

Development and Change

SWEDISH COOPERATION WITH
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Winding up the old Soviet Union

Slightly more than ten years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a fundamental and painful process of change is taking place in the 15 new independent states. In some of the countries and regions, there is a process of rapid transition towards democracy and a market economy. In other countries, the process of change has been negligible, counteracted by the political establishment and financial interests.

Everywhere, the transformation is encountering problems inherited from the old system. Two of the major problems are the unwieldy and inefficient bureaucracy and the authoritarian and centralist philosophy that prevents people from making decisions or taking initiatives. Winding up the Soviet system has proved to be very complicated and costly.

Wars and conflicts that have exploited ethnic antagonisms have divided and weakened several of the countries. The old system also left a terrifying heritage in the form of waste dumps that leak highly dangerous toxic substances or radioactivity, and industries that have harmful effects on the environment. There is a considerable lack of knowledge of effects on the environment and of environment-friendly alternatives.

The process of change creates new problems. When a government is weak, organised crime becomes strong. Corruption spreads in situations where money flows in new channels, there is no legislation, and morals are undermined.

Drug abuse is growing rapidly among young people who feel frustrated and have been misled. As a consequence, HIV/Aids is also spreading rapidly. The abuse of alcohol has reached appalling levels, particularly among men who have seen their traditional role disappear.

The process of change is smoothest in countries or regions that have contacts with the West. Most of Sweden's programmes of development cooperation with the former Soviet Union therefore focus on creating as many interfaces as possible between the countries. In this brochure we give prominence to the programmes of cooperation that are financed and administered by Sida – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – in the former Soviet Union except for the Baltic States.





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Reforms for transition

Russia is a neighbouring country of Sweden and an important partner in many areas, both bilaterally and regionally. Swedish development cooperation with Russia focuses on support for reforms and integration with Europe. Programmes of cooperation relating to the Baltic Sea and the Barents Sea constitute important links between the EU and Russia.

Sida's development cooperation is based on the concept of strengthening the capacity of the partner country by facilitating the transfer of know-how and experience. The partner in cooperation then adapts the know-how and experience to its own needs.

Swedish-Russian cooperation focuses mainly on north-west Russia with St Petersburg as the focal point. This area includes Leningrad oblast (county), Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Pskov, Novgorod, Kaliningrad and the Republic of Karelia. Vologda and Komi are also included in some programmes. In order that changes should not be confined to the local level but spread throughout the country, there is a large amount of cooperation with the federal ministries in Moscow.

Democracy

Sida supports various measures designed to increase the participation of citizens in political life. Local self-government is being strengthened, not least through twinning cooperation.

Today, there are 45 twinning arrangements between Swedish and Russian municipalities. Support is given to independent mass media and for strengthening the position of women. Sida has supported two institutes that pro-

vide training for women politicians and businesswomen, in St Petersburg and Murmansk.

Economic transition

Reforms of the public administration are necessary in order to speed up the process of economic transition. Among other things, Sweden is supporting the development of property registers and land reform, statistics, the tax administration and labour market institutions. Russian industry is receiving support through various training projects.

Social issues

In the social sector, the points of departure of Swedish cooperation are to build up effective social services and to make further training possible for social workers. A significant proportion of the programmes of cooperation have the aim of changing attitudes towards children with disabilities and of reducing the admission of children into institutions. The health care services receive support to develop primary care and clinics for young people. Important issues are HIV/Aids and drugs.

Environment

One central objective is to eliminate major sources of pollution of the Baltic Sea, for example the discharges of effluents from St Petersburg and Kaliningrad. Russia is also receiving support from Sweden to handle used nuclear fuel, nuclear waste and radiation. Cooperation in the environment sector takes advantage of Swedish expertise in environmental technology and energy.



