

Education for All — a way out of poverty



Education is the foundation of development

The very essence of personal and social development is education and knowledge. A glance at the development of humanity over time shows the crucial importance of knowledge and education for social, political and economic development in different societies. Where individual people are concerned, education is the very foundation on which they can improve their own lives, their families' lives and the lives of future generations. Well aware of the value of education, governments all over the world have declared education to be a basic human right and it is the responsibility of every state to give its citizens free basic education.

The objective of Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to the reduction and elimination of poverty. This objective, as well as the objectives for the promotion of human rights and democracy, gender equality and environmentally sustainable development, is based on all people acquiring knowledge through which they can improve their lives.

Programmes of support for education have had a central position in Swedish development

cooperation for many years. Swedish support gives priority to basic education for all. This priority is based on the basic humanitarian and political attitude that education is a human right and that education for all is essential for progress towards democracy and equality.

There is a clear relationship between education and poverty reduction. Good education strengthens people's self-esteem. Moreover, it is also of great importance for the

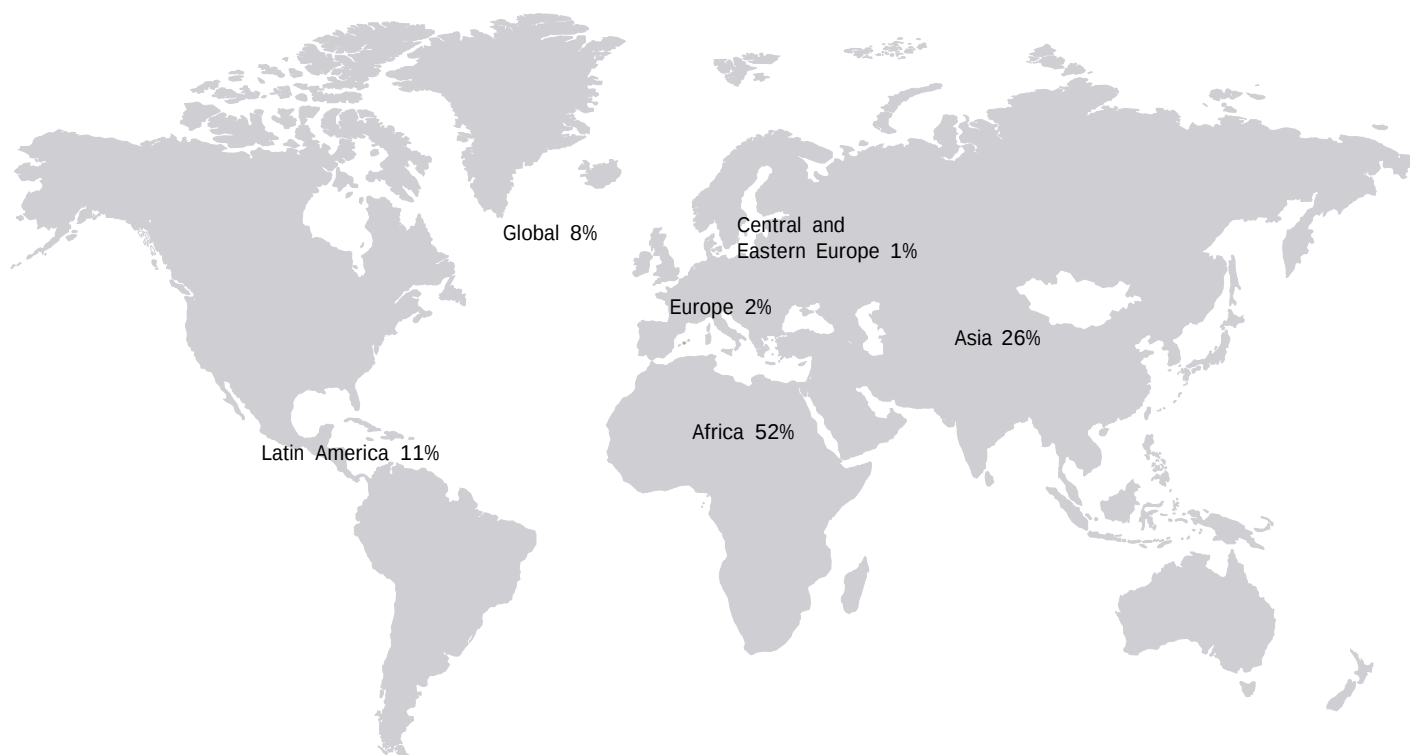
In the year 2000, it was estimated that 133 million children still did not go to school. The majority of these children were girls. At the same time, almost 900 million adults were unable to read and write. Two-thirds of these adults were women.



Photo: Sean Sprague/Phoenix Bildbyrå

Schoolchildren in Bangladesh. Sida is providing support for education in Bangladesh that includes programmes for non-formal education for very poor children in urban areas.

Sida's support for education year 2000



health status of people, for their income and the possibilities available to them to improve their lives. It starts in the womb and continues to the next generation.

Different studies show that education is clearly the most important factor for the reduction of child mortality. To put it plainly it can be said that education can save millions of lives in poor countries in a very concrete way. This applies particularly to the education of girls and women.

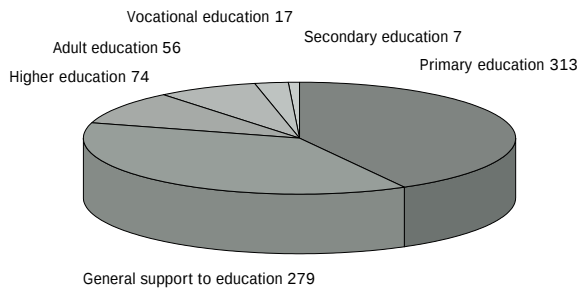
Education gives people a voice – an opportunity to participate in social life, to organise and to exert an influence on their living conditions. Education is therefore one of the founda-

tions of political participation and democratic development.

Education is also essential for positive economic growth. It strengthens the productive capacity of people, partly because it makes them healthier, but also since it enables them to absorb new technologies or to see the opportunities that can make positive changes to their lives. In the struggle against poverty, this is particularly important in the agricultural sector, where most people make their living.

Research and experience show that education is essential for long-term positive development that includes the elimination of poverty. But it is not sufficient in itself. Despite the fact

Sida's support to education, SEK 746 million (in 2000)



** General support to education includes support to the entire educational sector and support to Swedish NGOs active in the education sector.*

that many African countries made considerable investments in education in the 1960s and the 1970s, the results were meagre. One of the reasons for this was that their economic policies could not provide the job opportunities that education had prepared the ground for. Another was that the education given was inadequately or poorly adapted to prevailing needs in the countries.

Obstacles and challenges

There are many obstacles to a good, basic education for all. At the national level, economic and political structures and shortcomings in the quality of the education provided often stand in the way. At the local level, it is primarily poverty that prevents children from going to school.

Parents are often extremely eager that their children should go to school. But many uneducated parents do not always understand the importance of education or are critical of the instruction provided. In addition to this there are direct costs, for school uniforms, school materials or books, which the poorest people cannot afford. In many cases, children are kept from attending school since they have to work to contribute to the family economy.

Other children are prevented from going to school since they belong to a minority group, are disabled or orphans. In some cases, children cannot go to school since the school is not adapted to the farming seasons or to the nomadic life-styles of certain groups, for example cattle breeders. In many countries and areas it is

Ambitious goals in Jomtien and Dakar

At the conference on *Education for All* in Jomtien in 1990, the participants agreed to work towards a concept of education that met the basic needs of all people.

At the conference on education in Dakar in 2000, the participants agreed on six objectives for the work in forthcoming years:



Photo: Heltur Netocny/Phoenix Bildbyrå

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.



