



Social Protection

Comprehensive systems for multidimensional poverty reduction

Social protection is a human right and an effective tool for poverty reduction. When it is reaching people living in extreme poverty and vulnerability it can increase resilience to shocks and break the cycle of poverty.¹ It can also act as an enabler, facilitating the realisation of other human rights such as health, education, employment and gender.² Sida's support to social protection has expanded rapidly over the past five years but decreased somewhat in 2022. Increased financing of social protection measures during the pandemic was in line with the global trend, and the positive effects from the use of social protection measures have resulted in an increased recognition of the importance of social protection in international development cooperation. Sida's total support in 2022 amounted to SEK 671 million (See Figure 1). Approximately 2.8 percent of Sida's development cooperation budget.



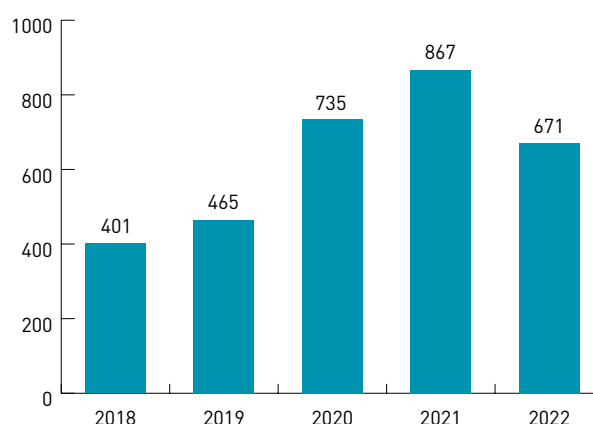
DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD

The pandemic became a wakeup call as vulnerable groups fell into poverty, and the deep inequalities between and within countries became more evident. Global poverty increased further in 2022 due to stressors such as the ongoing high inflation rates, and the food- and debt crisis. The needs for support are immense as 82 percent of people in low-income countries lack access to social protection, and significant efforts are needed to realise the human right to social protection.³

In 2022, the global dialogue focused on the urgent need to expand access to social protection, and called for an expansion of both domestic and international financing to meet these.⁴ Also, the need to support progressive realisation of universal social protection is increasingly prioritised for example in ILO's normative dialogue and in the new World Bank strategy⁵. Sida and other members are jointly driving this agenda forward in the global partnership for Universal Social Protection 2030. In 2022 areas such as universal social protection and digitalisation, financing, food security and climate change have been prioritised.⁶

Other areas where Sida participates in global dialogue are social protection linked to gender equality, and in the peace, humanitarian and development nexus. A process called the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection and a Just Transition, launched by the UN Secretary General has also started. It is a new initiative, to expand social protection for all.⁷

FIGURE 1: DISBURSEMENT WITHIN SOCIAL PROTECTION 2018–2022 (MILLION SEK)



1 Bastagli et al. (2019), Understanding the Impact of cash transfers: the evidence

2 Government of Sweden (2017), Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, Government Communication 2016/17:60

3 ILO (2021), World Social Protection Report 2020-2022

4 USP2030, Financing Working Group (2023), Joint statement: Principles for Financing Universal Social Protection

5 World Bank (2022), Chartering a course Towards Universal Social Protection: resilience, Equity and Opportunity for all

6 USP2030 (2023), Summary of 4th Membership Assembly

7 ILO (2022) Background note - Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transition

THE GLOBAL GOALS

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development include everyone - and we can all contribute. The goals are interdependent and therefore indivisible. Sida's main contribution is to implement development cooperation, thereby reducing poverty and saving lives. Together we can build a better future where no one is left behind.



Results

MAIN AREAS OF SUPPORT

Social protection programmes, such as child- and maternity benefits, or old age pensions, are important to reach people living in poverty. Sida's vision is to support the establishment of universal social protection systems that can meet vulnerabilities throughout the lifecycle. This is an ambitious goal and Sida is supporting countries and global actors to expand social protection progressively.

To reach sustainable results, Sida's bilateral support is focused on the development of social protection systems with institutional development and national ownership as core features in all interventions. Sida also prioritises support that can be catalytical to strengthen linkages between social protection and other sectors, for example gender or nutrition-sensitive social protection. When needed, Sida supports systems with the ability to scale up and adapt to large-scale shocks. Finally, all programmes integrate the five perspectives prioritised by the Swedish government in appraisals and follow-up; poverty, rights, gender, environment and peace. Social protection always contribute to enhanced resilience.

SIDA'S SUPPORT

In 2022, the support for social protection was directed primarily through bilateral interventions in around 20 countries, of which 12 are situated in Africa, which is also the region receiving the largest share of funds. Other geographical areas where support to social protection expanded in 2022 are Europe and Asia. (See Figure 2). In the latter, the contributions are implemented in the peace, humanitarian and development nexus. The main cooperation partners in the bilateral portfolio are multilateral organisations, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, WFP and other international organisations.

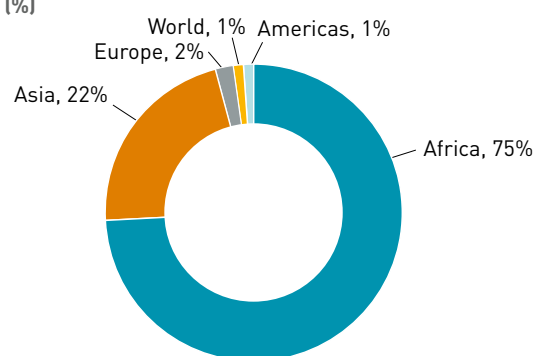
In some countries the decision to expand support to social protection is a result of Sida's context analyses in regular Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA), which is supporting the identification of poverty in the strategy cycle. In Sida's strategy reports 2022 it was evident that social protection efforts have been implemented to mitigate the effects of the ongoing recession and crises related to climate change, droughts, weather hazards and/or conflict.⁸

Sida's global portfolio provides strategic support to international organisations on advocacy for social protection for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or workers in the informal sector. The global portfolio also includes

core support to ILO, a special initiative within the partnership for universal social protection 2030 to strengthen the efforts in achieving universal coverage and enhanced capacity development of government employees through Sida's International Training Programme implemented in ten countries in Africa and Asia.

Social protection has specific targets in the sustainable development goals: 1 End Poverty; 5 Gender Equality; and 10 Inequality. In addition, there is evidence that cash transfers have an effect on other SDGs, for example health, malnutrition, education and livelihoods.⁹ In 2022, approximately 90 percent of Sida's support to social protection targeted the first SDG, 50 percent targeted SDG 5 and 20 percent targeted SDG 10. 43 percent of Sida's support contributes to climate adaption, and 30 percent to employment (marked as a significant objective in Sida's systems).

FIGURE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF DISBURSEMENT IN 2022 (%)



Results from Sida's support in Zambia

Improving and expanding social protection in Zambia has been a journey spanning over two decades. Government funding of the sector has increased and reached 73 percent in 2022. Payments to beneficiaries have been made more regularly in 2022 and the number of households reached 973,000, which corresponds to just under half of Zambia's poor population. About 80 percent of the recipients are women. The volume of the monthly payments has also increased to a more adequate level to cope with everyday life. In addition Zambia is implementing the all-digital Zambian Information Social Protection System improving the efficiency through a unified registry and digital payments. This improves the security and transparency of the program, while at the same time increasing access to financial services for women.

⁸ Sida Rwanda (2022), Strategy reports Rwanda

⁹ Bastagli et al. (2019), Understanding the Impact of cash transfers: the evidence