

The Impact of Canada's International Assistance for Family Planning, 2023–2024

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Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including family planning programs and services, are central to resilient health systems, gender equality and sustainable development.¹ The evidence is unequivocal: Investments in SRHR save lives, reduce maternal mortality, prevent unintended pregnancies, and expand educational and economic opportunities for women, girls and LGBTQIA+ people.

Canada's Support for SRHR

Over the past decade, Canada has firmly established a strategic and respected leadership role in advancing SRHR globally. The 2020 launch of the 10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights, with an annual target of CA\$700 million for SRHR, solidified Canada's position as a credible and principled global leader and has delivered measurable, positive outcomes for millions of people.² By explicitly prioritizing comprehensive, rights-based SRHR, including a focus on neglected areas, Canada helped set a global standard that affirms SRHR as foundational to the realization of broader human rights and global health.

The 10-Year Commitment also set a global precedent for effective SRHR financing: predictable, multi-year, ring-fenced investments as the bedrock of resilient and sustainable health systems. This evidence-based approach reflects the exceptionally high returns of SRHR investments, which remain among the most cost-effective and high-impact development interventions available.^{3–5}

Between 2019 and 2023, Canada invested approximately CA\$2.09 billion in SRHR.⁶ With SRHR investments accounting for 5.04% of official development assistance in 2023, Canada consistently ranks among the leading donors globally for SRHR.⁷ As other major donors retreat from funding SRHR, Canada's sustained investments ensure predictability and stability for essential services. Canada is among a group of major economies—including leading European donors, Japan, Australia and South Korea—that account for the majority of global SRHR financing. Within this group, Canada's contributions are credible, ambitious and proportionate. Yet, the global financing gap for meeting the SRHR needs of women in low- and middle-income countries still stands at US\$54 billion, a gap that will only widen if Canada steps back from its commitments.³

Planned reductions of CA\$2.7 billion in the development assistance budget over the next four years, alongside the 2025 federal budget's targeted cuts to global health funding, put Canada's leadership at risk.⁸ The impacts of these reductions are not abstract. They will be felt by adolescents denied access to contraception and by mothers who have nowhere to give birth safely and with dignity. In this moment of global retrenchment, Canada's financial and political investment in SRHR plays a critical stabilizing role and must be protected.

Canada now faces a clear choice: sustain investments that are proven to save lives and deliver measurable impact, or pull back at a moment when global leadership on SRHR is most urgently needed.

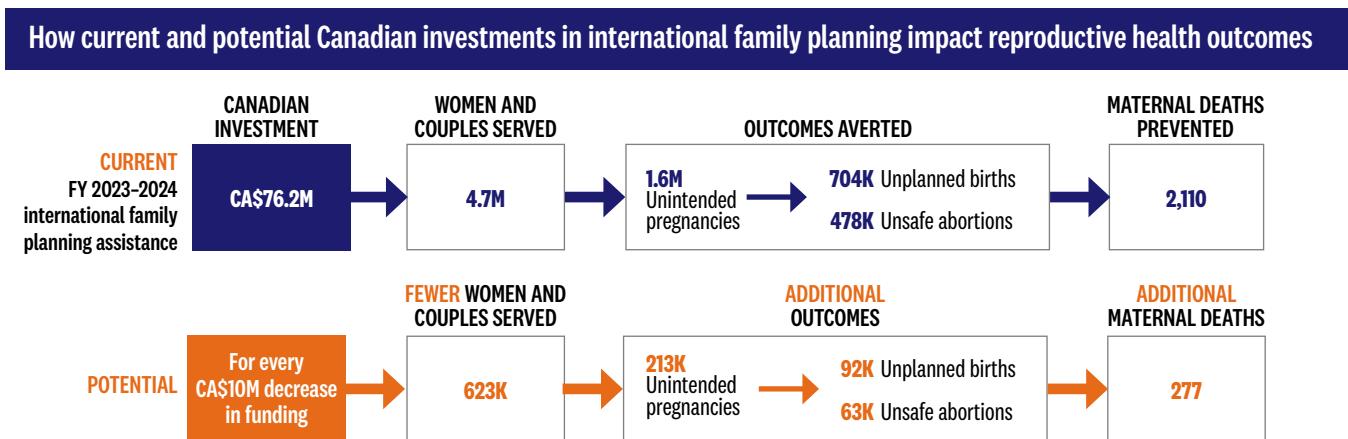
Impact of Canada's Investment in Family Planning

