

Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended to post-secondary students, school administrations, the media, and interested civil society organizations. It provides basic answers to questions related to:

The Millennium Development Goals

The 8 Goals Campaign

The role of Canada in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The role of students in the Campaign

The role of university, college and cégep administrations in the Campaign

The Millennium Development Goals

What are the Millennium Development Goals?

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the first set of goals and measurable targets shared by all developing and developed countries to end extreme poverty in the world by 2015.
- They focus on key aspects of human development, and seek to:



1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Reduce child mortality
4. Improve maternal health
5. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
6. Ensure environmental sustainability
7. Develop a global partnership for development

- In this global pact, Canada and other donor countries pledged to help developing countries reach the first 7 goals by providing more and better aid, debt cancellation, and more just trade rules.

Where do the Millennium Development Goals come from?

- There are officially derived from the **Millennium Declaration signed at the United Nations Summit in 2000**. But the challenges and issues they underpin were already major concerns for world leaders and international cooperation agencies in the 1990s.

Why are the Millennium Development Goals important?

- Any progress on one Goal means that we are that much closer to securing human rights for all, like the rights to education, to food, and to health.
- They are essential to global peace and security. Gross inequalities create global instability which contributes to war, terrorism, forced migration and the collapse of industry. Meeting the Goals would free people from dehumanizing conditions and promote peace.
- In this era of fast globalization, the prevailing conditions in countries as far as Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia can impact our lives. Vice versa, our daily actions as citizens and consumers of an affluent country can have a profound effect on the lives of people in the developing world.

Can we reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015?

- Yes, because **they are affordable**. Developed countries have more wealth than ever before. While governments spent \$900 billion dollars on military in 2003 alone, a number of leading experts agree that the Goals can be achieved with \$195 billion of aid each year.
- Yes, because **they are measurable**. Each Goal contains targets that are measurable by statistics.
- Yes, because **they are integrated in countries' plans to reduce poverty**. Countries that receive international assistance must report on how they have invested in the Goals.
- Yes, because **we are all working together**. This unprecedented pact combines the power of all the world's states and civil societies – in Canada, there's over 31 million of us, including half a million post-secondary students!
- However, we must multiply our efforts as we are not currently on track to achieve all of the Goals by 2015. Progress in some of the poorest areas and most disadvantaged groups is falling behind. See www.8goals.ca for a snapshot of progress to date and challenges to overcome.
- The good news? We are on track to reach some of the targets, like reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe water. Most importantly, it's not too late. If all world citizens make a strong, combined effort to strengthen the political will needed to reach them, we can meet the Goals in our lifetime.

The 8 Goals Campaign

What is the 8 Goals Campaign?

- The 8 Goals Campaign is primarily an education campaign on the MDGs which is active on university, college and cégep campuses across the country. However, as education must lead to action, we work closely with Make Poverty History and support its policy platform on aid, debt and trade.
- It is affiliated to the United Nations Millennium Campaign, which is active in 30 countries throughout the world.
- We aim to strengthen Canada's contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Who is involved in the 8 Goals Campaign?

- The Campaign is led by established Canadian organizations and student groups concerned with global issues. To see which organization is on board, visit www.8goals.ca.
- Hundreds of post-secondary students will take part or be exposed to the activities of the Campaign on over 78 university, college and cégep campuses across Canada. To see who's on board, see the campus map at www.8goals.ca.

Why do we need a campaign on the Millennium Development Goals?

- A 2005 poll showed that only 13% of respondents in Canada had heard of the MDGs.
- The goals will only be met if citizens are informed and actively hold the government accountable to its commitments under Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development comprising of more and better aid, debt cancellation, and more just trade rules.
- It is important to lead a campaign of this sort in Canada because as global citizens and consumers our daily actions can have a profound impact on the lives of people in the developing world. In the same vein, the prevailing conditions in developing countries impact us as well.

What is the link between this campaign and Make Poverty History?

