CONTEXT

On May 18, 2016, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, launched a public consultation as part of Canada’s review of its international assistance. This review will help establish an international assistance policy and funding framework that will be focused on helping the poorest and most vulnerable people, and supporting fragile states, while advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. With an emphasis placed on women and girls, the Government of Canada plans to apply a feminist lens to all of its international assistance activities.

For 45 years, CWY has offered transformative learning experiences and opportunities for capacity building to young women and men from all backgrounds. Having worked closely with youth and youth-serving organizations on six continents, CWY has developed a deep understanding of the benefits of investing in the development of young people, as a precondition to address issues of poverty and environmental sustainability. This includes access to sustainable livelihoods, to quality education, AND to youth-friendly health services, just to mention a few.

CWY welcomes the new emphasis on rights and the application of a feminist lens to international assistance activities. Along with the emphasis on rights, youth need to be at the core of Canadian policy. Moreover, our more than 45 years of experience leads us to postulate that no other investment is as likely to drive advancement of all the Sustainable Development Goals as investing in youth.

THE LARGEST YOUTH GENERATION IN WORLD HISTORY DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Recommendation 1: Mainstream youth in Canada’s international assistance program; for example earmark at least 25% of overseas development aid to be directed at youth within a long term strategy (10 – 20 years).

Mainstream youth in all Canada’s policies on the basis of the lessons learned from mainstreaming gender. Youth mainstreaming could be an important tool to address development with an ultimate goal of intergenerational equity, or fairness between generations as the basis for sustainable development, and to pave the way for adult-youth partnerships.

With a historic high of 1.8 billion around the world, today’s current youth population makes up slightly less than one quarter of the global population (UNFPA, 2015). In most developing countries, youth between 10 and 24 years old now represent the largest age group (UNFPA, 2015). Moving forward, the world will continue to be characterized by a youthful population, as the total number of children under 15 years old represents one quarter of the world’s population (CSIS, 2015, Global Monitoring Report 2015). However, too many youth are
disproportionately affected by development issues and face more barriers than older cohorts to fully participate in society:

- Among those aged 15-24, approximately 120 million are still illiterate, some 500 million live on less than $2 a day, and over 73 million are unemployed (UNFPA, 2015).
- Youth compose the majority of the world’s indigenous population, which make up 5% of the world’s population; an estimated 10 to 30% lives in poverty.
- An estimated 180 to 220 million youth live with a disability. In developing countries, unemployment among people with disabilities averages 80 (UN, 2007)
- Youth represent over 12% of the world’s migrants for safety or economic reasons. Half of them are women and girls, and 60% live in developing countries (UNDESA, 2013).
- An estimated 1.3 million adolescents died in 2012, mostly from preventable or treatable diseases (Global Partnership for Youth, 2015).
- Youth are among the most vulnerable to climate change, and carry a heavy burden for assisting their families in adapting to the effects of environmental degradation and climate change (World Migration Group, 2014).
- Over 35% of new HIV/AIDS infections globally occur among youth (UNAIDS 2016). An estimated 2.2 million adolescents are living with HIV – around 60% are young girls (UNAIDS, 2016).

In certain regions of the world, most notably Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa, this youth bulge is accompanied by a gender imbalance with more young men than young women. For example there are 2.1 billion men and 1.9 billion women across Asia. This gender imbalance has significant implications for development as it may result in the threat of social unrest, especially in the case of an excess of low-status young males unable to find spouses being recruited into the service of extremist movements and political factions.

At the same time, youth mainstreaming should be embedded in gender mainstreaming strategies, so that the youth dimension can be recognized within strategies to address persistent gaps between women and men. This would allow the specific realities of young women to be addressed from both a gender perspective and a youth perspective.

For young women, the barriers to participation are even more important. Although gender disparities in access to primary education have been greatly reduced, girls are still more likely to be excluded from primary education when they are poor (UNESCO, 2015). In contrast to adolescent boys, adolescent girls typically have less access to information about sexual and reproductive health, peer networks and opportunities and resources to develop skills, capacities and capabilities (Women’s Refugee Commission, 2014). More than one third of young women in the developing world were married before reaching the age of 18, a change in status which can increase the risk of domestic violence. Also, early marriage frequently leads to early childbirth – the leading cause of death of adolescent girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. About one quarter of the 100 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2015 were women and adolescent girls of reproductive age (UNFPA, 2015a).

