

PRESS RELEASE

International Women's Day - Quebec MP and Minister Jean-Yves Duclos announces more than \$ 42M in funding to three international cooperation organizations in Quebec City

March 8, 2021, Quebec City - To mark International Women's Day, Jean-Yves Duclos, Member of Parliament for Quebec City and President of the Treasury Board, announces funding for a major international cooperation project promoting women's rights and access to quality sexual and reproductive health care.

The Government of Canada will provide \$42,300,000 in funding over seven years for the project Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali (PLURIELLES), which will be jointly implemented by the Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement (CCISD), SOCODEVI and Avocats sans frontières Canada (CBSA), three Quebec City-based organizations. In addition to this funding, the One Drop Foundation will contribute \$4,230,000 and provide technical assistance to improve water, sanitation and hygiene practices in healthcare settings through the foundation's unique *Social Art for Behaviour Change*[™] approach.

This will be the first time that the CCISD, ASFC and SOCODEVI consortium will work together on the same project, a first collaboration also with One Drop. The combination of each partner's expertise in health, economic empowerment, law and behavioural change will have a greater impact on the living conditions and well-being of participants.

The project is expected to benefit approximately two million women and adolescent girls in vulnerable situations.

In 2019-2020, close to 3,400,000 people will have access to sexual and reproductive health services thanks to the support of Canada and its feminist international aid policy. Canada is committed to taking concrete action to advance the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals, which aim to achieve a more prosperous and egalitarian world for all.

Quotes

" The pandemic has changed many things, but it has not changed the important role we have to play internationally. Our country has a long and rich history of cooperation. That is why we are pleased to announce significant support for three Quebec City-based organizations that are spreading our expertise around the world."

- *Jean-Yves Duclos, Member of Parliament for Quebec and President of the Treasury Board*

"We will not have a more sustainable future for all if we do not take care of the well-being and participation of all. And to do this, every adolescent girl and woman on earth must have access to a full range of health services, including sexual and reproductive health."

- *Joël Lightbound, Member of Parliament for Louis-Hébert*

" CCISD's co-development interventions have been contributing to sustainable health improvement for and with communities since 1987. However, better respect for human rights combined with real economic access will make a real difference in overcoming barriers and promoting better living conditions. We know that multisectoral approaches are necessary to sustainably improve the health of populations, and we are proud to carry the torch with our partners Avocats sans frontières Canada and SOCODEVI. "

- *Robert Beaudry, Executive Director, CCISD*

"The law is a powerful tool for change, and we intend to help equip women and adolescent girls in the countries covered by this project. Together, and alongside the civil society of the countries where we will intervene, we believe we can accompany them towards their empowerment. We want to make sure that they know their rights and that they can speak out to defend them. So that not only can they aspire to live in inclusive, just and egalitarian societies, but also contribute to building them. "

- *Me Pascal Paradis, Executive Director, Lawyers Without Borders Canada*

"Since 1985, SOCODEVI has been supporting mutual and cooperative societies with the aim of improving the living conditions of people in more than 40 countries. In Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso, women simply do not have the means to access health care for themselves and their children. Strengthening the economic capacities of women and adolescent girls, particularly those who are victims of gender-based violence, is therefore a crucial step in ensuring their continued access to health and justice services. By working with women's groups, mutual health insurance companies and local financial institutions, we will be able to develop health insurance and credit products adapted to women's needs and constraints. This will be a novelty for women in these countries! "

- *Jean-Philippe Marcoux, General Manager, SOCODEVI*

"Contributing to the empowerment and improvement of the living conditions of women and girls is in line with the One Drop Foundation's commitment. Through multiple initiatives, One Drop has seen the added value of its expertise and the integration of its innovative Social Art for Behaviour Change approach related to water, sanitation and hygiene. This approach strengthens the capacities of girls and women and gives them their place in today's and tomorrow's society."

- *Véronique Doyon, Chief Program Officer, International Programs, One Drop Foundation*

Highlights:

- Canada is proud to promote gender equality around the world through its domestic, diplomatic, trade, humanitarian and international development initiatives.
- Canada's feminist policy aims to empower women and girls to reach their full potential. Canada has become the top OECD donor for gender equality and the world's largest donor for women's rights organizations and for sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Canada's feminist policy has also helped us address the effects of the pandemic, which exacerbates inequalities and threatens to reverse the progress we have

- made, particularly for women and girls, refugees and displaced persons, and the LGBTQ2I community.
- One of Canada's priorities is to strengthen the power of women- and refugee-led organizations, an approach that improves the effectiveness and efficiency of international assistance, rebalances power, and helps remove systemic barriers to equality of opportunity.
 - In June 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a historic investment of \$1.4 billion per year over 10 years, beginning in 2023. This investment will support women in all their diversity as well as the health of girls around the world, and \$700 million of this annual amount will be dedicated to sexual and reproductive health rights.
 - In March 2017, Canada announced that it would provide \$650 million over 3 years to address gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world.

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Le projet PLURIELLES est mis en oeuvre par le consortium composé de:



Avec l'appui financier de:

