



Evaluation of the International Humanitarian Assistance Program, 2011/12 to 2017/18

The evaluation by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) of Canada's International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) Program demonstrated that from 2011 to 2018, Canada's humanitarian investments have saved lives, reduced suffering and protected human dignity. Canada disbursed over \$5B in humanitarian assistance between 2011 and 2018: consistently in the 10 largest humanitarian donors, with one of the highest proportions of official development assistance (ODA) directed to humanitarian assistance.

The evaluation was conducted by the International Assistance Evaluation Division (PRA), and relied on key stakeholder interviews, case studies, an analysis of humanitarian disbursements, a survey of heads of aid at Canada's missions, an appeals and media analysis, and environmental scan of other donors' IHA practices and GAC's alternative IHA delivery, as well as a literature and document review. The evaluation focused on responsiveness, results and value added, and delivery and the way forward.

KEY FINDINGS

Canada was a consistent and respected humanitarian donor that responded to needs in humanitarian crises. It could further increase its effectiveness and strengthen its role in the global humanitarian policy sphere.

The IHA Program (IHA) responded quickly and effectively in rapid-onset crises; increasing its use of draw-down mechanisms and benefiting from rapid approval processes that are unique to IHA and essential for humanitarian results. Conversely, its means to respond to protracted crises could be streamlined.

While staff in the Department's different program streams demonstrated nexus thinking and cooperated informally, there was a lack of overall Departmental guidance on the nexus, and the process constraints of different program streams made cooperation difficult.

IHA's profile and contributions to global policy work were perceived by global actors to have diminished in recent years. Contributing to this decline in policy influence include IHA's reduced support for humanitarian research, and the burden of transactional work that limited the time staff had available for learning, analysis and policy work.

IHA staff (and staff in diplomatic missions that support IHA) would benefit from structured guidance and training, especially in light of the rotational staffing environment.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Department could consider approaches outside the traditional programming silos, starting from a Department-wide analysis of fragility. IHA could consider formally capitalizing on the field knowledge of Canada's missions, as well as consider moving towards a pooled-fund model. In tandem, IHA could deepen dialogue with strategic partners. IHA could consider strengthening its results orientation, monitoring and evaluation capacity, and also consider formalizing training on humanitarian topics and internal processes for all new rotational staff (and select outgoing mission staff).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Department-level

1. The Deputy Minister of International Development should clarify the Department's pathway towards achieving a predictable, multi-year humanitarian budget for the IHA Program that is consistent with the Budget 2018 commitment, and would allow for a more strategic and longer-term approach in Program engagement within the global humanitarian system.
2. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of International Development should clarify expectations and responsibilities of different departmental actors with respect to nexus programming.