THE NEED TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

Despite the diversity within this age group, what defines youth is being in transition towards full independence and adulthood. One of the differences compared to previous generations is that these transitions tend to be more complex and less linear. Youth now face transitions to independence and full agency that are less
predictable, and that involve frequent breaks, backtracking and the blending of statuses (Furlong, 2013). Evidence from the ILO’s School-To-Work Transition survey (Matsumoto and Elder, 2010) shows that youth today tend to remain in the transition stage for longer periods of time than before.

Unemployment is one of the indicators that is most used to illustrate the change in these transitions. This phenomenon affects more than 73 million young people around the world. In low- and middle-income countries, underemployment in the informal sector is considered the primary employment challenge faced by young people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, 80% of jobs held by women are in the informal sector (ILO, 2014), particularly in the subsistence agriculture sector, and gender gaps are pervasive in terms of share of vulnerable employment. A coping strategy for the effects of economic shocks on these transitions is migration. Attracted by the potential of improving their earnings, youth leave their rural communities and migrate to urban areas within their own country. At the same time, skilled youth with high career aspirations contribute to the “brain drain” in developing and transitioning countries, and are often confronted with low incomes and high costs of living faced with non-recognition of training credentials (Salzano, 2013). Migrant youth – particularly those in lower skilled, unskilled and/or irregular situations – face risks of abuse, exploitation, discrimination, exclusion and unemployment in many countries. Young women migrant workers confront high risks of sexual and gender based violence, as well as abuse and exploitation at work and elsewhere in their migration experience.

In Canada, the difficulties associated with these transitions affect specific segments of the youth population, namely indigenous youth and recent immigrants. 56% of young immigrants in Canada have a university degree, yet their unemployment rate is five times higher than for their Canadian-born peers. In 2010, the unemployment rate among Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 was 21.1% compared to 14.7% for non-Aboriginal youths (Usalcas, 2011).

A second issue that illustrates these transitions is the transition to parenthood. Globally there is a trend in delaying marriage, especially in contexts where there has been an increase in educational attainment (Psaki, 2014). However, the risk of unplanned pregnancies has increased for unmarried adolescents (Psaki, 2014). In fact, despite the decline in the overall birth rate in the developing world, adolescent birth rates remain high, as approximately 16 million girls aged 15–19 give birth, accounting for around 11% of all births. In some contexts, the social or institutional support for these transitions is eroding. Not addressing the specific needs of young women has important consequences for the well-being of women. An analysis of the characteristics of poor households indicates that countries where women are at greater risk of poverty also tend to have an over-representation of single-mother households among the bottom 20% (UN, 2015).

The way these issues affect youth is influenced by the complex intersections of gender, marital status, economic status and geographical location. They also depend on whether they are members of an ethnic minority, are living with HIV or a disability, are refugees or internally displaced persons, have the support of family or have dependents. The intersection of these factors, often in complex and multiple combinations, influences the risks and vulnerabilities faced by youth.

Addressing these transitions is critical, as it can lead to the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of the largest demographic cohort in developing countries and can unlock the untapped potential of youth from a human capital perspective.
A KEY TOOL FOR BRINGING SOLUTIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH POLICY TO GUIDE POLICY AND INVESTMENTS

Recommendation 2: Adopt a youth policy as a tool to seize the strategic opportunity to lead global efforts and to fulfill the potential of the largest generation of youth in world’s history and undo intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequity.

A youth policy represents an opportunity to ensure the coherence of Canada’s domestic and international policies and initiatives, as stated in Global Affairs Canada’s consultation paper. One key aspect of this youth policy should be a framework to mainstream a youth perspective into Canada’s international assistance policy. Lessons learned from almost two decades of practice in gender mainstreaming could inspire a process of assessing the implications for young women and men in international assistance policies and initiatives. As the literature in youth development has shown, working to create equitable partnerships between youth and adults strengthens the capacities and the well-being of youth: the developmental needs of young people are met while youth are in leadership roles improving the conditions in which they live (CWY Impact Assessment 2006).