Canadian support for expanding access to the full, comprehensive package of SRHR services includes critical investments in contraceptive care. In fiscal year (FY) 2023–2024, Canada made an estimated investment of CA\$76.2 million in international assistance for family planning,⁹ an increase from CA\$63.5 million in FY 2020–2021.¹⁰

* This figure represents a minimum estimate of Canada's investments in family planning, based on reporting to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which sometimes excludes multisectoral investments that include family planning. A separate analysis by KFF estimated that Canada's family planning funding in 2024 was as high as US\$101.7 million, almost twice as high as the amount based on OCED DAC data (see reference 12).

In 2023–2024 alone, this CA\$76.2 million investment in family planning provided modern contraceptive methods to an estimated 4.7 million women and couples. As a result, approximately 1.6 million unintended pregnancies were averted—avoiding 478,000 unsafe abortions and 704,000 unplanned births, and, ultimately, preventing more than 2,100 maternal deaths in low- and middle-income countries.

The graphic below shows both the concrete benefits of Canada's current investments and what is at risk if funding is reduced through proposed cuts to the development assistance budget. For example, every CA\$10 million decrease in funding would deny 623,000 people contraceptive services, increasing the number of unintended pregnancies by 213,000 and failing to prevent 277 maternal deaths.



Notes: Impacts estimated using Adding It Up 2024 data. M=million. K=thousand.

Maintaining Canadian Leadership in SRHR Funding

Through more than a decade of sustained commitment to family planning, Canada has demonstrated the tangible, life-saving impacts that principled, predictable SRHR financing can achieve. These include millions of unintended pregnancies averted and thousands of maternal deaths prevented. Yet this track record of impact now stands at a crossroads. As opposition becomes increasingly coordinated in its efforts to undermine hard-won gains for SRHR and global health financing becomes more volatile, Canada's leadership is both a reflection of its long-standing values and a strategic investment in global health security and stability. The evidence is clear: Canada's SRHR investments work.

Methodology and Sources

The impacts of current and decreased investment outlined in this report were calculated using the Family Planning Investment Impact Calculator.¹¹ The level of Canadian funding for family planning in FY 2023–2024 was reported by Global Affairs Canada as CA\$76.2 million,⁹ based on Canada's reporting to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee. This represents a conservative estimate of Canadian funding for family planning in 2024, with other sources reporting more than double the amount (US\$101.7 million).¹² For sources in US dollars, the average annual exchange rate for 2024 was used for converting to Canadian dollars.¹³

The Family Planning Investment Impact Calculator estimates the impacts of actual, planned or hypothetical investments in family planning and assumes investments would go toward the total costs of providing contraceptive care—both family planning service delivery costs and associated programs and systems costs necessary to support the larger health system in providing this care. The calculator is designed to estimate impacts based on the costs associated with the current service provision environment. The calculator does not account for the additional indirect costs that would be needed to scale up services to meet the needs of a large number of additional users—e.g., for new infrastructure development or workforce expansion.

To estimate the number of women and couples who would be expected to receive contraceptive care at any given investment amount, the calculator divides the entered annual funding amount by the average annual cost of contraceptive care per user from 2024. The average annual cost of contraceptive care is based on distribution of types of methods used and cost for annual use of each method, as of 2024. To estimate the pregnancy-related impacts of the entered funding amount, the calculator uses ratios of impacts per contraceptive user served, taken from the Adding It Up 2024 study.³

Acknowledgments

This analysis was written by Elizabeth A. Sully and Jessica D. Rosenberg, Guttmacher Institute; Meghan Doherty and Brianna Parent Long, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. Meltem Odabaş of the Guttmacher Institute supported the analysis. It was edited by Chris Olah, Guttmacher Institute, and reviewed by members of the Future Planning Initiative.

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