RUSSIA

Capital city:
Moscow

Population:
145 million

Life expectancy:
69.7 years (1970)
66.1 years (1999)

GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 260 (1998)

Change in GNP:
-4.8 per cent (1990-2000)

DEVELOPING BUSINESS

■ Sida is supporting an extensive training programme for businessmen in Russia. With the aid of a Swedish business management institute, ten training institutes in Russia are running a course to show businessmen how they can develop their businesses. Among other things, the course participants, who are often key persons in their companies, visit Sweden and meet Swedish businessmen working in the same sector.

Over 600 Russian businessmen have participated in the course and have visited more than 300 Swedish companies. After the course, many Russian participants become members of local "Business Clubs" which are important meeting places and valuable contact points for Swedish businessmen.

MANAGERS TRAIN IN SWEDEN

■ A practical further education and training programme for young Russian managers is arranged by Sweden. The programme is being run by the Norden Association (an association with members in all the Nordic countries) and, over a five-year period, 500 young Russians have undergone practical training in Sweden. The objective is to improve management skills in Russian companies and to promote links between companies in Russia and Sweden.

Marina Kouznetsova is training at a Swedish hotel in order to gain experience for her job in a hotel to be opened in St Petersburg.



PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN



In ten years Russia has passed from a top-down planned economy to a market economy, with more freedom for its citizens. Sida is supporting various measures to increase the participation of the citizens in political life.

PHOTO: BENGT AV GEIJERSTAM

CHRISTMAS MARKET IN A KARELIAN VILLAGE

■ What about a load of manure or a live pig for Christmas? At all events, there were many expectant visitors at the Christmas market in the village of Tjalna in Russian Karelia who hoped to win at tombola on a cold winter Sunday. Among the stalls selling Karelian handicrafts, knitted gloves, hot pirogues and skewers, young and old people jostled to catch a glimpse of Father Christmas who distributed prizes to proud winners.

The Christmas market in Tjalna is the second largest of its kind in Karelia. It is the result of a Sida-supported rural development project, implemented in cooperation between a number of villages in Karelia and the Swedish county of Västerbotten. Within the framework of the project, 15 different working groups, among them the Christmas market group, have been started. Other groups work, for example, with marketing, wood processing, knitting, and intensive courses in English and German. Some 400 people have been affected directly or indirectly by the project, which has now been extended to two more municipalities.



PHOTO: MARGARETA LEJD

The market in Tjalna is part of the project for rural development in Karelia.

St Petersburg

Many of Sida's projects in Russia are in St Petersburg. The Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm is implementing an extensive programme for the development of social care, in cooperation with the social authorities. The aim is to make the social services more effective by improving the skills of the social workers. The programme includes pilot projects for the rehabilitation of the disabled, for the care of the elderly, and for strengthening ties between families and children.

Sida is participating in several strategically important environmental projects in St Petersburg. By far the largest is the South-West treatment plant, which is planned to treat wastewater from 700 000 people. Today, this wastewater is discharged untreated into the Gulf of Finland. Sida has been instrumental in finding a financing model for the project. Swedish companies are members of the consortium that has overall responsibility for the project and Swedish companies are supplying a large amount of the equipment. One prerequisite for the project has been



PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN

A large amount of the environmentally hazardous waste produced in St Petersburg with its five million inhabitants is dumped at the landfill at Krasnyj Bor. Here it is stored untreated and unsorted and threatens to leak out into the Baltic Sea. The landfill shall be decontaminated and reorganised in a project supported by Sida.

EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN

■ At the Early Intervention Institute in St Petersburg, parents are taught methods to stimulate and develop children with minor disabilities. In this way it is possible to reduce admissions of children into children's homes. The Institute has received support from Sida for many years in the form of Swedish experts and cooperation with the Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm. The methods developed at the Institute are now being spread throughout the country. In Arkhangelsk a similar project is a cooperation between the city of Arkhangelsk and the Swedish town of Örnsköldsvik.



PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN

Children with minor disabilities are given help at an early stage.

COMBAT DRUG ABUSE

■ There are more than two million drug addicts in Russia.

