

CSO-Government Partnership:

Lessons from the Canadian Experience¹

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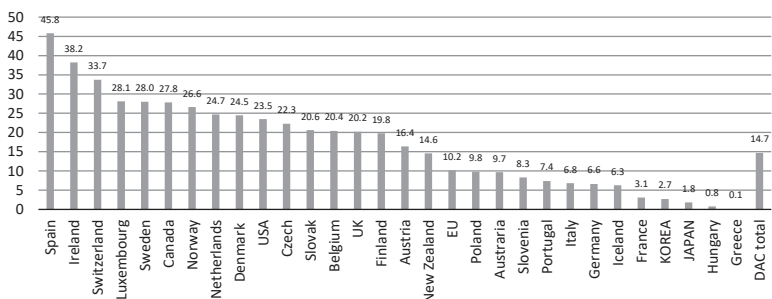
INTRODUCTION

For OECD/DAC members, one of the actors they have partnered with are civil society organizations (CSOs). DAC members in total allocated about 15% of their bilateral official development assistance (ODA) in 2017. Seven members spent over 25% of ODA to and through CSOs. Donors in Western Europe, North America and Southern Pacific have partnered with CSOs—or NGOs in the 20th-century terminology—since the mid-1960s to 1970s.

Partnering with CSOs is a new idea for Northeast Asian donors—South Korea, Japan (DAC members) and Taiwan (a non-DAC member but reports its aid statics to the DAC). Japan established funding schemes for supporting CSOs in 1989, and Korea in 1995, while Taiwan has not yet established schemes. Korea allocates only 2.7% of ODA to and through

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Figure 1 : Aid to and through CSOs (2017): %



Source, OECD (2019a)

CSOs,² and Japan only 1.8%. Taiwan is estimated to have allocated 2.61% of its ODA for CSOs. What lessons can Northeast Asian donors draw from the experiences of the “pioneer” countries in partnering with CSOs is the topic I want to discuss in this article. This article especially focuses on Canada, whose history of partnering with NGOs/CSOs goes back to the time the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was established in 1968.³ Canada was once considered to be a country whose NGO programs were innovative and effective (Brushett 2019).

The DAC acknowledges CSOs as independent development actors in their own right and important partners in international development (Wood and Fallman 2019). Actually, generally

2 Aid to NGOs means official contributions to programs and activities which NGOs have developed themselves, and which they implement on their own authority and responsibility. Aid through NGOs means payments by the official sector for NGOs to implement projects and programmes which the official sector has developed, and for which it is ultimately responsible (Wood and Fallman 2019).

3 Even before the establishment of CIDA, there was funding to NGOs.

speaking, donor policies and practices in partnering with CSOs always involved tensions between respecting CSOs as independent actors in their own right and enabling them to operate based on CSOs' own objectives and priorities, and controlling or instrumentalizing CSOs based on donors' policies and priorities. Looking at the 50 years of CSO-government partnership in Canada, it is a history of this tension. What lessons can we draw from the Canadian experience?

1. EARLY DAYS OF THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS IN CANADA

Canada, like other bilateral donors, started its partnership program in the form of responsive co-financing of NGO-initiated projects. Funding for NGOs started from about C\$ 3 million (1.5% of ODA) in 1968, and by 1990 grew to more than C\$ 300 million (11.0% of ODA). According to Lewis Perinbam, CIDA's Vice President for Special Program's Branch (which dealt with NGO funding) from 1974 to 1991, the principles for CIDA's funding to NGOs in the early days had been to respect the independence and integrity of NGOs, and that instead of CIDA taking initiative, CIDA co-finances projects and programs that are under initiative of NGOs.⁴

In addition to the responsive programs, several new schemes started in the 1980s, including:

- non-responsive program: NGOs implementing bilateral aid
- program funding to NGOs (and later institutional funding for

⁴ Lewis Perinbam's lecture at Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), May 19, 1990. See Brushett (2019) on the works of Perinbam.

