

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) came into force in 2008. Its purpose is to ensure that all Canadian official development assistance (ODA) focuses on poverty reduction and reflects aid effectiveness principles and Canadian values. For details, please refer to the full text of the ODAAA (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.8/FullText.html>).

To help ensure the accountability and transparency of Canada's international assistance, the Act requires that an annual report summarizing Canada's ODA spending and activities be tabled in Parliament. The Minister of International Development tables the annual report in Parliament, on behalf of the Government of Canada.

In order for international assistance to be reported to Parliament as ODA under the Act, three criteria must be met. Assistance must:

- 1. contribute to poverty reduction;**
- 2. take into account the perspectives of the poor; and**
- 3. be consistent with international human rights standards.**

Canadian ODA can also be directed toward humanitarian assistance to help alleviate the effects of a natural or human-caused disaster or other emergencies in developing countries.

When the Government of Canada developed its Feminist International Assistance Policy, it was conscious of the need to ensure that the policy reflected the Act's goals. Based on overwhelming evidence, Canada recognizes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to poverty eradication.

Canada's ODA takes into account the perspectives of the poor to ensure that local needs are being met effectively. Canada works closely with partner governments, civil society organizations and project recipients to help ensure Canadian supported initiatives are effectively designed and implemented.

It regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including international experts, academics and local partners, to inform Canada's international assistance efforts. Stakeholder engagement also plays a critical role in informing Canadian policy and programming approaches in specific country contexts.

For Canada's programming to be consistent with international human rights standards, initiatives must demonstrate, at a minimum, that they reasonably expect to "do no harm." This requires exercising due diligence to avoid undermining human rights in the host country or community.

Many projects led or funded by Canada go beyond the principle of "do no harm" by specifically promoting and protecting human rights. Some of these projects are presented in the Inclusive governance section of this report.

Canada's feminist approach, as outlined in the Feminist International Assistance Policy, is grounded in a human rights-based approach. Canada recognizes that all people should enjoy the same fundamental human rights and be given the same opportunities to succeed. This is regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, migrant or refugee status, or any other aspect of identity.

Adopting a human rights-based approach means that Canada is contributing to advancing human rights through all of its international assistance. Canada's approach is guided by the key human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and transparency and accountability.