

Conclusion

Canadian foreign policy has been built on ideas of good international citizenship and creating global communities. Its treatment of disability issues, within a limited framework, has been from a human rights perspective. But that human rights approach has failed to transcend direct attention on disability. It fails to inform Canadian action towards landmines survivors, many of whom experience disability as a result of their encounters with landmines. Human rights also fails to inform Canadian policies towards immigrants. Canada continues to use medical evidence and judgement about the experience of disability to assess whether or not someone is eligible to enter Canada. Proposals being considered around HIV testing could increase this exclusion. As a result, those with disabilities who are outside Canada can be expected to be treated as less than equal.

The disability community has recognized the importance of highlighting Canada's long-standing commitment to adopting and upholding international human rights treaties, and of including disability as one aspect of human rights. Canada has led the way internationally in making information about countries' record in implementing their human rights commitments through initiatives like Human Rights Internet². Canada's own reports are also publicly available, although they often paint a rosy picture of the Canadian implementation, without acknowledging the failures or limited applications.

²Human Rights Internet maintains an annual report called For the Record on countries records in implementing international human rights treaties. For the 2001 version see: <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord2001/index.htm>