

Internationally, Canada's ODA programs help people and communities address poverty. Poverty reduction is integrated into programming with broader goals and is built on community participation. This is consistent with the approach that Canada has encouraged multilateral development bodies to adopt in their programming and in the Canadian International Development Agency's new Poverty Reduction Policy.

Changing Consumption Patterns

Canadian industry and government have made progress in reducing consumption in many areas, including in their production of bulk wastes and specific pollutants. Reducing personal and household consumption is a greater challenge, particularly in the area of personal transportation. A variety of programs now exist to help consumers understand the environmental impacts of their consumption decisions and to make choices that are better for the environment. Experiments in the pricing of goods and services are part of this process.

Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability

Canada has focused primarily on supporting population and reproductive health efforts in developing countries. Programs in this area have placed great emphasis on the value of education as an effective tool to reduce population growth. Through this work, Canada has come to recognize that the most important contribution to demographic targets comes from effective social and economic development policies. This recognition has been reflected in recent Canadian policy and program decisions.

Most of Canada's direct support for population-related programming is channelled through international agencies. Canada is committed to maintain and, if possible, increase spending in this area.

Promoting Education, Public Awareness, and Training

Activities aimed at educating and informing the public about environment and sustainable development issues have increased considerably in the last twenty years. Canadians have created opportunities for educators to exchange resources and successful strategies through multi-stakeholder organizations, networks, and conferences.

A similar trend exists in the larger field of public awareness and environmental citizenship. There are many projects under way that encourage the public to take specific, concrete actions to support environmental protection and a more sustainable future. Some of these projects also seek to involve Canadians as workers and as business people in environmental issues in the workplace and where they live.

Integrating Environment and Development into Decision Making

All sectors of Canadian society are working in partnership to make progress on sustainable development.

In 1995, the federal government introduced the National Energy Code for Buildings, which provides guidance for cost-effective, energy-efficient construction. The Federal Buildings Initiative (FBI) also helps federal departments reduce energy consumption. Under the FBI, departments will reduce energy consumption by 15 to 20 percent or more and realize potential savings in excess of \$160 million per year. The initiative will involve capital expenditures from the private sector of over \$1 billion and create 20,000 person-years of employment.

Because literacy is a life-long learning skill, Agenda 21 underscores the importance of reducing adult illiteracy. Governments and educators need precise measures of the actual literacy skills of Canadians in order to target and promote initiatives for improvement. Since 1989, Statistics Canada has been conducting adult literacy assessments in Canada.