Sida is supporting a project called the "Drug Box". This is an information package for teachers, policemen, social workers and others working with young people and with problems related to drug abuse. The aim is to show how local communities can combat drug abuse.

The "Drug Box" has been produced by the Swedish National Association for a Drug-Free Society. The project is based in St Petersburg and is being run on a regional basis throughout north-west Russia.

the reform of the city's water company. Here Sweden has played an important role through a Sida-financed contribution implemented by Stockholm Water.

Another environmental project concerns the renovation and reorganisation of a plant for toxic waste in Krasnyj Bor. Here environmentally hazardous waste has been stored for thirty years. Most of the waste has been dumped in open dams that are in danger of collapsing - with resultant leakage into the Baltic Sea. The project includes helping St Petersburg to improve its management of environmentally hazardous waste.

Cooperation projects also include the labour market, land survey, traffic and tourism. Stockholm University has helped to organise a master's degree programme at the International Banking Institute in St Petersburg.

Leningrad oblast

Leningrad oblast (county), with slightly less than two million inhabitants, surrounds St Petersburg. Here Sida is supporting further education programmes for managers and staff at social offices to improve their capacity to take care of vulnerable children, the elderly, the disabled and socially excluded groups. Other contributions have the aim of developing land survey and property registration, creating jobs for unemployed young people by training them to become sports leaders, building up municipal care centres, improving heating and water supplies and solid waste management.

Leningrad oblast has extensive contacts with the Swedish county of Södermanland.

Kaliningrad

One million people live in the Kaliningrad exclave. One-third of these live in the city of Kaliningrad, formerly Königsberg.

At present, Sida is supporting some ten projects in Kaliningrad in the fields of social development, integration of the disabled on the labour market, private sector development, local self-government and property registration. Sida is also participating in the construction of a wastewater treatment plant in the city of Kaliningrad.

Kaliningrad is struggling with considerable drug abuse problems and is one of the regions most severely affected by HIV/Aids. The city is included in a Sida-supported project, run by the National Swedish Association for Sexual Information (RFSU), that is providing sexual education for



PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN

At "Karlsson", a day centre in St Petersburg, mentally disabled children learn to cook and serve food.

teachers and health care staff. Another project that has the aim of preventing the infection being spread from mothers to children includes training of staff working in children's homes for children with HIV-infected mothers.

Kaliningrad has strong ties with south-east Sweden, mainly the counties of Blekinge and Kalmar.

Novgorod

Novgorod is one of the oldest cities in Russia and has extremely old historical links with Sweden. Today, the region has 750 000 inhabitants.

Sida is supporting some ten projects in Novgorod, including a major project for local democracy and self-government in cooperation with the regional administration. In addition to this, projects are being run in fields such as consumer protection and the training of home economics teachers. Sida is supporting an extensive health care reform and a school for the further education of land surveyors from all parts of Russia.

Sida is helping to reform companies owned by the city in order to reduce the pollution of air and water.

Novgorod region has close contacts with the Swedish county of Örebro.

Murmansk

Sida is supporting some ten projects in the region, including projects for disabled children, as well as youth clinics and programmes to prevent drug abuse. Training programmes for social workers are being run in Murmansk and Apatity. In addition, Sida has contributed to an insti- ►

CHANGING ATTITUDES ON SEX EDUCATION

■ Last year HIV/Aids increased tenfold in Russia. Tuberculosis (TB) is also spreading rapidly. The underlying cause of the spread of the diseases can be found in the same social problems - drug abuse, social exclusion and poverty.

Today HIV is mainly spread by drug addicts sharing needles but there is a great danger that the disease will also be sexually transmitted on a large scale. There are many prostitutes in Russia and the disease is rapidly being spread to new groups.