NGOs with proven records)

- direct funding for Southern NGOs
- funding NGO coalitions

The rapid growth of CIDA funding was one of the factors that led to the rapid expansion of Canadian NGOs. In addition to Canadian branches (later affiliations) of international CSOs (like Oxfam, Care, Plan, World Vision, etc.), faith-based (mainly Christian) groups and volunteer-sending NGOs, many new groups were established in the 1970s and 80s. By the 1990s, around 40% of the income of Canadian international development NGOs came from CIDA. Also, after the mid-1990s, 55 to 60 CSOs received institutional (core) funding. The Other side of the coin of the enhanced partnership between NGOs and CIDA was a situation, in the words of Ian Smillie (1995), “When CIDA sneezes, NGOs reach for vitamin C.”

2. GROWING DIFFICULTIES: 1990s AND EARLY 2000s⁵

But in the 1990s, there were increased voices – sometimes from the Foreign Affairs and other parts of the government, and sometimes from within CIDA – to align NGO funding to aid policy priorities. Behind this was the changing environment of Canada’s aid policy: while after the end of the Cold War, supporting former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries’ transition to market economy became an important issue to work on through aid, Canada also had to decrease ODA to tackle with the budget deficit problem. Brodhead and Pratt (1996)

5 This section is a summary of Takayanagi (2001: Chapters 5 and 6; 2003).

wrote:

A number of factors have led CIDA to “use” NGOs for a wider range of responsibilities while also developing major new programs within which it, rather than the NGOs, identifies projects to be supported. As well, CIDA has become more selective about the NGOs that it supports and more cautious towards the NGOs’ aspiration to greater policy influence... The conclusion seems unavoidable: CIDA-NGO relations in the next few years will be marked by uncertainty and redefinition, CIDA will increasingly assert closer policy control over the NGOs that it assists, and a common NGO approach to CIDA and to the government may become impossible to sustain.

What were the things that took place? In 1991, Secor Report, a report by a consulting company reviewing the management of CIDA, recommended “greater integration of all CIDA-financed activities in any country around CIDA’s strategic plan for that nation (quoted in *Ibid.*).” In late 1992, a leaked aide-memoire titled “International Policy Assistance Update,” probably prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), also argued that NGOs should be used according to CIDA priorities instead of CIDA respecting NGOs’ initiatives.

NGOs’ criticisms on the “International Assistance Policy Update” led to Foreign Policy Review at the Parliament. As a result of the review, the government published *Canada in the World: Government Statement*, which included the new direc-

tion of Canada's foreign policy, including aid policy. *Canada in the World* said, "In consultation with Canadian partners, the government will ... develop a framework for a renewed relationship between CIDA and Canadian voluntary organizations based on the principle of complementarity of action (Canada 1994). Voluntary Sector Paper (VSP) was made as the framework for a renewed relationship (CIDA 1996).⁶

In the consultation between NGOs and CIDA on the VSP, CIDA's early drafts said that "relevance for ODA program priorities and Regional/Country Development Policy Frameworks" should be included as the criteria for CSO funding. After strong criticisms from CSOs, the final version of VSP did not include this phrase. What I learned through my interviews with CIDA staff members in different branches in 1997 was the following.⁷ There was no consensus within CIDA whether or not the agency should ask NGOs that they should align their programs with CIDA's country/regional frameworks. It was an occasion of a continuing debate within CIDA whether it should respect the independence and integrity of NGOs or whether it should

6 Voluntary sector was not synonyms with NGOs. The latter is apparently an important part of the former. VSP defined voluntary sector as "encompasses a wide range of community, grassroots and people's organizations, development and environmental organizations, churches, labor unions, professional associations and cooperatives. All are accountable to constituencies or memberships through governing structures. Most maintain a financial relationship with government. Equally important, all consider themselves as part of a broader civil society and are driven by values such as justice, equity and solidarity in their international work."

7 The author's interviews with CIDA staff members of Partnership, Policy, Asia and Americas Branches in July-October 1997.

strengthen control over them so that CIDA funding would align with CIDA's priorities.

