

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT UNICEF CANADA'S MANDATE IN CANADA

UNICEF Canada's mandate is to:

- Raise funds for UNICEF's emergency and development work around the world.
- Advocate for lasting change for children by promoting public policy in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Canada and internationally.

Questions regarding Individual Complaints/Communications (requests for assistance in cases of individual children's rights concerns)

Q 1. "Advocate for children"- does that mean you assist with individual rights complaints?

A. UNICEF Canada does not have the mandate, authority or the capacity to investigate and act on individual cases of rights complaints. Therefore, we cannot offer advice to individuals on what legal or other recourse they may take. However, there are different kinds of organizations and authorities that have this mandate, depending on the nature of the issue. UNICEF Canada' advocacy focuses on policy and systems change to ensure more rights for more children are respected, protected and provided for. Fixing systems reduces the number of downstream violations of the rights of individual children. We make sure that situations affecting individual children inform and drive improved policies and systems to prevent and reduce the violations of their rights. Our aim is to promote improved policies, laws and services so they comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all children in Canada benefit.

Q 2. If you cannot act on individual cases, what can you do for me and for other children in Canada, whose rights are being violated?

A. When Canadians contact us relating concerns about children's rights, we identify the best possible source of assistance. While we are not in a position to recommend any particular organization, or offer legal advice, we may be able to suggest the most appropriate referrals to possible sources of support. It is up to individuals to decide if they want to use this information. UNICEF Canada treats these communications confidentiality and with priority concern for the best interests of the child (see Q 4.).

Q 3. Can the information you provide be used in court?

A. The material or information UNICEF Canada provides is purely in the nature of information and should not be interpreted as a legal opinion or legal advice to be relied upon for any litigious or other purpose.

Q 4. What do you do with the communications that you receive from individuals?

A. Confidentiality is preserved in the best interests of the child, such as by limiting the internal circulation of the complaint and refraining from external circulation of the complaint unless necessary to serve the best interests of the child or to comply with a legal duty.

Q 5. What circumstances may warrant the need to share the complaint externally?

A. Where there is a suspicion of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect, based on reasonable grounds; UNICEF Canada staff have a duty to report it to child welfare authorities under relevant provincial laws.

Other Questions

Q 6. What if I am a researcher or student looking for guidance or access to UNICEF publications or programming in Canada or abroad, will UNICEF Canada assist?

A. Yes, if the theme, subject or area of research falls within UNICEF's mandate, UNICEF Canada will endeavour to locate relevant resources and guide you to the ones that are publically available. UNICEF Canada cannot share internal or classified documents, nor provide extensive support for projects and assignments.

Q 7. Does UNICEF Canada provide financial assistance for projects/initiatives in Canada that I could apply to?

A. UNICEF Canada does not offer financial assistance for projects undertaken in Canada. These would include holding or participating in seminars, training, conferences or meetings in Canada or abroad; carrying out research; and implementing projects in any sector. UNICEF Canada may partner with a Canadian organization or technical expert as part of an externally funded agreement that may require UNICEF Canada to seek out expertise to implement the agreement.