease and pandemic prevention: Canadian aid helped build a centre in southern Africa to track, respond to and prevent biological weapons and threats that could spread around the world.
- Policing and security: Canadian aid, in partnership with INTERPOL, helps them prevent ISIL operations in the Middle East, by training policy and judges, tackling terrorist fighters and preventing violence against women and girls.
- Women’s political participation: In Mongolia, support from the [Equality Fund](#) contributed to a historic breakthrough: the highest number of women candidates (519) and women elected (32) to Parliament in the country’s history, surpassing regional averages and advancing gender equality and democratic participation.
- Peace: Between 2018 and 2024, the Canadian-funded [Women of Courage: Women, Peace and Security Program](#) led by KAIROS enabled transformative work in healing and justice for survivors of gender-based violence in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the West Bank, and South Sudan. A total of 36,128 people were reached with 7,995 women survivors receiving psychosocial counselling and accessing legal services to address the psychosocial impacts of war.