At the beginning of the 21st century, CIDA was preparing another policy document, *Strengthening Aid Effectiveness* (SAE) (in the first draft titled *Towards a Long-term Strategy for Canada's International Assistance Program*). SAE (CIDA 2001) reconfirmed the objectives of Canada's aid program in *Canada in the World* and said, "poverty reduction should lie at the heart of development efforts." The document rather focused on measures and institutional changes to improve the effectiveness of CIDA's programs, especially aligning CIDA's priorities with recipients' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Consultations on this new policy framework document were held in several places across the country in September 2001.

SAE, while appreciating NGOs' roles not only in service delivery but also in policy analysis, advocacy and dialogue, suggested changes in responsive funding. SAE makes the following discussions meaning dramatic cutback or even closing of the responsive programming:

- CIDA should use its responsive programs to help promote broad, genuinely participatory approaches to the development of locally-owned development strategies, such as PRSPs.
- In countries where governance is weak and unrepresentative and where there is no clear, locally owned poverty-reduction strategy, CIDA should maintain a smaller bilateral presence... and rely on its responsive programming, developed in partnership with local organizations, to deliver assistance to those whom it is intended.
- In countries which has developed locally-owned national de-

velopment strategies... CIDA should use its bilateral programs as the primary channel for aid delivery. Responsive programs should be supported if they conform to these strategies and accord with the roles assigned to CIDA within a coordinated donor effort, but not if they fall outside this framework.

CSOs made strong arguments against this direction in the SAE. CSOs argued that in talking about ownership or developing countries-owned development strategies and aid programming, reduction to government-to-government or state-to-state relationship does *not* assure “ownership by the people” and authentic poverty reduction strategy and programming. Therefore, responsive programming, independent from strategies or frameworks made in government-government relations, is vital for supporting the development of independent civil society in the South. Criticisms by CSOs led to CIDA’s decision to suspend the idea of aligning CSO responsive funding to recipient countries’ national development strategies.

Summing up the developments in the 1990s and early 2000s, while the government – although there was a lack of coherence within the government – on several occasions insisted that NGO/CSO funding should align with CIDA’s country priorities. NGOs/CSOs opposed the idea and articulated that CIDA’s CSO partnership policies and practices should respect CSOs as “actors in their own right.”

3. DETERIORATED PARTNERSHIP UNDER STEPHEN HARPER'S CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT (2006-2015)⁸

3.1 Instrumentalization of Aid under the Harper Government

The first few years of Harper's Conservative government did not witness significant changes in aid policy. There were changes in the way policies were made. After the Conservatives came into office in 2006, civil servants were required advance approval by the Prime Minister's Office for making public remarks (Brown 2012a), probably aimed at tightening control over the actions of governmental agencies. Also, there were delays in CIDA's decision-making in funding CSOs.

Changes in aid policy started to take place in 2009. International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda (in office from August 2007 to July 2012) announced changes in Canada's aid priorities. Geographically, "Countries of Focus" was changed, increasing the number of Latin American countries (including countries like Columbia and Peru where Canadian mining industries were active: Blackwood and Stewart 2012) and reducing the numbers of Sub-Saharan African countries (CIDA 2009a). Thematically, the priorities set by the Liberal government in 2005; 1) promoting good governance, 2) improving health outcomes, 3) strengthening basic education, 4) supporting private sector, 5) advancing environmental sustainability, and 6) ensuring gender equality as a cross-cutting issue; were changed to three; 1) increasing food security, 2) sustainable economic growth, and 3)

⁸ For detailed analysis of CSO-government partnership under the Harper government, see Brown (2012c) and Takayanagi (2016).

children and youth (CIDA 2009b). ODA became increasingly instrumentalized for Canadian commercial objectives (Brown 2016), and the vision of development behind aid policy changed from structural change to growth and charity (Takayanagi 2015).

On the other hand, the ODA Accountability Act (ODAAA) was proposed by Liberal M.P. John McKay as a private member bill and was passed by the two houses of the Parliament in 2008. The Article 4 of the ODAAA says, “Official development assistance may be provided only if the competent minister is of the opinion that it (a) contributes to poverty reduction; (b) takes into account the perspectives of the poor, and (c) is consistent with international human rights standards. The Conservative government said that Canadian aid was already in compliance with ODAAA, but in reality, the government ignored the ODAAA’s attempt to reorient aid (Brown 2012b).