YOUTH-CENTERED POLICY AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

Supporting youth to make successful transitions represents a development opportunity. As USAID (2012) puts it, “youth in any country are able to make significant contributions to economic, social, and political life in a way that lifts countries out of poverty, ensures greater stability and promotes healthier societies.” It makes sense for Canada, with constrained resources, to adopt youth-centered development as an overarching goal for its international assistance policy and programs. Addressing development from the standpoint of the diversity of youth experiences and realities would allow the adoption of a life-path approach and would focus on the trajectories of individuals, their participation in society and how institutions including educational institutions, labor market, family, community organizations, and government programs can support their different transitions. Focusing on youth offers an opportunity to innovate and address international assistance issues from an asset-based perspective, as it opens a door to consider the role of different assets (human capital, social capital, physical assets, environmental assets, spiritual assets and financial assets) in supporting youth transitions and thus, addresses the different dimensions of poverty. A positive asset-based approach also sees youth as key assets for communities instead of focusing on needs, avoiding the creation of long-term dependency, and builds self-efficacy and self-confidence—essential tools for developing resilience (Zimmerman, 2013, CWY 2012). The goal is to build a solid foundation that includes stable employment skills, self-confidence, financial literacy, a strong social network, among other key factors.

This approach can be useful not only to address the policy issues included in the Consultation paper released by Global Affairs Canada, but most importantly, can provide cohesiveness between policy priorities in Canada and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Moreover, it could also ensure consistency between development, trade and foreign affairs priorities, including international security considerations.

Youth economic empowerment has a direct impact on economic growth and stability at a country level, but also at a global level. According to Gurria (2015), inclusiveness should be a driver of strong economic performance and growth, which demands going beyond the average individual and enhancing labor market prospects

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1 A life-path or a life-course approach has been applied successfully to identify innovative solutions to public health problems, as it foresees a continuum of interventions across the lifecourse, combined with efforts to strengthen health delivery systems and address the broader social and economic determinants of health. See for instance, Haffon, N., & Hochstein, M. (2002), Van Look, Paul F. A. (2015)
particularly for underrepresented group such as youth, women with young children, ethnic minorities, and migrants, among others. In other words, investing in youth could be a strategic contribution from Canada to foster resilient economies which in turn can become stronger trade partners (CWY, YCI EQWiP HUBs submission 2014).

**Passing the impact test for Canada’s international assistance priorities**

**HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

**Recommendation 3: Enhance Canada’s impact on the health and rights of women by applying a youth analysis which will ensure current efforts are taking into account the specific realities of young women and adolescent girls.**

Canada has an opportunity to become a pioneer in addressing “youth in development” in a similar way it has played a leadership role towards integrating gender equity in the international cooperation agenda by recognizing that young people have different assets and vulnerabilities than young children or adults, and by implementing concrete strategies to improve their well-being.

Canada should continue supporting the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and continue playing a leadership role in the Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health sector. CWY welcomes the inclusion of a rights-based feminist approach and would suggest a more comprehensive approach that is inclusive of the rights of young women. Carrying out a youth analysis would ensure that current efforts take into account the specific realities of young women and adolescent girls, and would allow Canada to enhance its impact on reproductive rights for young women. Young girls continue to carry the heaviest burden of death and disability due to complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth, including unsafe abortions, with complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth the leading cause of death among 15 to 19 year-old girls in low- and middle-income countries (Global Partnership for Youth, GPFY, 2015).

Canada should assure that community-based and school-based health initiatives targeting youth are adequately supported. This would be consistent with an asset-based approach to international assistance and would target the social determinants of health for young women and men particular to different country and community contexts, while maximizing available resources. This is a smart investment, as these kind of initiatives address factors that affect health in adult years. Nearly one third of the total disease burden in adults is associated with conditions or behaviours that began at a young age, including tobacco use, behaviour that results in injury and violence, alcohol and substance use, dietary and hygienic practices, sedentary lifestyle, and sexual behaviour that causes unintended pregnancy and disease (WHO, 2015).