Photo: Claes Herlander/Phoenix Bildbyrå

Schoolchildren in Bolivia. The country's educational reform has started to provide positive results.

impossible for children to attend school due to wars and conflicts that have closed the schools and forced people to flee.

Conditions in many schools create further obstacles – a poor school environment, unmotivated teachers, authoritarian teaching methods that are not based on the needs of the students, a lack of textbooks, corporal punishment and the sexual harassment of girls, a language of instruction that is not understood by the students, and a weak school administration.

Conditions of this type affect the poor more than those who are better off, the rural areas more than the towns, and girls more than boys.

To remedy deficiencies of this type, integrated action is needed. Most important of all is the existence of a strong political will. Governments must assume full responsibility. It is not sufficient

merely to guarantee the financing of education, it is also essential to formulate long-term education policies which remedy the problems. Policies of this type must be based on the right of everyone to an education they can afford, on consolidation of the quality of education, and on the support of good teachers who can lead learning activities. By strengthening the participation of the local community and parents, schools can be better adapted to the needs of children.

Education for all

Sida's work is based on the conception that education is of fundamental importance for the achievement of the objectives of poverty reduction, gender equality and democracy. Therefore, Sida has found it natural to base its

Sector programmes in Mozambique

Swedish support for education in Mozambique is developing increasingly into the form of a sector-wide approach. This means that Sida and other donors contribute to the financing of the country's national education plan.

The point of departure for sector programme support is the strategic plan produced by the Mozambican government. This is based on the country's education policy and on an analysis of the most serious problems in the education sector, and proposes solutions to these problems.

- In order to increase access to basic education it is necessary to:

increase the number of schools and/or classrooms, shorten the distance between the students' homes and their schools, guarantee the supply of textbooks and other teaching aids, increase the number of teachers, and take action to increase the participation of girls.

- The quality of education must be improved by: changing the curriculum, improving teacher-training, developing better textbooks, strengthening educational support for teachers and improving their living conditions, and improving the conditions of students in the schools.

- Improvements of institutional capacity shall be achieved by: education and training of leaders at all levels, changes in administrative routines and systems with a focus on the delegation of decisions, and the inclusion of the local community, not least the parents, in the operations of the schools.

Mozambique's constitution lays down that education is both a right and an obligation for every citizen. At the same time the low level of education is one of the most serious obstacles to positive economic growth and social development. Only 40 per cent of the population are literate. In rural areas less than 16 per cent of the women can read and write.

In the government's new strategy to reduce poverty, education is regarded as extremely important for the attainment of sustainable economic, political and social development. The Mozambican government has therefore promised to increase its support to education – from 14 per cent of the government budget in 1995 to 21 per cent in 2003.

Some 25 bilateral and multilateral institutions and a large number of NGOs are involved in providing support for education. The growing number of partners in cooperation has hitherto resulted in an inefficient use of resources. Therefore, in the 1990s, Sweden took on the role of improving cooperation between the parties involved.

Swedish sector programme support covers the period from January 2000 to December 31, 2002. The objective is that the support shall continue thereafter for a further five to ten years.



Photo: Sida/DESQ/UND

Village school in Mozambique. The civil war destroyed many schools.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

A school outside school

Sida provides a great deal of support to the education sector in Bangladesh. In order to reach children that cannot go to normal schools, support is also being given to several non-formal education projects. These projects provide basic education for half a million children between the ages of 8 and 12 years living in the slums of four cities: Dhaka, Chittagong, Kulna and Rajshahi. The intention is to make basic education available for poor children living in slums who have never attended school or who dropped out of school at an early age. Special attention is being given to girls and vulnerable children.