Although Canada was traditionally a leading country among the OECD/DAC in gender and development, during the Harper era, “gender equality” was erased from government documents, shifting to “equality between men and women” (Tiessen 2016).

In 2013, CIDA was amalgamated into the Department of Foreign affairs and Trade (DFAIT) and the department was renamed the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

3.2 Deteriorated Partnership with CSOs

After 2009, the government’s attitudes on CSOs changed dramatically. Several CSOs such as Kairos (ecumenical international development and social movement CSO), Canadian Council

for International Cooperation (the CCIC: platform of international development CSOs in Canada), Alternatives and Match International were defunded. CIDA never explained reasons for defunding, but critical view on Israel (Kairos), emphasis on gender (Match), active and critical advocacy (CCIC) were speculated to be behind the defunding. Other CSOs with progressive visions faced funding cuts.

In July 2010, Oda announced changes in CSO funding framework—institutional funding would be terminated and CSOs would be funded according to calls for proposals, based on the following five principles; 1) sound governance, 2) support of Canadians, 3) relevance to CIDA’s mandate and coherence with Canadian government policy, 4) results, and 5) development effectiveness. She also said that 50% of partnership funding should be used in 20 countries of focus, and 80% should align with the three thematic priorities (CIDA 2010).

Thematically or geographically focused calls for proposals were made. The only general call for proposal were the ones for under \$2 million and over \$2 million in December 2010.⁹

3.3 Restored Partnership? under International Development Minister Paradis

The scene changed dramatically under the International Development Minister Christian Paradis, the last minister of the Harper government (in office from July 2013 to November

9 While the deadline for sending proposals was in March 2011, it was only in December 2011 that the accepted proposals were announced. CSOs were affected by this delay in decision-making and lack of predictability.

2015). In May 2014, at the annual forum of CCIC, Paradis announced that a new civil society partnership policy would be made. In the following month, DFATD released a draft (DFATD 2014), and public consultation was launched. After consultations and feedbacks from CSOs, etc., the “International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society Partnership Policy” was announced in February 2015 (DFATD 2015).

The policy’s guiding principles and commitments included ODAAA, (Harper government’s) Canada’s Aid Effectiveness Agenda, Busan Partnership for Effective Development, The New Deal for Engagement with Fragile States, Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship and the Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness. The policy named the following “objectives and actions.”

- 1) Augment the voice of poor and marginalized people, including women and girls
- 2) Facilitate an enabling environment for civil society in developing countries
- 3) Foster Canadian leadership in international development and innovation
- 4) Integrate roles of CSOs as independent development actors into development programming
- 5) Establish predictable, equitable, flexible and transparent funding mechanisms
- 6) Demonstrate sustainability, transparency, accountability and results
- 7) Foster multi-stakeholder approaches to development
- 8) Engage Canadians in development
- 9) Save lives and alleviate suffering

It is not easy to explain why the Conservative's attitude towards CSOs changed under the last minister Paradis. One explanation by Brown (2018) is that it was a response to the Province of Quebec's own development initiatives, including the establishment of Agence québécoise de solidarité internationale, the crisis in Harper government's relations with CSOs and to gain support in Quebec. Other hypothesis I heard from my civil society friends include; Paradis was more committed to international development and had expertise on it compared to his predecessors Oda and Julian Fantino (in office from July 2012 to July 2013), Paradis wanted to ease the difficult relations with CSOs as general election was upcoming, and that Paradis had genuine understandings on civil society voluntary actions because of the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster which took place in his riding in 2013.¹⁰

4. JUSTIN TRUDEAU'S LIBERAL GOVERNMENT, FIAP AND THE RENEWED CSO PARTNERSHIP POLICY

At the general election held on October 19, 2015, the Liberal Party led by Justin Trudeau won a majority government. Under the new Trudeau government, DFATD was renamed Global Affairs Canada (GAC). With a Prime Minister saying "Canada is back" and calling himself a feminist, there were hopes, especially from CSOs, that Canada's aid policy would be transformed into one that emphasizes poverty reduction, human rights and gender equality.