An asset-based approach can ensure Canada’s leadership in mainstreaming youth in the international development agenda, can provide consistency within its international and domestic policies, and can provide opportunities to roll-up results to demonstrate impact on realizing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

In other words, **investing in community-based outreach activities implemented with meaningful youth participation will have an impact on the physical, social, and mental health of youth and their transition to adulthood** (CWY YLA Summative Evaluation).
Recommendation 4: Ensure that education for young women and men is a stand-alone priority, given its impact on every other development issue that affects youth and its high return on investment. Youth-centred models such as experiential, asset-based, non-formal learning opportunities should be supported.

Education should be a stand-alone priority for Canada because of its potential impact on the socioeconomic well-being of young women and men and their communities. As the UN’s GPYF (2015) mentions, ensuring basic literacy and numeracy skills for young people in low-income countries could potentially lift 171 million people out of poverty. Moreover, ensuring adequate access to technical education and vocational training, entrepreneurship training, and other market-relevant education programs not only supports youth’s economic inclusion but has also been shown to have a direct impact on economic growth and stability. The UN estimates that youth participation in the job market could add up to 4.4% per year to a country’s GDP. Education can also have a positive effect in other international assistance priority areas for Canada. For instance, enhancing the educational attainment of girls is especially effective to achieve results in the area of MNCH: the risk of maternal death is 2.7 times higher among women with no education than among those who have completed 12 years of school, and two times higher for women with one to six years of education (Karlsen et al. 2011).

For its international assistance to be effective, Canada must support programs that address inadequate access to quality education and training, along with the mismatch between the skills of job-seekers and vacancies faced by youth in developing countries. From a perspective of globalization, the development of skills that allow youth to navigate from one sector to another thus allowing them to be adaptable and resilient to economic shocks is critical. Canada should also promote educational programs that allow youth to develop the skills that are most in demand by employers as complements to programs that contribute to technical skills development. Research shows that most of these skills are not gained through education provided by formal institutions. For example, a comprehensive sample of 27 studies reveals a remarkable consistency across regions, industry, occupation, and education level, in the skills demanded by employers that are not necessarily provided in a formal educational context (Cunningham and Villaseñor, 2016).

Employers value technical skills, but there is a greater demand for socio-emotional skills such as adaptability, teamwork, social values, intercultural skills, self-confidence, and higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis skills, critical thinking, learning process, and second language acquisition (Cunningham and Villaseñor, 2016). In contrast, different studies on the effects of volunteering programs and other non-formal educational activities such as CWY Youth Exchanges have shown a positive contribution of this type of programs to youth’s personal assets and human capital (Knowles and Behrman, 2005, Souto-Otero, 2012, CWY/VOSESA, 2013). In the U.S., for instance, strong empirical evidence establishes a positive association between participation in volunteering programs and the likelihood of finding employment regardless of a person’s gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area, or the job market conditions (Spera, 2013). These experiential programs support youth in applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real-world problems or situations. In practice, they translate into volunteering programs (domestic and international), access to cross-cultural exchanges between different regions of the world (north-south, south-south), and quality internships (linked to educational or work outcomes, respecting labor rights, providing adequate supervision). In fact, the latest World Youth Report, identifies entrepreneurship training and internships as two key solutions to avoid the “lost generation of workers” from becoming a reality. Moreover, the skills acquired through these programs are strongly predictive of life outcomes and influence impact on other development areas (USAID, 2012).
CLEAN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the majority of the funding for climate adaptation for developing countries targets young women.

Youth have a unique stake in the promotion of low-carbon economic growth and in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures in the light of accelerated, human-induced climate change. From an economic standpoint, Canada should continue to prioritize the economic empowerment of women and youth.

