

The Canadian response to disability in the context of landmines suggests a return to primarily a medical model response to disability – one that focuses on the individual and his/her impairment and how to prevent or fix it or rehabilitate the person to adapt to it. This is in stark contrast with the human rights understanding of disability which is based on a social model of disability. The social model looks at the societal context within which a person with disability lives, and seeks to make it more hospitable to all its citizens. Thus people with disabilities are treated first and foremost as citizens, those with rights. The state's responsibility, and that of other countries, is to ensure those rights can be achieved by removing the necessary barriers.

With the heavy emphasis on individual impairment and rehabilitation, Canadian foreign policy in the area of landmines illustrates that the human rights understanding of disability has not filtered into areas outside of those areas of foreign policy related to human rights. Human security policy as evident in the approach to landmines fails to address disability within its broader human rights framework. Until the human rights approach becomes more widely spread within all parts of DFAIT, it is unlikely that we will see appropriate attention to disability.

Immigration policy and disability

Canadian foreign policy suffers not only because it draws upon individualistic and medicalized understandings of disability that are in conflict with the human rights perspective, but also because it practices foreign policy which is exclusive. The internationalist perspective that many Canadians highly prize is one which emphasizes building global communities to deal with problems. Yet we see a tension between domestic and foreign policies which leads to an immigration policy which specifically excludes many people with disabilities (often as a result of