



## Meet Your MP

### How to do it!

Meeting your Member of Parliament is a great way to move forward on the mission of ending global hunger. It also opens the door to more and better communication with your decision-maker in Ottawa. It's easier than you think.

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

Everyone's time is valuable – politicians are no exception. A meeting with your MP needs to have a clear purpose and should focus on a specific "ask."

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

### Before the meeting:

- Find your MP with your postal code at [parl.gc.ca](http://parl.gc.ca) Take some time (on his/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. Get the basic ideas down in your mind (feel free to use some notes to remind you), rather than simply regurgitating the information;
- 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! (And 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 developing countries!
- Bring additional material you can leave with her or him (a brochure, a one-page discussion paper, 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?" For example, the Minister of Development.

### 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 you voice your concerns in the most effective way possible.