

The 0.7% Aid Target & British Politics

In 2013, the British government finally achieved its target of contributing 0.7% of its Gross National Income as Overseas Development Assistance (£11.4 billion in 2013).

The only other countries to do so in 2013 were Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and the UAE.

What counts as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)?

- Aid given to (most) low and middle income countries¹
- Aid given to multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank
- Aid administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective
- Using armed forces to deliver humanitarian aid, peacekeeping operations, election monitoring and mine clearance – if carried out for development reasons

Why 0.7%. and Who Agreed?

1960 ↓	UN General Assembly expressed the hope that international assistance 'should be increased substantially so as to reach as soon as possible approximately 1 per cent of the combined national incomes of the economically advanced countries.'
1970 ↓	The 0.7% target was formally recognised in October 1970 when the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution including the goal that
1970s ↓	Through the 1970s the new target gained acceptance, but the US made clear that while it supported the general aims of the Resolution, it did not subscribe to specific targets or timetables.
1974 ↓	0.7% target adopted by the newly-elected Labour government.
2002 ↓	UN Financing for Development meeting in Mexico called on developed countries to 'make concrete efforts' towards the goal of contributing 0.7% of GNI towards ODA.
2005	EU Member States pledged to meet the 0.7% target by 2015.

¹ They have to be included on the OECD's Development Assistance Committee's List of ODA Recipients: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/49483614.pdf>



Who is Actually Contributing 0.7%?

- Norway (1.07%)
- Sweden (1.02%)
- Luxembourg (1%)
- Denmark (0.85%)
- UK (0.72%)

Whilst the USA is on 0.19%.

However, in terms of how much ODA each country is giving, the US is far in the lead – at \$31.5 billion. The UK is in 2nd place at \$17.9 billion. Norway, who contributes the most proportionally, contributes \$5.6 billion.

Party Lines on the 0.7% target before May 2015 election

Conservative	They say they have delivered on the UN target of 0.7% and will continue to meet it. They also add that they will insist that every government and organisation funded by the UK meets global transparency standards.
Labour	Did not use the word ‘aid’ in their manifesto. They did mention that they are proud that Britain spends 0.7% of our gross national income on international development. Labour said that they would use that commitment from the British public to transform the lives of the world’s poorest people, whilst ensuring value for taxpayers’ money. They also mentioned the Sustainable Development Goals summit.
Liberal Democrats	In their manifesto they noted that the coalition has delivered “for the first time on the 40 year old UN ambition for developed countries to spend 0.7% of national income as Official Development Assistance.”
Green Party	The Greens wanted to increase the 0.7% target to 1%.
UKIP	UKIP said that they will repeal recent legislation committing aid spending to 0.7 per cent of GNI.

Corruption

Most of the countries to which the UK gives aid are perceived as highly corrupt by Transparency International. The UK gives aid to 28 countries, none of which receive a score of over 49 from Transparency International in 2014 - 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean (Denmark, ranked first, scores 92). According to the Narrative Project this means that the main reason people are apathetic towards the concept of UK foreign assistance is that they perceive the countries who receive our aid to be corrupt. Equally the Narrative Project suggests that some are put off foreign assistance due to negative imagery and the scale of the problem presented to them. They do not believe that they can make a difference. This could be as a result of perceptions of corruption – how can they make a difference if they perceive that the money they give will not reach those they wish to help?

Corruption is estimated to increase the cost of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal on water and sanitation by **US \$48 billion**.

Jewish Texts on Aid and Giving

Sifra on Leviticus 25:35

“If your kin is waxen poor, and his/her means fail with you; then you shall strengthen him/her, (whether a stranger or a native, so that s/he can live with you)” (Lev. 25:35). Don't allow her/him to fall into utter poverty. The injunction may be explained by analogy with a load on a donkey: As long as it is standing up, one may grab it [to keep from falling] and keep it standing upright. Once s/he has fallen, five people cannot make it stand up again.” [Translation by Hillel]

Suggested discussion questions:

- How can we best prevent a donkey from falling down? What happens if we hesitate?
- What might be a more modern analogy than the load on a donkey?
- How can we prevent today's donkeys from toppling over?
- How does this text propel us into action?

Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 34:1

Rabbi Yonah said: The verse does not say "Happy is the one who gives to a poor person," rather, it says: " Happy is the one who considers the poor person" (Psalms 41:2). therefore, you must consider how best to benefit such a person.[AJWS translation]

Suggested discussion questions:

- What is the difference between giving to the poor and considering the poor?
- How can we consider the poor? What questions should we consider?
- How can we determine how to best benefit the poor?

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity

“In the face of the economic misery of immigrants, when saving human lives was a crying emergency, concentration on material aid was an act of supreme wisdom. However, our situation today is a spiritual emergency crying for moral and intellectual relief. . . . We are ingenious in fundraising, which is good; we are shipwrecked in raising our children, which is tragic. I wish we would give priority to teaching and inspiring our children to live as Jews.”

Suggested discussion questions:

- Is it true that we are ingenious in fundraising and shipwrecked in raising our children? Is this the same globally?
- What should our main priority be – fundraising or child-raising?
- Is ‘the economic misery of migrants’ a thing of the past? If not – will it/can it be solved by inspiring our children to live as Jews?



Jewish action for a just world

25-26 Enford St, London, W1H 1DW EMAIL: info@tzedek.org.uk TEL: 020 3603 8120

Activities

Tzedek Trade Game

Game for 3 groups (up to 5 in each group). Each group is a different 'country' with different resources (paper, scissors, rulers) and an amount of fake money. The aim of the game is to produce the greatest number of products (paper shapes) using the resources.

Each 'country' starts with an unfair distribution of the resources.

Each group is encouraged to trade their resources with each other – some countries have more money, others have more resources.

As the game goes on, the presenter introduces new elements to the game – one country receives an aid loan, another has an industrial strike, etc.

Game highlights the inequalities in the global trade system, and how aid can be both useful (in short time, country can buy more), but could be damaging in the long term (if interest rates on repayments are too high).

Please email education@tzedek.org.uk if you would like Tzedek to come and run the trade game at your event.

Parliamentary Education - Aid and Selection Committees

Divide the group into smaller groups. Give each group one of the issues on the slides (8-14 in 'Activity Presentation – Aid and Select Committees') and ask them to discuss it.

Each group should feedback the main points of their discussion to the rest of the participants.

Ask participants to look at the summary of two Select Committee reports in the online feature on aid and international development.

What view did the Select Committees take of the issues discussed in the previous exercise? Did they correspond with participants' views?