Non-formal education involves special educational programmes that give the children basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and in simple life skills. New flexible methods and new educational

materials are being tested, as are unconventional places for providing instruction, for example drop-in centres, street theatres, market places, bus and



Photo: Olof Sandkull

Doing homework in Bangladesh.

railways stations – whatever is necessary to encourage children to go to school regularly. The goal is that half of the students should be girls. The way to attain this is to ensure that most teachers are women and that special education

centres for girls are established.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. The linkages between poverty and education can be illustrated by the fact that, on average, only 50 per cent of the population are literate (only 27 per cent for women). After the government of Bangladesh decided to eradicate illiteracy and introduced compulsory school attendance in 1992, 85 per cent of the children are now enrolled at school. However, in the slum areas, the figure is only 18 per cent (of 1.5 million children).

The formal school system is not sufficient to achieve education objectives. It needs to be supplemented with other programmes. Four major informal education projects are being implemented now, of which two are receiving support from Sida.

RESEARCH

Research strengthens primary education

Research into education, particularly of the type that is important for developing countries, is underdeveloped and is hampered by a lack of funding. Sida is working to strengthen research of this type, mainly through its Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC. Sida also tries to strengthen cooperation between ministries of education and local and international research programmes. In this way theoretical analyses and

practical experience can mutually reinforce each other.

Sida has supported research in developing countries for many years, often in cooperation with Swedish institutions. The goal is to strengthen research capacity in developing countries and to encourage development-oriented research. International contacts are extremely important in the field of research, as is research into local conditions.

Part of the research support focuses on developing knowledge and research capacity that can be of direct importance for development, and for the implementation of different development programmes that Sida contributes to. Where the education sector is concerned, research into education or languages is of great importance for a country that is striving to achieve the goal of a good education for all.

programmes of cooperation in the field of education on the declaration of *Education for All* that was adopted at the first World Conference on Education in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Ten years later this objective was reiterated in Dakar, Senegal, and a number of concrete objectives were approved (see box). As part of the objective to halve poverty by the year 2015, the rich countries in OECD have also undertaken to strive towards the achievement of

education for all no later than 2015, and to achieve gender equality in education.

From school desks to education reform

Sida's support for education is based on the education programmes in the countries with which Sida has programmes of development cooperation. Since the mid 1970s, special

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

School in wars

Afghanistan is in a period of transition, politically, economically and socially. In the education sector many positive changes are underway, not the least for girls and female teachers who, after the fall of the Taliban regime, are now being encouraged to return to school. The following example shows the situation as it was recently and illustrates the possibility to support education under difficult circumstances.

Approximately 15 000 schoolchildren in classes 1–6 in the Keshim valley in the north-east corner of Afghanistan and among the Hazara people in the central parts of the country can go to school thanks to the Swedish Afghanistan Committee. In the Keshim schools, just over one-third of the students are girls, and among the Hazaras, who have often been discriminated against on account of their ethnicity and religion, a fifth of the students are girls – in a country where girls are not allowed to go to school.

The Swedish support consists of grants for the salaries of teachers, principals and other members of the school staff and the distribution of educational materials including textbooks. The schools are also

visited every other month by special educational advisers who make a general project follow-up and provide further education for teachers locally.

Conditions in Afghanistan are characterised by almost twenty years of war. The Afghan state is an example of a so-called "failed state", i.e. it is a central power that does not function administratively. The majority of people with a higher or upper secondary education background have been killed or have fled the country and almost all institutional education has, in practice, come to a standstill. Of the population of just over

20 million, only a fraction are literate. Of the five million children of school age, only a few have been offered schooling.

In the war-torn Afghanistan there is no functioning central government, and Sweden cannot cooperate with Afghan authorities that deny girls their right to education. Sida is now providing substantial support to school projects in the Keshim valley and among the Hazaras. These projects are part of the Swedish Afghanistan Committee's total support to 580 schools with 170 000 students in rural areas in Afghanistan.



Photo: Svenska Afghanistankommittén

With the aid of the Swedish Afghanistan Committee, several hundred thousand children have been able to go to school.

importance has been attached to providing support for basic education and literacy for all.

Sida does not implement the projects. Sida contributes knowledge and resources to support national efforts. Therefore, Sida's role is normally to provide funds, to be a partner in the dialogue, and to contribute to the consolidation of national capacity.

