

Meet Your MP – how to do it!

Meeting your Member of Parliament is a great way to move the issues affecting global hunger forward, but also to open the door to more and better communication with your decision-maker in Ottawa. It's easier than you might think, and it's mostly about developing good relations with those who represent you.

If the potential impact of a letter or phone call is great, a visit is even greater. You can feel confident that you are going into such a meeting with the purpose of supporting people in developing countries, particularly rural people and smallholder farmers, for whom Canada's actions could play a positive role.

Everyone's time is valuable – politicians are no exception! So a meeting your MP needs to have a clear purpose and it should focus on a very specific ask.

Below are some tips to make it a worthwhile experience for everyone.

Before the meeting:

- Find your MP with your postal code here: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/> . Take some time (at his or her website) to learn about the party and positions the party has taken – this will help you understand how to communicate with your MP ;
- You can call or go to your MP's constituency office to set up a meeting – give your name and postal code, and be flexible as possible (alternatively, you could meet with your MP's staff person, which can also be effective); sometimes you need to be patient but persistent;
- Prepare yourself on the issue – if there is a tip sheet, read it carefully; don't simply regurgitate the information, but rather get the basic ideas down in your mind (use some notes to remind you);
- Find one, two, or three companions whom you trust to go with you to represent this issue (feel free to call the Foodgrains Bank for additional support);

At the meeting:

- Be on time! (Be prepared to wait...)
- Dress respectfully – remember that one of the goals is to build a relationship;
- Thank your MP for taking the time to speak with you, and specifically for any action that Canada has around this issue;
- Make it personal – begin with explaining why you are there, why this issue is important to you, your family, community, and especially people in low-income countries!
- Bring additional material you can leave with her or him ([Climate Change and Hunger](#) brochure or a copy of your letter, for example);

- Be clear and concise about what you're asking (and rehearse a little); if you are asked questions you are unsure of, it's okay to say "I'll need to find out more about that and get back to you."
- Feel free to take notes and be prepared to hear from your MP, since they will be more than eager to tell you about their views and activities;
- At the end, ask "Can I count on you to communicate this message to the appropriate people?" With the issue of climate change financing, ask them to forward this message to the **Minister of the Environment**.

Follow up:

- Say thanks! A card or email to express your appreciation for the meeting is also a good opportunity to remind your MP of the purpose of your visit;
- Let us know of your visit and how it went – we are eager to learn from your experience!

The effort you put into making this meeting is the beginning of a relationship with your MP. It can serve you well for future communication as we voice our concerns in the most effective way possible.