10 The author's interview with CSOs in August-September 2017 and August-September 2019.

4.1 International Assistance Review

In May 2016, International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau launched the International Assistance Review (IAR) with a discussion paper (GAC 2016a). After saying that “Empowerment of women and girls and the protection and promotion of their rights through advancing gender equality will be at the heart of Canada’s international assistance” and that the feminist lens would be applied (Ibid.: 10), the paper named five “policy issues”; 1) health and rights of women and children, 2) clean economic growth and climate change, 3) governance, pluralism, diversity and human rights, 4) peace and security, and 5) responding to humanitarian crises and the needs of displaced populations.

During the IAR, GAC organized more than 300 consultation events in 65 countries with 15,000 participants, and there were more than 10,000 public comments (GAC 2016b). There were about 80 submissions from CSOs during the IAR process (CCIC 2016). In a report titled “What We Heard” (GAC 2016b), the GAC summarized inputs. Among them were;

- Make the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality a stand-alone priority.
- Apply feminist lens to all international assistance works.
- Engage a full spectrum of stakeholders, including men and boys.
- Make bold funding for women’s rights movements.

4.2 Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

Bibeau announced the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) on June 9, 2017 (GAC 2017a). FIAP reflected many

of the inputs through the IAR. The policy said that Canada would adopt a feminist approach to international development and that;

A feminist approach to international assistance recognizes that promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls require the transformation of social norms and power relations. This objective is also essential for the achievement of all other development priorities (GAC 2017a).

FIAP names the following “action areas;”

- 1) (core) gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- 2) human dignity
- 3) growth that works for everyone
- 4) environment and climate action
- 5) inclusive governance
- 6) peace and security.

In FIAP, the following commitments were made;

- By 2021-22 no less than 95 percent of Canada’s bilateral international development assistance initiatives will target (15 percent) or integrate (80 percent) gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
- To dedicate \$150 million over five years to support local women’s organizations and movements that advance women’s rights in developing countries.
- To provide \$100 million over five years for small and medium-sized Canadian CSOs.

FIAP explicitly commits to gender equality, erased in the

Harper government and changed to “equality between men and women” (Tiessen and Swan 2018). FIAP was welcomed by CSOs as new and innovative (CCIC 2017a), but it was not free from concerns, criticisms and limitations. These include;

- FIAP did not explicitly define feminism, and it seemed to be based on instrumental rather than a transformative approach to feminism (Brown and Swiss 2017; Tiessen 2019; Tiessen and Black 2019).
- There was no mention on LGBTQ rights in FIAP (Tiessen 2019; Tiessen and Black 2019).
- A critical issue was financial resources for implementing FIAP. After the Trudeau government came into office, the aid budget showed a minor increase in the 2016 federal budget and no increase in 2017. FIAP did not make any commitment on increase of aid budget, quite in contrast with the Defence Policy (announced one day before FIAP’s announcement) which said that in the coming ten years defence budget would be increased by 70% (Brown and Swiss 2017; Tiessen and Swan 2018; Tomlinson 2017; Takayanagi 2018).

After the announcement of FIAP, in the 2018 federal budget, a \$2 billion increase of aid budget over the following five years was proposed, but in the 2019 budget, there was only a minor increase.

- Another concern was expertise. During the Harper government, when the language shifted from “gender equality” to “equality between men and women,” mid-level people in CIDA contributed to keeping gender-related programs not very different (Tiessen 2016). But gender experts gradually left CIDA and the amalgamated DFATD. (Takayanagi 2018).

It is vital to see how well FIAP “translates in to practice” (Tiessen and Swan 2018). Several signature programs have been established after the announcement of FIAP. Common to all the signature programs is that they involved CSOs, either Canadian, local, or both.

On May 25, 2018, Bibeau announced that Canada “will launch consultations on the creation of a unique partnership to catalyze new investments in support of gender equality and women’s rights in developing countries” with the government’s commitment to contribute up to \$300 million to such a partnership of the government, CSOs, philanthropic community and the private sector (GAC 2018b). After about a year of consultations and call for interests, Minister Maryam Monsef,¹¹ the Minister of International Development and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality announced on June 2, 2019, that the Department for Women and Gender Equality would commit \$30 million to provide funding to women’s organizations in Canada, and that the GAC would invest \$300 million in a consortium, the Equality Fund (GAC 2019b) which will support women’s movements and women’s rights groups in developing countries. The Equality Fund is a consortium of CSOs (Match International Women’s Fund as the lead agency,¹² Oxfam Canada and WUSC), Canadian women’s movement groups, philanthropic organizations and the private sector.

11 Monsef became the Minister for Women and Gender Equality on January 10, 2017 and the Minister for International Development on March 1, 2019. On the same day Bibeau became the Minister of Agriculture.

12 Match officially announced in October 2019 that its name will be changed to the Equality Fund.

On June 4, 2019, Trudeau announced that “the Government of Canada will raise its funding to reach \$1.4 billion annually, starting in 2023, to support women’s and girls’ health around the world” (Trudeau 2019). GAC will invest approximately \$325 million over five years to promote the health and rights of women and girls around the world (GAC 2019c).¹³ In late-August 2019, a call for proposals (\$325 million over five years) was announced (GAC 2019c).

Starting from Bibeau’s announcement of the program in Haiti in February 2018 (GAC 2018a), the GAC has contributed, as of August 2019, \$174 million for Women’s Voice and Leadership Program in 32 projects in 30 countries with 21 partners. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of women’s rights organizations to program and advocate to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. (GAC 2019d)

A smaller but an important program announced on February 7, 2019, by Bibeau was a new fund to support LGBTQ2 rights; in over five years \$30 million will be funded to Canadian CSOs that collaborate with developing country partners, developing countries’ local and regional organizations and partnerships or multilateral initiatives that work on policy, advocacy and research efforts on LGBTQ2 rights (GAC 2019a).

13 Harper government emphasized support for maternal health, newborn and child health (MNCH). Muskoka Initiative for supporting MNCH was proposed at the G7 Summit in 2010. MNCH by the Harper government was criticized for not addressing the root causes including gender inequality and exclusion of funding safe abortion (Swiss and Barry 2017; Keast 2017). By explicitly mentioning sexual reproductive health rights, Trudeau’s Liberal government’s framing is completely different from Harper government’s MNCH.

Besides the signature programs, Canada, according to the OECD/DAC data (OECD 2019b), has made progress in aid in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment. While gender-focused aid was 69% (3%: significant objective; 66%: primary objective) in 2016, it went up to 87% (fourth among the DAC members; 13%: significant objective; 74%: primary objective) in 2017.

4.3 Civil Society Partnership Policy

FIAP also committed to updating the 2015 civil society partnership policy. In late-August 2017, the GAC circulated the draft around CSOs and asked for comments.¹⁴

On September 27, 2017, Bibeau announced the renewed policy at the CCIC conference. The new “Canada’s Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance: A Feminist Approach” (CSO policy) acknowledged CSOs as independent development actors in their own right and described many roles for CSOs. It names five guiding principles (FIAP, The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ODAAA, “human rights and inclusivity,” and the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness). Here, while the other four are exist-

14 GAC did not plan consultations for this document because during the IAR there were a lot of comments regarding CSO-GAC partnerships. CSOs, while complaining about the draft being circulated at the time many staff members were taking holidays, and were asked for feedback in quite a short time (two weeks with later one week extension) also preferred early renewal of the policy rather than another round of consultations. (Author’s interviews with the GAC and CSOs in August and September 2017). The draft was not put on GAC’s website.

ing policies or documents, “human rights and inclusivity” explicitly acknowledges the roles of CSOs in promoting human rights-based approaches in development by saying, “Canada is committed to supporting international assistance policies and programs that are grounded in a human rights-based approach. Human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and transparency and accountability are integrated in Canada’s international assistance.”

Then the CSO policy identified nine objectives;

- 1) Reduce poverty by empowering women and girls and promoting gender equality
- 2) Facilitate a safe and enabling environment for civil society
- 3) Protect human life and dignity
- 4) Foster CSOs leadership in innovation
- 5) Integrate CSOs as independent CSOs into international assistance programming
- 6) Establish more predictable, equitable, flexible and transparent funding mechanisms
- 7) Foster multi-stakeholder approaches to international assistance
- 8) Engage Canadians in international assistance
- 9) Promote sustainability, transparency, accountability and results (GAC 2017b).