Sida's contributions to counteract HIV/Aids in Russia focus on changing attitudes through education and information. There is still very

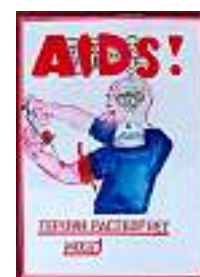
little sex education in Russian schools and talking about sex is not accepted. The Swedish Association for Sex Education has received funds from Sida for a project that is intended to improve knowledge of reproductive health, sex and social life among key groups in north-west Russia.

Sida is also financing the preventive work being done by the East Europe Committee of the Swedish Health Care Community (ÖEK) in the former Soviet Union. Among the ÖEK's projects, mention can be made of clinics for young people, programmes to make clean needles available to drug addicts, tuberculosis checks and

programmes to combat tuberculosis in prisons.

Sida is financing a major programme that focuses on inmates in seven large Russian prisons who are already infected with HIV/Aids or are at great risk of being infected. The Russian counterpart is the Ministry of Justice and the project is being implemented by Aids Foundation East-West, which cooperates with local organisations, health authorities and Aids centres.

A Sida-financed project aims at reducing the transmission of TB in Kaliningrad. The project is implemented by WHO and includes training of medical staff, educational campaigns, improved laboratory equipment etc.



Children in St Petersburg draw posters: "Heroin dissolves the brain!"

- tute of management training for women at the university in Murmansk. The development of primary care and psychiatry in the region is being supported through the East Europe Committee of the Swedish Health Care Community (ÖEK).

A number of Swedish contributions are being provided to secure Russian atomic waste in Murmansk. The projects shall improve the protection of two atomic ice-breakers, a shipyard and a scrap yard. The aim is to prevent substances being spread that can be used, for example, by international terrorists. The projects are being implemented by the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate (SKI).

Murmansk is twinned with the Swedish county of Norrbotten.

Pskov

Pskov region has more than 800 000 inhabitants. Sida is supporting the training of social workers to enable them to provide better support and services for socially vulnerable groups, including children in institutions. The chamber of commerce in Pskov is receiving support to improve its capacity to help local companies to start up business. A project is being run together with the World Wildlife Fund that has the aim of producing a model for ecological forestry in the region.

Pskov region has close ties with Dalarna in Sweden.

Karelia

The Republic of Karelia has 780 000 inhabitants. Among other things, Sida is supporting the development of a Karelian association of local authorities and training programmes for social workers in the capital city of Petrozavodsk. Support is also being given to the social sector, in cooperation with the twinned town of Umeå in Sweden, for the rehabilitation of disabled people and the elderly, for the treatment of drug addicts, and for providing assistance to vulnerable families and children.

Karelia is twinned with the Swedish county of Västerbotten.

Arkhangelsk

Archangelsk region has one and a half million inhabitants. Sida is supporting some ten projects, including the training of social workers and the development of rural areas. Women politicians and local civil servants have been trained in modern budgeting techniques. In the social field,

the contribution focuses on the rehabilitation of disabled children and support for a centre for vulnerable families and children. Arkhangelsk is twinned with the Swedish county of Västernorrland.

Moscow

Moscow and its suburbs have a population of some 15 million people. A large part of the public administration cooperation between Russia and Sweden takes place in Moscow and Sida has a programme officer stationed at the Swedish embassy there.

Sida is supporting some ten projects in Moscow in fields such as support for the media, private sector development and democracy. In the social sector, support is provided for training in social work and individual care for personnel and children at a shelter for street children. The National Swedish Association for Sexual Information is running a training programme in sexual and reproductive health together with its Russian counterpart. The target groups are young people and health care personnel.

Sida is financing several projects within the framework of direct cooperation between the Ministries of Finance in Russia and Sweden. One cooperation project has the aim of spreading experience from labour market projects. The extensive project for land survey and property registration in Russia is being coordinated in Moscow. Managers of forest agencies throughout Russia are being trained with support from Sida.

Other regions

In the republic of **Komi**, Sida is running a training project together with a forestry institute. The aim of the project is that forest companies should give greater consideration to the environment and should exploit the forest resources in a more sustainable manner.