As part of a two-tiered youth policy, Canada should adopt an ambitious plan to promote green jobs, as decent jobs contributing to preserving, restoring and improving the environment. According to the ILO, most studies indicate employment gains in the order of 0.5% to 2%, which would translate into 15–60 million additional jobs globally. Promoting the acquisition of skills to seize opportunities in areas such as sustainable agriculture (as most poor rural workers and subsistence farmers are women), and other areas such as recycling, protecting or restoring ecosystems and biodiversity; and supporting adaptation to the effects of climate change. Such a plan could include enhancing skills development and upgrading for women and young women. This could be a signature contribution from Canada to enhance the capacities of education systems, to develop gender responsive curricula and training programs.

A majority of the $2.65 billion funding that has been committed by the Government of Canada to support developing countries to “move to low-carbon economies, sustainable manage and protect their natural resources and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change” should be dedicated to adaptation efforts targeting women and young women. As women and young women have less access to different amounts and combinations of livelihood assets, women tend to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly in rural areas and regions with high food insecurity (IPCC, 2014). Drought, saline intrusion into water sources, and erratic rainfall all cause women to work harder to secure resources such as food, water, and fuel. This not only has a negative impact on climate change, but also on women’s economic potential and their availability to pursue their studies.

Gender and social differences between men and women also affect access to weather and climate information, resulting in lower preparedness for women in the event of extreme weather events. In an FAO-study in India, only 21% of women report having access to weather information versus 47% of men (Lambrou and Nelson, 2010). Moreover, women, and particularly young women, are subject to increased violence during climate-related environmental crisis and migrations. It is important to note that women and young women can be crucial actors in finding solutions on how to cope with climate change. Households rely on women to cover a wide range of roles not only within the family as caregivers, but also as farmers and food producers, thus assuring household food security. Indeed, women have knowledge, relationships, and practical skills that are critical to implementing any adaptation measures, and they often play a vital role as stewards of natural resources. Empowering them can positively impact the well-being of their families and children.

Furthermore, climate change will particularly put indigenous peoples, who depend on the environment and its biodiversity for their food security and nutrition, at high risk – specifically those living in areas where significant climate change impacts are expected such as mountain regions, coastal and other low-lying areas, and in the Arctic (IPCC, 2014). Climate change magnifies already existing problems because the unprecedented changes in the environment and natural resource base erodes indigenous peoples’ adaptive capacity and community resilience. Following Canada’s adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Canada
should ensure participation and informed consent of indigenous populations, with a special emphasis on young women and men, when developing mitigation and adaptation measures.

Last, Canadian adaptation measures should be based on the assumption that resilience to climate change is about more than technological solutions; it requires social transformation in the broadest sense. Investments in mitigation and adaptation will not trickle down to women and young women if they do not address deep-rooted gender inequality. Initiatives led by Canada should prioritize women and young women’s access to control over land and other productive resources, access to technical training particularly by young women, strengthening rural women’s organizations and networks, and the supporting of enhanced participation by women in early warning systems for environmental hazards.

GOVERNANCE, PLURALISM, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Recommendation 6: Ensure that Canada promotes positive youth engagement through traditional and emerging mechanisms. Canada should play a role in the promotion of the human rights of youth in situations of minority through a long-term strategy.

Mainstreaming youth into international assistance efforts can also constitute a smart strategy to promote governance and pluralism, given the assets they bring as the most interconnected and educated generation in history. At the same time, the Arab Spring events brought into light drawn-out intergenerational inequities and struggles that are present in most areas of the world. The predominant role that social media and the internet played in the propagation of the Arab Spring also hid the fact that although the new Information and Communication Technologies are a key tool to engage youth, 77% of those over age 25 in the developing world and 70% of youth under 25 years old do not have access to the Internet (USAID, 2012). In Canada this is a particular important barrier to engagement for indigenous youth. Canada should play a renewed leadership in promoting connectivity, as well as e-literacy and life skills development to ensure positive online engagement.