Swedish support has assumed many different forms and has, as a rule, consisted of financing different programmes or projects, such as school building in Zimbabwe after independence, teacher training in Tanzania, production of textbooks in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, innovative programmes to provide education for girls in India, and so on.

During recent years, Sida and several other donors have developed methods for providing support together with the partner countries. There is a gradual process of transition towards supporting the partner countries' national strategies and programmes for the entire education sector. In 2001, Sida adopted a new policy for cooperation in the field of education where this focus is of central importance. This form of cooperation is known as sector programme support or the sector-wide approach. The point of departure of this type of support is that it is based on the development of trustful cooperation – partnership – founded on shared values. The framework of cooperation is established through a close dialogue between the partner country and the donors. Where Sida is concerned, the basic education priorities of the countries concerned are an important issue in the discussions with the partner countries.

While support to individual projects or programmes, for example school building, is based on agreements covering technical or financial matters, sector programme support means that the parties agree on the education policy, for example basic education and educa-

tion for girls. It is also necessary that the country has the determination and capacity to implement the sector programme, has reliable systems for providing reports on financial contributions, and for monitoring the results.

Thereby, cooperation is in a gradual process of transition towards joint donor financing of the partner countries' education sectors via the partner countries' government budgets.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Girls have an equal right to education

FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists) is a Pan-African voluntary organisation which has its headquarters in Nairobi. The organisation was formed in 1993 by African women ministers and vice-chancellors. These powerful and influential women saw the need to join forces and to take action to improve the education of women and girls in African countries.

FAWE's work focuses on three areas:

- influencing education policies to ensure that education programmes in African countries take into consideration, and promote, the education of girls
- mobilising people at all levels in society to support education for girls
- producing and spreading innovative examples of how it is possible to improve the education of girls in a concrete way.

The organisation has members in 33 countries and has received support from Sida since 1994.



Photo: Gustaf Eneroth/Phoenix Bildbyrå



The intention of the transition to sector programme support is to strengthen the priority given by the partner countries to national, long-term education policies and their responsibility for these policies. With the aid of sector programmes, it is hoped that it will be possible to gather support, which is otherwise often fragmented, to strengthen and reform the national institutions, and to contribute to improving efficiency in the use of national resources.

A change of this type takes time. In Sweden's support to, for example, Mozambique and Tanzania, it has had the effect that special programmes, such as support for the production of textbooks, are continuing while, at the same time, discussions are taking place on sector programme support. In these discussions less focus is placed on how Swedish funds should be used. The focus is rather on the country's education policy, its institutional capacity and the content of its education programmes.

Work on many fronts

The right to, and access to, basic education for all is a central theme in Sida's support in the field of education. Most of Sida's disbursements in this field go directly or indirectly to basic education.

However, to achieve the objective of education for all, it is not enough merely to support primary education. It is necessary to provide support in other parts of the education system in order to achieve education of good quality that reaches everyone. Some of these areas are exemplified in this booklet.

Institutional development

If the education system is to function properly, strong and competent institutions are essential. There are shortcomings in this respect in many countries. Therefore, Sida works together with other donors with programmes that strengthen capacity, for example in ministries of education.

TEACHER TRAINING

Student-oriented education in Namibia

Before Namibia became a free country, Umeå University and SWAPO, the liberation movement, were given support by Sida to train teachers in exile, in the neighbouring country of Angola. In the 1990s this programme of cooperation was extended to support for a reform of teacher training. The objective was to support Namibia's reform of the education of primary school teachers, and to strengthen national capacity in teacher training, planning and research.

The new teacher-training programme is something of a revolution. The

previous authoritarian form of teaching has been replaced by student-centred methods. Teaching is based on the needs of the students and is designed to develop their natural curiosity with their knowledge, skills, interests and understanding as the starting point.

The new teacher-training programme consists of three-year undergraduate studies and the possibility of further education through external studies. Teacher training colleges have been supplemented by regional resource centres that support teachers and

provide further education.