In the **Republic of Bashkortostan**, the Swedish National Labour Market Board is working on modernising the regional labour market authority with IT support and management training.

In **Vologda**, Sida is supporting a Swedish National Labour Market Board project and the training of local officials and politicians. Sida is also providing support for the development of the social sector. Vologda has contacts with the Swedish county of Jämtland.

START-EAST

■ Small companies in Sweden that start business projects in Eastern Europe can receive preferential part-financing from Sida's Start-East programme. Loans are given to part-finance training in connection with the start of a project. The objective of the programme is to get productive and profitable activities started up as quickly as possible and to contribute to the transfer of know-how and skills to companies in the partner countries. More information on Start-East is available at www.sida/ost.se.



PHOTO: MARIA SÖDERBERG

Kaliningrad's bread factory has improved its baking technology with aid from a Swedish company.

DEMO-EAST

■ Demo-East is a Sida programme that has the aim of launching modern Swedish environmental technology in Central and Eastern Europe by part-financing investments. The purpose is to give customers (for example municipalities) in the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine and north-west Russia (including Moscow) the opportunity to test Swedish environmental and energy equipment. More detailed information on Demo-East can be found at www.sida/ost.se.



A foster family in Pskov in north-west Russia. Foster families are uncommon in Russia but are a good alternative to children's homes. In Sida's programmes of support to the social sector, social workers produce alternatives to institutional care or prison.

PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN

COMPLICATED TAX RULES

■ The tax system represents a major obstacle to development in Russia, as well as in most other countries that formed part of the Soviet Union. The tax rules are complicated and obstruct the development of the private sector. The result is that few people pay the tax they should pay and the state receives less revenue.

A Swedish contribution facilitating and spreading up development work at the tax authorities in the Republic of Karelia where some 60 persons are studying the Swedish tax administration. The project is being implemented by the tax authorities in the Swedish town of Östersund, with financing from Sida.

GREEN REVOLUTION IN RUSSIAN FORESTS

■ In a model project in north-west Russia, new, ecologically sound methods are being tested that have the aim of making the Russian forest industry more profitable and sustainable. The model forest covers 46 000 hectares of forest outside Pskov. It is being run by the World Wildlife Fund with support from Sida and Stora Enso, a Swedish forestry company. The large forests in Russia are still owned by the state. The methods currently in use make forestry unprofitable and therefore unattractive to work with.

The project includes a number of demonstration plots that show the advantages of new felling methods and of planning the forest landscape. The project is trying to stimulate the interest of the local population in forest issues with the aid of meetings and study visits. One aim is to exert an influence of Russia's forest legislation. The project will also initiate the certification of forests on the basis of international standards, which can increase Russia's forest exports.



PHOTO: ANDERS HEDLUND

Boris Romanjuk wants to interest the local population in forest management.

Democracy in focus

Compared to its neighbouring countries, Belarus is going backwards where democracy is concerned, and the restructuring of the economy and the reform process have come to a standstill. The president, Alexander Lukashenko, has strengthened his position with the aid of undemocratic methods. In the presidential elections held in 2001, he consolidated his position for a further five years.

Swedish development cooperation with Belarus started in 1994. However, due to the negative democratic and political trends in the country in recent years, it has not been possible to establish full cooperation. The EU has decided that support to the country should focus on democracy and development of civil society.

Today, Sida is working in Belarus mainly through non-governmental organisations. The contributions are intended to give Belarusians an opportunity to establish international contacts.

Forum Syd

Forum Syd is an umbrella organisation for Swedish non-governmental organisations that are engaged in international cooperation with Sida funding. Through Forum Syd, some sixty organisations have been engaged in projects together with Belarusian organisations. Forum Syd also holds courses and seminars on Belarus in Sweden.

Social work

The Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm has held training programmes in social work in Belarus. A new project with the Department of Social Work signals the start of extensive support for reforms in the social field. The project focuses on orphans and children with disabilities.

