

STRATEGY FOR SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FOR GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' RIGHTS 2018–2022

THE OBJECTIVE OF SWEDEN'S development cooperation and humanitarian aid is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. The development cooperation will be based on the principles of aid and development effectiveness, and the new international agreements agreed on by the international community in 2015: the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation will promote global gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. The strategy will apply in 2018–2022 and encompasses a total of SEK 1000 million*.

Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are prerequisites for implementing the whole 2030 Agenda and fulfilling the Global Goals, but it is also a goal in itself (goal 5). Activities within this strategy shall contribute to the following goals:

Gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls

1. Enhanced global and regional conditions to implement and strengthen the global normative framework for gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.
2. Enhanced global and regional conditions to counteract discrimination and gender-stereotypical norms and attitudes.
3. Enhanced global and regional capacity to combat all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices.
4. Enhanced conditions for women's rights organisations, feminist movements and women human rights defenders to act independently and contribute to gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.
5. Increased safety and security for actors and organisations that promote gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.
6. Increased access to and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender equality research.
7. Enhanced methods and capacity development for gender equality efforts.

* Contributions within the framework of this strategy are financed in line with the terms and conditions for appropriation 1:1 Development cooperation, appropriation item 34 or the equivalent appropriation item in the appropriation directions concerning the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each financial year.



CONTEXT

EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE global development cannot be accomplished without equality between women, men, girls and boys. The global normative framework for gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights includes inter alia, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the declarations and action plans of the UN Conference on Women in Beijing and the Population Conference in Cairo and their respective follow-up conferences, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda constitutes a systematic raise in the level of ambition by clearly integrating gender equality in the entire sustainability agenda. The principle of leaving no one behind places the poorest, most marginalised and excluded people – not least women, girls and LGBTI persons – in focus and underlines the importance of considering different interacting power structures and forms of discrimination.

RECENTLY, THERE HAVE BEEN setbacks in the global work for gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. Global normative frameworks and international commitments on gender equality and human rights are being increasingly questioned, not least sexual and reproductive rights. A shrinking democratic space, along with inadequate financing, limits the opportunities for women's rights organisations to act independently and thus contribute to societal development. Women's rights organisations play a central role in advancing the implementation of global normative frameworks and in reaching the poorest and most vulnerable and marginalised women and girls.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' ACCESS to economic and political power and influence remains a major challenge, and discriminatory legislation is still in place in many countries. A lack of economic rights and resources, not least in terms of ownership and inheritance rights concerning land and other property, limits development. A great deal remains to be achieved in terms of women's and girls' access to, and rights in, the formal labour market and their responsibility for unpaid work, as well as access to good quality education and opportunities to complete their studies. Gender-stereotypical norms undermine women's and girls' empowerment and agency in social, economic and political areas. Destructive and gender-stereotypical social norms and values concerning women's and girls', men's and boys' role and status hinder gender equality and counteract sustainable development. Men's and boys' commitment to, and responsibility for, gender equality is key, not least in terms of changing social norms and preventing gender-based violence.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE is a serious barrier to the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. Gender-based violence – which includes domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking for sexual purposes, exploitation of persons in prostitution, and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, honour-related violence and oppression, and female genital mutilation – is a global problem with serious consequences for individuals and society as a whole. Conflict and post-conflict situations are often marked by gender-based violence, and women's opportunities to



take part in peace processes are often limited. It is crucial to support and highlight women's and girls' agency in contributing to societal change.

GREATER ACCESS TO, and use of, sex-disaggregated data and gender equality research are fundamental to understanding and highlighting the situation of women and girls in different contexts. Research and analysis contribute to developing normative and legal frameworks and are necessary for evidence-based advocacy work. Data and research are also key to developing methods and work procedures, for example regarding gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, and they are a prerequisite for the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, the capacity to define, collect, analyse and report statistics and other information is limited at all levels.

Sweden is a leading global actor in respect to gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. Sweden has an added value in the form of high credibility and long-standing commitment, not least concerning different rights issues that have not been highlighted sufficiently by other actors in international cooperation.

Efforts for gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights require long-term commitment, flexibility and creativity. Sweden needs to continue to build and deepen broad networks and strategic partnerships to ensure more effective collaboration and sustainable results.

ACTIVITIES

SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT cooperation shall take as a point of departure and be characterised by a rights perspective and by the perspective of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development. Such an approach involves giving visibility, ahead of each contribution, to individuals and groups who are discriminated against, excluded and marginalised, so that all persons, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, can enjoy their rights. The perspectives of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, conditions and priorities of poor women, men and children must be the starting point for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable development.

SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT cooperation must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and gender-equal. The development cooperation is based on a holistic approach to the challenges, needs and circumstances of people and societies. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be understood and managed in an integrated context. Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in their own right and a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflict are among the largest obstacles to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important part of conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a gender equality perspective and a conflict perspective shall therefore be



systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation. Internationally agreed principles on development effectiveness must be applied. Gender equality work is hindered by armed conflict, humanitarian crises and climate change. Women's and girls' agency in peace processes and global environmental and climate work is crucial, as well as in work on sustainable natural resource use and food security. It is important in this context to support and highlight women's and girls' agency in advancing change in society.

ACTIVITIES WITHIN this strategy are to strengthen global and regional actors working for gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, and to contribute to conditions for coordination and collaboration between different actors. One prerequisite for achieving gender equality and accountability at all levels is that key agents for change, such as women's rights organisations and other organisations working on gender equality, have an independent role and influence.

Activities are to support global and regional work in developing methods, sex-disaggregated data and gender equality research, which is also an important prerequisite for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To pursue rights-based gender equality work and evidence-based advocacy, it is necessary to continue developing methods, not least regarding gender mainstreaming in development cooperation.

THE ACTIVITY'S OPERATIONAL FOCUS serves as the basis for choosing partners and forms of cooperation. Broad and transformative work for gender equality involves a wide range of actors. Besides women's rights organisations, feminist movements and other organisations working on gender equality, other actors such as academic institutions, faith communities, cultural practitioners, trade unions and business can become involved in dialogues and collaborations for gender equality. Men and boys as actors for gender equality are particularly relevant in the implementation. Catalytic and innovative activities shall be considered.

SWEDEN'S RESOURCE base, including Sweden's experience, expertise and networks in different sectors of society, shall be taken into account in the implementation (when relevant).

To achieve gender equality and all women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, progress is needed in all areas of the gender equality agenda. Activities should supplement and seek synergies with efforts already under way for gender mainstreaming and activities for gender equality throughout Sweden's development cooperation, but not replace an ongoing activity.

Global added value is to be prioritised in the implementation, but operations focused on a single region may also occur. Activities at global and regional level that link work on the broader normative agenda at national and local level enable a holistic approach, complementarity and collaboration. Support via multilateral organisations must be compatible with Sweden's priorities and approaches in cooperation with these organisations. Internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness must be applied. In the implementation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will ensure that a comprehensive overview of the overall Swedish support within the thematic area is maintained. This strategy will be followed up according to the principles and processes set out in the Government's Guidelines for Strategies in Swedish International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