Through the reform, many teachers, both new and old, have improved their subject knowledge of subjects their teaching methods. A new understanding of how good quality education can be developed has started to take root.



Photo: Jørn Sjønekar/Phoenix Bildbyrå

In order to achieve the international objectives of education, there is a need for a considerable increase in the flow of development cooperation to education, particularly basic education. Today, no more than just over two per cent of development cooperation from the rich countries goes to basic education.



Photo: Trygve Belsstad/Phoenix Bildbyrå

A teacher in India. Teachers are of central importance for improvements in the quality of education.

Higher education

The quality of basic education cannot be improved without facilities for higher education where the persons who can lead activities and develop teaching methods and content can be trained. Higher education is also essential for the economic and technical development of society, not least in the rapidly changing, globalised world of today.

Research

Research into education is essential in order to acquire knowledge about the possibilities to achieve the objectives of a good basic education for all and of life-long learning.

Teacher training

Teachers are of central importance for teaching and for improving the quality of education. If they are to play this important role, they must be given opportunities for professional development and be given tolerable working conditions. Therefore, Sida is financing teacher training in many countries.

Support via NGOs

Sida is of the opinion that the right of everyone to education must be based on sound national education systems where, in the first place, the state has the responsibility and provides resources. However, voluntary organisations can play an important, supplementary role. They can reach groups that are outside the school, they are flexible and can introduce new teaching ideas, and they can reinforce aspects of democracy in education and in the content of education.

Education in situations of emergency

Schools face particularly difficult challenges in situations of emergency and conflict. Here foreign support can be of decisive importance. In situations of this type it is often difficult to work through governments, and international and Swedish NGOs can constitute the only channels through which support can be provided. A significant part of Sida's support to education is therefore channelled through Swedish NGOs that cooperate with organisations in the partner countries.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education improves mental health services

University programmes for graduates are included in Sida's support for the mental health reform in Bosnia & Herzegovina and for the country's programmes of mental and social rehabilitation.

Bosnia has a heavy, centrally steered and old-fashioned institutionalised care service, particularly in the mental health field, that has few prospects of coping with the considerable needs of care resulting from the war. Sida's support to higher education is one way of contributing to the aspirations of the health care authorities to modernise Bosnia's rehabilitation services. In particular, the training of nurses in psychiatric open care has attracted a great deal of appreciation.

There is an acute need of knowledge in family therapy, since there are widespread social and mental problems in families. The training in family therapy in Banja Luka, an extremely interesting programme of cooperation between the universities in Stockholm and Belgrade, is one way of meeting the enormous needs. There are also programmes in psychology for students at the universities in Sarajevo and Banja Luka in cooperation with Gothenburg University. Moreover, master's courses in child psychiatry are being arranged in a programme of cooperation between the universities in Umeå and Sarajevo.

In addition a college of social studies has been opened in Banja Luka in order to improve the general quality of social work, with new social workers and, in a long-term perspective, with research.

COMBATING HIV/AIDS

Educational programmes on HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is having a serious effect on education, particularly in southern and eastern Africa. Thousands of teachers are dying prematurely, as well as many of their students. In the struggle against the epidemic it is important to reach the young generation.

Sida is supporting work against HIV/AIDS through many different types of projects. In Malawi, 20,000 teachers at intermediate and senior levels in the compulsory school are being trained to provide sex instruction. Sida is financing 20 experts who are training 630 teachers who, in turn, will train others. The project is based on experience gained from sex instruction in schools in Tanzania and Uganda.

The particular objective is to build up a body of teachers who can provide information on health, sex and sexuality, venereal disease and sexual issues. The ultimate objective is to make girls and boys aware of their right and ability to say yes or no to sex.

In Malawi the number of young girls who become pregnant and leave school prematurely is extremely high. The national statistics show that among persons in the 15–24 age group, five times as many girls have HIV/AIDS as boys. It is therefore specially important that girls are included in sex instruction programmes that it is hoped will help young people to protect themselves against venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS.