Trafficking of women

Belarus is a strategically important country for trafficking of women in Europe. Sida supports a project against trafficking in Belarus through the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). The project aims at building net-

works with neighbouring countries and raising the awareness among the police and the judiciary. Together with local NGOs a system for rehabilitation of trafficking victims is created.

Business Associations

Small and medium business in Belarus is facing a lot of problems and have difficulties to promote their common interest. In cooperation with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Sida is supporting five local business associations in different regions.

Mass media

Support for the mass media is important in countries with authoritarian regimes. For several years Sida has supported the training of Belarussian journalists and a legal counselling centre for editors and reporters.

Local self-government

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities is running a project for local democracy in Belarus, which includes study visits to Sweden for local politicians and further education programmes for local government officers.

For reform-oriented municipalities, there is the possibility of in-depth twinning cooperation with Swedish municipalities. One project supports the establishment of a Belarussian association of local authorities.

Other programmes

A master's degree programme in real estate technology at the University in Novopolotsk is being implemented by the Royal College of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm.

The project being run by the Swedish National Environmental Protection Agency in respect of transboundary water courses also includes Belarus, as does a project being run by the Swedish Immigration Board in the migration field.

Some 2 000 students are participating in the Baltic University Programme – an exchange programme for universities coordinated by Uppsala university.



BELARUS

Capital city:
Minsk

Population:
10.2 million

Life expectancy:
71.5 years (1970)
68.5 years (1999)

GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 6 876 (1998)

Change in GNP:
-1.6 per cent (1990–2000)

The prisons in the former Soviet Union are overcrowded and diseases such as HIV/Aids and tuberculosis are spread rapidly. Sida is supporting projects that have the aim of finding alternatives to prison for young people.



PHOTO: © JOHN RAVARD



Belarus has gone backwards on the road to democracy and market economy. The work on reforms has come to a standstill. It has not been possible for Sweden to establish full-scale cooperation with Belarus. Sida's support focuses on developing the civil society.

PHOTO: VLADIMIR BAZAN

TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRISON

■ At Lebedeva prison in St Petersburg, 3 400 persons, including 500 children, are being held in custody, crowded together in an area intended for a quarter of their number. They are locked in their cells 21 hours each day.

In this unhealthy environment, tuberculosis and HIV/Aids are easily spread. On average, the young people remain in custody for a year before the investigations into their cases are finalised. But the boys often receive sentences that are shorter than the time they have spent in prison and they are then released, but without any assistance. Many of these young people come from broken families, and they have no one to help them, to give them food or

clothes. The result is that most of them are soon back in Lebedeva once again, for new crimes. If social workers could make thorough studies of their situation, it could be possible to give them the support they need, for example to enable them to start school again.

A project is started, financed by Sida, for training of social workers and judges working in the courts in St Petersburg. The objective is to find alternatives to sending boys to prison. The project is being implemented by the Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm and has the aim of introducing a Swedish model, adapted to Russian legislation.

In Archangelsk, there is a similar project in which the Swedish National Police Board is working with new methods to prevent drug-associated crimes and to find alternatives to youth prisons.

In Ukraine, Sida is supporting the work being done by the Council of Europe to reform correctional care. Ukraine's prisons are also overcrowded. A programme of cooperation between Sweden and Ukraine has the aim of introducing alternatives to prison. With the aid of study visits to Sweden, personnel in the correctional treatment service learn about different forms of care, for example probation, rehabilitation of young offenders and community service.



On a cold winter's day when children are playing in Gatchina's public swimming baths it's easy to see how much water means in our lives.

Gatchina is a model town for

It is easy to understand how important water is in the lives of people living in Gatchina, just by looking at the children in Gatchina's swimming baths on a cold winter day. Gatchina's water company is now being transformed to enable it to bear its own costs and to provide better service.

Gatchina, just south of St Petersburg, is a pioneering town. As a result of innovations and with external impulses and support, not least from Sweden, Gatchina was recently selected as Russia's best-run town.