CWY applauds the establishment of the Prime Minister’s Youth Council and encourages participatory bodies as a model for youth engagement. Canada could play a leadership role to facilitate youth engagement, not only through traditional forms of political engagement – youth councils/advisory councils and promoting participation in elected bodies - but also through new ways of engaging youth (e.g. social media) into governance objectives. Special attention should be given to the promotion of the human rights of underrepresented groups within the broad diversity of youth, including migrant and refugee youth, street children, rural youth, married girls, youth from sexual minorities and young people with disabilities. One entry point can be the promotion of youth participation in the development of poverty reduction, national development plans, or climate adaptation strategies, given that these issues affect youth in a disproportionate way and that only one third of the world’s governments consult youth in any way. In CWY’s experience, promoting the participation of youth builds their credibility and shows in a practical way how their unique perspectives can result in innovative solutions. Finally, it must be recognized that democratic, pluralistic societies that are committed to human rights do not emerge overnight. It is important that Canada secures long-term funding to promote change.

PEACE AND SECURITY

Recommendation 7: Ensure that youth are included in peacebuilding efforts. Invest in stabilizing young people’s livelihoods and assets in fragile contexts and implement programs that build a culture of peace such as Youth Exchanges.
Mainstreaming youth can enhance peace and security outcomes. Peaceful, inclusive, and safe societies require the participation of young people, with close to 600 million youth living in fragile contexts or conflict-affected countries (UN, 2016). In these contexts, youth are also overrepresented as direct or indirect victims of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation. Globally, 43% of homicide victims are aged 15-29. (UN, 2015). Also, the lack of support for successful school-to-work and other life transitions can “create conditions for youth to be recruited into criminal networks, armed groups, youth gangs, and trafficking, all of which contribute to sustained violence, extremism and insurgencies” (USAID, 2012). A lack of economic opportunities and political, civic, and social exclusion can increase the probabilities of social unrest or violent extremism. Creating conditions for youth to access assets and social support can lead to stable and safer societies. Moreover, the active role that youth can play as agents of change in peacebuilding within their communities is often overlooked. A multi-country study on youth participation in peacebuilding showed that young peacebuilders increased peaceful cohabitation, reduced discrimination, reduced violence, and increased support to vulnerable groups (McGill et al, 2015).

Canada should consider supporting livelihood programs that target youth at risk of being recruited by extremist movements, political factions, and/or criminal groups; this could be an important mechanisms for enhancing peace and security. Different programs could stabilize young people’s livelihoods and/or enhance their assets through skills development or creation or access to finance and savings. Young women should be specially targeted to participate in peace building and recovery efforts. Finally, long-term investments in fostering mutual understanding among youth through Youth Exchanges can create synergies across ethnic groups, regions, and borders.

**Responding to humanitarian crises and the challenges faced by refugees and displaced populations.**

Canada should focus on resilience, as opposed to continuing to pursue a responsive approach, which will require ever increasing investments, given the growing incidence of climate-related and human-induced humanitarian crises. As the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent states, if current trends continue, natural disasters could have a global cost of more than $300 billion a year by 2050. Despite the lack of predictability in these events and the likelihood of a net increase, experts in the humanitarian field recognize that investments should be directed at preventive approaches that can reduce risks. These type of strategies are highly cost-effective: a dollar invested in disaster risk reduction can save two to ten dollars in disaster response and recovery costs. Mainstreaming youth in resilience efforts is particularly important given that the countries that are more prone to natural disasters and that are currently affected by long-term conflict also have very young populations. Canada can play a role to change the predominant view of young women and men as victims in the context of humanitarian crises.

Resilience for youth in a context of human-induced or climate-related vulnerability can be enhanced through the reinforcement of their capacities of youth to access information, prevent, prepare for, cope with and adapt to a new environment and reality. As Tanner (2010) mentions, young people can play an active role in disaster risk reduction (DRR) by participating in different initiatives such as the conception and implementation of projects that address risks pertinent to their lives or communicating risks among their peers and with their families, persuading them to take action. Canada can play a role in ensuring that training is available for young men and women to participate in DRR strategies. Moreover, technical and life skills training can also be an invaluable tool for youth to recover from humanitarian crises. Canada should also invest in livelihood assets as an integral part of its contribution to disaster preparedness and response plans.