One significance of the CSO policy, compared to the 2015 policy, is that the objectives had “action area examples,” which listed possible measures the GAC and CSOs could take.

Compared to the draft, reflecting comments by CCIC (2017b) and other CSOs, the Istanbul Principles was added as one of the guiding principles, and several action area examples were

either amended or added.

In February 2018, Advisory Group to Support Implementation of the Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance Policy: A Feminist Approach (CPAG) was established to advise the GAC on the implementation of the CSO policy. CPAG is composed of members from both CSOs and the GAC. CPAG first worked on objectives 1, 6 and 8 and then worked on the other six. I learned during my visit to Canada in August and September 2019 that the final report would be published sometime in September and that the report would not include recommendations on funding schemes.¹⁵ At the time of writing this article (January 2020), CPAG has finalized the CSO policy's implementation plan, and its final report has been approved by the GAC senior management, but it has not been made public. CPAG is discussing its dissemination plan, and after it is finalized, the report will be made public. CPAG will probably continue as a group to monitor the implementation of the report.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

At the general election on October 21, 2019, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party won a minority government. In the new Cabinet, which came into office on November 20, Karina Gould became the new Minister of International Development. FIAP and the CSO Policy would stay as the frameworks for aid policy and CSO-GAC partnerships. It took almost two years since the

15 The author's interview with CSOs and the GAC in August and September 2019.

16 The author's E-mail communication with CCIC, October 2019 and January 2020.

Trudeau government came into office in November 2015 to establish the new FIAP and the CSO policy, and it was almost before the following election was called that many of FIAP's signature programs were announced. The Trudeau government "did little to clear up continuing problems" for CSOs in government funding predictability (Smillie and Sanchez 2018).

What are the lessons we could draw from the Canadian experience? First, even in "like-minded" or "CSO-friendly" countries, there are always tensions between policies and practices that respect CSOs as independent actors in their own right and enabling them to operate based on CSOs' own objectives and priorities and that control or instrumentalize CSOs based on donors' policies and priorities. Second, the scene could change, and the relationship could deteriorate with the change of the government, especially to conservative ones like the Harper government. But as being non-partisan is a requirement for CSOs in many countries, they cannot explicitly state which party (or parties) would provide a favourable environment for them. Third, as a result of a long partnership between CSOs and the former CIDA, CSOs in Canada became over-dependent on government funding and vulnerable to changes such as what happened under the Harper government. Northeast Asian CSOs, while strengthening partnerships with their governments' aid agencies, should also always diversify their funding sources.

What can the Northeast Asian donors learn from the Canadian experience, especially the recent developments? The OECD, drawing lessons from the peer reviews, advises the members to have an overarching civil society policy or strategy (OECD 2012). Canada's CSO policy (and the previous VSP and the

2015 policy) is an example of an overarching civil society policy,¹⁷ and the (new) CSO policy explicitly mentions that CSOs are important development actors in their own right and emphasizes human rights-based approaches and gender equality. While Korea recently launched a CSO-specific policy framework (KCOC and KOICA 2019), Taiwan and Japan are encouraged to have such policies.

Northeast Asian donors could also learn from the IAR and CPAG processes how to engage CSOs and the public in general in policy-making. Inputs from CSOs and other actors have made the FIAP quite different from the discussion paper at the launch of the IAR.

Finally, Canada, through FIAP's signature programs, has committed to supporting women's movements, women's rights groups and LGBTQ2 rights groups; and to work on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which are all sensitive in a certain number of partner countries. The government of Japan has tended to avoid supporting CSOs working on diplomatically sensitive issues. But I would argue that an important role for donor countries' CSO-government partnership is to support initiatives in the civil society of partner countries that are working on issues that are sensitive in government-to-government aid.

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17 According to Wood and Fallman (2019), 22 of the 30 members have some form of CSO policy, four are developing policies, and of the 22 with some form of CSO policy, fourteen have civil society-specific policies.

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