



Canadian Funding for Global Education – A Basic Overview

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Background

According to the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, “a dollar invested in an additional year of schooling, particularly for girls, generates earnings and health benefits of \$10 in low-income countries”. However, in the same recent report, the Commission concludes that the world is in the middle of a learning crisis with a quarter of a billion children out of school. Donor countries seem to be losing interest in education : “Since 2002, the share of education in total aid has fallen from 13 to 10 percent”.¹

With Malala Yousafzai having received honorary Canadian citizenship in April 2017, and the new Canadian Feminist International Assistance Policy, which underscores the importance of education, having been launched shortly thereafter, one would expect Canadian funding for education to have increased. What does the data show?

Data Sources

The Government of Canada reports on its aid program expenditures in two ways: 1. like every donor, it provides a report which is inputted into the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System, on a calendar year basis, in accordance with expenditure categories determined by the OECD; 2. under the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA), it publishes a statistical report on a fiscal year basis (April to March) using identical expenditure categories. We will review both sources of data.

Findings

As shown in the table below, total funding for education is in a drastic decline since the beginning of the decade, as shown in the table below. The 2017 expenditures are only 50% of what they were in 2010. There were cuts in the overall aid budget starting in 2012, but the cuts to education predate these cuts. As a proportion of the aid budget, education has been particularly hard hit: as a result, education funding in 2017 is 40% lower than the 2008-2010 average. So education is now a smaller proportion of a smaller aid budget.

Canadian Expenditures on International Education

MILLIONS OF US CONSTANT DOLLARS

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Education Aid	274.9	350.3	413.2	266.9	254.8	221.9	210.0	250.5	216.5	206.0
% of Cdn Aid	9.1%	11.0%	11.9%	7.9%	7.7%	7.5%	7.3%	8.2%	7.7%	6.5%

Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System, consulted on June 15, 2019

¹ http://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Learning_Generation_Full_Report.pdf

Additionally, when Canadian aid for education is compared to global education aid, it barely reaches 2.4% of the global total, whereas that proportion stood at 4.7% at the beginning of the decade. Canada's share has nearly melted by half, reaching a ten-year low.

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Education Aid	274.9	350.3	413.2	266.9	254.8	221.9	210.0	250.5	216.5	206.0
Global Ed. Aid	7600.8	8320.2	8722.1	8317.2	7975.6	7807.7	7845.5	7700.9	8804.5	8555.2
Canada as %	3.6%	4.2%	4.7%	3.2%	3.2%	2.8%	2.7%	3.3%	2.5%	2.4%

Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System, consulted on June 18, 2019

Using data published by the Government of Canada in its Statistical Reports on International Assistance for each fiscal year provides additional insight into this trend by extending the analysis to the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2018, which better captures the first years of the Trudeau government. Although the data is not directly comparable with the OECD data above², it nevertheless shows similar trends. It shows in particular a sharp decline for the first two complete years of the Trudeau government. It confirms the observation that Canada has clearly been dedicating less and less of its overall aid to education.

GAC Disbursements for Education, in Millions of Canadian Dollars and as % of GAC's Aid Program

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
CAD\$M	270.63	293.18	342.64	324.99	319.17	297.84
% of GAC Aid	8.4	9.2	11.1	10.4	8.7	7.7

Source: Statistical Reports on Canadian International Assistance, Government of Canada

Conclusion

The above trends should offer important food for thought for Canadians. They complement other GPS analysis which shows that funding for basic education is also in decline. Considering that one of the new key performance indicators that GAC is using to assess its performance is "Number of graduates (m/f) of Global Affairs Canada supported, demand driven, technical and vocational education and training", it is important to be vigilant to ensure that total education funding increases so that vocational training, a traditionally low spending priority, does not take a bigger share of an already reduced pie.

² Although the same definition of education expenditures is used, the data of the Statistical Report on International Assistance is expressed in Canadian dollars and in current dollars (instead of constant US dollars), it covers a different 12-month period, and it includes regional development banks (which is accounted for differently by the OECD).

Key Self-Directed Learning Questions

How has the share of education in total aid been evolving?

How is Canada's share been evolving?

What portion of total education aid is borne by Canada?