Photo: Sean Sprague/Phoenix Bildbyrå

The struggle against HIV/AIDS

The global HIV/AIDS epidemic constitutes a deadly threat to the objective of education for all. In large parts of southern and eastern Africa, where the education situation is already precarious and only six children in ten go to school, the spread of HIV/AIDS is also most serious. It is having the effect that thousands of teachers, as well as parents, are dying prematurely. Special contributions must therefore be made to stop the spread of the disease. Here Sida is working in many areas, not merely in the school system.

Non-formal education

The formal school system cannot reach all children, particularly not the very poorest. Under such circumstances, support to the school system be supplemented by the financing of non-formal education that is better adapted to the living conditions of the students. Support of this type can be given in cooperation with voluntary organisations and with governments.

A challenge for everyone

The greatest responsibility for combating poverty and giving the citizens education does not rest

with foreign donors but with national governments. These governments must give priority to education in the government budget, reform their tax systems to mobilise domestic resources, and develop constructive cooperation with civil society and the private sector. Today, many countries fail their citizens, particularly the poorest, by investing too little in basic education and by permitting inefficient and corrupt authorities.

The donors can therefore play a very important supportive role, not in the first place through financial contributions – they constitute merely a fraction of the total costs of education – but through a constructive dialogue on the importance of education for the development of society and through contributing to strengthen the skills and knowledge needed.

One special challenge in the rapidly changing world of today is to make it possible for developing countries to meet the demands of globalisation and to participate in the opportunities it offers. This requires new knowledge that must be based on a system for life-long learning, which includes basic education for everyone, as well as the possibility of higher education.



Schoolchildren in Bolivia

Reforms in Bolivia improve school results

In Bolivia, levels of literacy are low. A large part of the population speak poor Spanish or no Spanish at all and have either spent a very short time in school or have not been able to absorb an education that was not adapted to their languages or needs.

Sida has supported an education reform in the country since the mid 1990s. It became clear at an early stage that a great deal needed to be changed in the school system as well as in educational methods. The objective of

the ongoing reform is to ensure that the poorest rural and urban areas are given access to education of high quality.

Investments have therefore been made in new schools, but perhaps above all in the development of subjects taught in the schools, in education methods, teacher training and the administration of education. The reform also includes giving more influence to local authorities, individual schools and parents.

Much remains to be done, not least in producing better teachers and a better administration. But evaluations show clear improvements in school results when the language of instruction and the subjects are better adapted to the needs of the students.



Photo: Kristina Roberts

Literacy course in Bolivia

In the interest of the poor

The objective of Sida's support for education is to strengthen the right to relevant education for all, an education that enables poor people to participate in social development. The following areas are regarded as important for Sida:

- to contribute to ensuring that the teaching in poor countries uses methods that are based on the student's own will to learn
- to contribute to creating good management of education where those in authority can be made accountable for their work
- to work to make primary schooling compulsory and truly free of charge for all children
- to contribute to ensuring that children with special needs are given education
- to contribute to the elimination of gender, language and ethnic barriers and to enhancing bi- or multilingual learning
- to contribute to mobilising support for the education of girls
- to work for the availability and rehabilitation of education in emergency and post-conflict situations
- to contribute to making better possibilities available for children and adults to learn to read through formal and informal education
- to contribute to making better possibilities available for formal, non-formal and informal life-long learning, specially for teachers.



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Education is a fundamental human right. Education is also essential for the elimination of poverty. Support for primary education for all has long had a central position in Swedish development cooperation. Special emphasis is placed on school systems that reach the poor and give girls and boys equal opportunities to attend school.

Today Sida is cooperating with other donors to contribute to the production of long-term national development programmes that can receive joint support. This support is supplemented with contributions that strengthen the possibilities available to the partner countries to develop programmes of high quality of education for all.

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