- Make Poverty History is a major Canadian campaign which aims to engage citizens of all walks of life in policy-related actions to end poverty in the world. Make Poverty History has been calling on the Government of Canada to provide more and better

foreign aid, to cancel the debts of developing countries, and to make trade rules more just. For more information visit the campaign website at www.makepovertyhistory.ca.

- The 8 Goals Campaign works **exclusively with post-secondary students** to intensify our collective education efforts and supports Make poverty History policy platform related to aid, debt, and trade.
- The two campaigns enjoy an increasingly close working relationship and often coordinate activities.

The role of Canada in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

When it signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, Canada explicitly recognized that meeting the Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved through a global partnership (MDG 8) comprising of more and better aid, debt relief or cancellation and more just trade rules.

How can Canada strengthen its role in achieving the MDGs?

- We want our country to provide **more and better foreign aid**. Over 30 years ago, Canada promised to give **0.7%** of its Gross National Income (GNI) to international aid. Canada has continued to make this pledge to poorer countries, but has never set a timeline to meet the goal.
 - Canada's official development assistance represented around **0.3%** of GNI in 2006 (or 4 billion dollars), while its defence expenditure amounted to about 1.2% of GNI (or 16 billion)
- We want Canada to **cancel the debts** that developing countries owe to international creditors, like the IMF and the World Bank, and governments, like Canada. These debts need to be cancelled without conditions to enable developing countries to implement their own national plans to end poverty.
 - Why? Because millions of people go without access to health care or education as their governments instead spend money to service enormous external debts. In some countries, almost half of all government spending goes towards interest payments on debt –not including paying the loan back!
- We want our country to push for **more just trade rules** at the World Trade Organization. We want our country to support measures that boost the capacity of small farmers and businesses to export goods globally and that prohibits the selling of goods below cost on the markets of developing countries. We also want our country to push for a trade system in which developing countries are allowed to eliminate their import tariffs gradually, rather than immediately.

- Why? Because millions of small-scale farmers in developing countries cannot compete in the current trade system and are unable to meet the basic needs of their families. Because Import tariffs can be an important source of income to combat poverty, illiteracy, diseases, and other challenges that the Millennium Development Goals seek to address.

For more information on these subjects, go to www.8goals.ca, including our Resources section.

The role of students in the Campaign

Why are post-secondary students essential to the 8 Goals Campaign?

- University, college, and cégep students are in a unique position to champion the Millennium Development Goals and leverage the public support of the Goals (a 2005 poll showed that only 13% of Canadians have heard of the MDGs) because:
 - We have **skills and interests** in a variety of disciplines to contribute;
 - We have **strength in numbers**. Together, we represent over half a million Canadian post-secondary students;
 - We have **passion and energy**. As young leaders of change, we have a big stake in the future;
 - Many of us are also **world travelers** and **volunteers** with hands-on knowledge of the world in which we live.

What can students do in the Campaign?

- They can **champion the Development Goals** on campus by organizing activities related to the Goals like information booth, fair trade fashion show, rally or workshop.
 - They can take part in the 8 Goals Campaign key action days every year. See our website at www.8goals.ca.
- They can get the support of their student associations and administrations by asking that they sign a Millennium Declaration. To download the Millennium Declarations, visit our Resource section at www.8goals.ca

They can **call for policies to achieve the Goals** through actions like writing letters to MPs and engaging decision-makers in a dialogue about the Millennium Development Goals and Canada's role in achieving them.

The role of university, college and cégep administrations

Why is the Campaign seeking the support of university, college and cégep administrations?

- From academic programs with an international focus to student exchange programs and thousands of North-South projects and networks, Canadian institutions of higher education make significant contributions to Canada's role in the world.
- Through their teachings and actions, universities, colleges, and cégep administrations are uniquely positioned to promote a sense of global citizenship in students and to help them develop broad views of the world.
- The support of administrations can significantly increase the ability of student groups to champion the Goals on campuses and garner public support throughout the country.
- Student groups are encouraged to enlist the support of their school administrations by asking that they sign a Millennium Declaration. You can download it from the Resource section on www.8goals.ca. This declaration contains a number of actions. Several of them aim to leverage the support of other key actors like MPs, mayors, and other school administrations.