Focusing on resilience is consistent with Canadian efforts to expand resettlement capacity globally and to welcome new refugees to our country. This openness should also be accompanied by active efforts to ensure
full integration in our society, working in partnership with Canadian organizations that have expertise in the affected areas and can create linkages with their countries of origin (CWY Syrian Refugee Youth Concept Note, 2016). As the Global Migration Group states, “when grounded in human rights, and underpinned by humane, fair and well-governed migration policies, migration can be a powerful tool for development.”

DELIVERING RESULTS

*Improving effectiveness and transparency*

- Undertake a review of Global Affairs Canada Development Branch systems, including bidding processes, cost—sharing, and length of contract negotiations. Eliminating significant disparity between different funding sources in project management and granting mechanisms. This will result in greater transparency and efficiency.

- Ensure consultation with youth, and youth centred organizations, to develop a comprehensive youth policy. Consultations should engage youth from different backgrounds: young women and men, Aboriginal youth, Northern youth, rural and urban youth, migrant and refugee youth, street children, married girls, youth from sexual minorities and young people with disabilities. Listening to youth will allow a better understanding of their unique needs and generate programs that have sustainable impacts for youth and their communities.

- Play a leadership role in the generation and use of age- and sex- disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth that can influence international development priorities and outcomes. This will also contribute to measuring impact on issues that affect youth.

- Invest for the long-term, committing to longer term responsive funding, 10 to 12 years, is crucial to assuring effectiveness. Transformation does not happen in five-year cycles.

*Innovation*

- Support programs that build key skills including socio-emotional skills (adaptability, teamwork, social values, intercultural communication, and self-confidence) and higher-order cognitive skills (analytical skills, critical thinking, learning process, second language acquisition).

- Support technical and life skills training that build resilience in youth and communities to recover from economic and environmental shocks. Canada should invest in livelihood assets as an integral part of its contribution to disaster preparedness and response plans.

- Ensure that the majority of the funds announced at the COP21 for climate change targets adaptation measures, including green job opportunities for young women and men.

- Create an Innovation Fund which supports multi-sectorial consortia approaches for proof-of-concept projects or scaling-up.

- Act as a knowledge incubator, coordinating existing structures (IDRC) in order to improve Canadian expertise in development.
Partnerships

- Encourage project and initiatives that support youth-adult partnerships; a partnership in which the contribution of youth is recognized and valued and which works to address issues facing youth and/or develop and implement programs and policies affecting youth.

- Prioritize consortiums that bring together organizations and institutions with complementary expertise and skills. Encouraging cross-sector collaborations and partnerships will leverage the strength and expertise of different stakeholders and promote innovative models to support youth.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: **Mainstream youth in Canada’s international assistance program**; for example earmark at least 25% of overseas development aid to be directed at youth within a long term strategy (10 – 20 years).

Recommendation 2: **Adopt a youth policy** as a tool to seize the strategic opportunity to lead global efforts and to fulfill the potential of the largest generation of youth in world’s history and undo intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequity.

Recommendation 3: **Enhance Canada’s impact on the health and rights of women** by applying a youth analysis which will ensure current efforts are taking into account the specific realities of young women and adolescent girls.

Recommendation 4: **Ensure that education for young women and men is a stand-alone priority**, given its impact on every other development issue that affects youth and its high return on investment. Youth-relevant models such as experiential, non-formal learning opportunities should be supported.

Recommendation 5: **Ensure that the majority of the funding for climate adaptation for developing countries targets young women**.

Recommendation 6: **Ensure that Canada promotes positive youth engagement through traditional and emerging mechanisms**. Canada should play a role in the promotion of the human rights of youth in situations of minority through a long-term strategy.

Recommendation 7: **Ensure that youth are included in peacebuilding efforts**. Invest in stabilizing young people’s livelihoods and assets in fragile contexts and implement programs that build a culture of peace such as Youth Exchanges.

Recommendation 8: **Review Global Affairs Canada’s Development Branch systems, funding allocations, and processes**, to increase efficiency and eliminate disparity in funding sources.

Recommendation 9: **Create an Innovation Fund and act as a knowledge incubator** to improve Canadian expertise in development

Recommendation 10: **Prioritize partnerships and consortiums in program design** that bring together diverse organizations and stakeholders to best serve youth.
Sources


The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2014; Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability available online at https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/


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