With the aid of Sweden, Gatchina is in the process of reorganising its energy system. Increases in tariffs and modern equipment have already had the effect that water

and heating, which previously consumed over half of the town's budget, only account for 17 per cent of expenditure today.

"By reducing costs in the energy sector, we can invest more in the social field," says the mayor, Stanislav Bogdanov.

However, in Russia today public subsidies are no longer provided for water. Consumers must start to pay for their water, but it is difficult for the town council to increase tariffs too fast without people being seriously affected, which leads to protests.

Gatchina's water company is now being transformed on the basis of Swedish models so that it can charge fees for its services, bear its own costs and, at the same time,



for lives. Gatchina's water company is now being transformed to enable it to bear its own costs and to provide better service.

PHOTO: ANDERS GUNNARTZ

for all Russia

improve the services it provides.

Sida has assisted in reforming Gatchina's municipal energy company and introducing new ways of thinking. Swedish consultants and Swedish technology, together with impressions gained in Gatchina's twinned town in Sweden, Eskilstuna, have inspired the introduction of an energy-saving system. Gatchina is the first Russian town to install modern Swedish district heating pipes with the aid of the latest technology, which minimises leakages.

With the aid of Sweden, local district heating centres are being installed in Gatchina. These centres will ensure that the heating supplied to the apartments is better adjusted to meet prevailing needs and to reduce wastefulness.

Gatchina has also made considerable progress in the field of health care. A primary health care system has been introduced that is based on family doctors. This represents a complete break with the former system. It has been done with the aid of examples from a Swedish county council (Gävleborg), which also helped to train staff. The system is being spread from Gatchina to other parts of north-west Russia.

Young people in Gatchina know more about sex than many other young people in Russia. With inspiration from Sweden the town has built a centre where young people can come for education and counselling in all matters that concern sex, sexually transmitted diseases and drugs.

Collective farm workers are now farm owners

Since Ukraine became independent in 1991, the country has struggled with severe economic and social problems but, in recent years, a change has taken place. The reform process has made progress and has given concrete results.

Swedish development cooperation with Ukraine started in 1995. Sida has a member of staff stationed at the Swedish embassy in Kiev.

Agriculture

Ukraine has considerable agricultural potential. During the Soviet era, all agriculture was owned by the state. Now a change is taking place that has the effect that many questions relating to ownership, production methods and organisation must be solved.

Swedish support for agriculture consists of two projects. One is in the southern part of Ukraine and is being run by Scanagri, the consulting organisation of the Federation of Swedish Farmers. A number of farmers are being trained in new agricultural methods. They are also trained in marketing and environmental issues, primarily in efficient use of water. They sell their products on the open market and to a Swedish-owned company in the vicinity – Tjumak. The project includes farmers from Gammalsvenskby, a village where some of the villagers are of Swedish descent.

The other project concerns agricultural issues at the national level, for example policies, legislation, education, institutional cooperation, credits etc.

Energy and the environment

Sida is supporting a project that has the aim of reducing the consumption of energy in public buildings in Kiev. Sida is also participating in the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant in Lviv, in western Ukraine. Wastewater from Lviv eventually reaches the Baltic Sea.

Sida is financing a project for the economical use of water in the lower part of the River Dnieper. The objective is to make the use of water more efficient and to reduce erosion. The computer model for water use that has been produced in the project will now be used in all parts of the River Dnieper.

The National Board of Forestry and a consultant, Scandiakonsult, are working together with the governmental forestry committee in Ukraine to develop the country's forest sector with the objective that the sector should bear its own costs.

Public administration

The public administration in Ukraine is over-dimensioned. Extensive reforms are now being implemented at central and regional level in a programme in which a Swedish consulting firm, Sipu, is providing assistance. Sida is also supporting a programme of cooperation between Statistics Sweden and the statistical agency in Ukraine.

A Sida-supported training programme for social workers is now being followed by a programme that focuses on vulnerable children and children with disabilities living in institutions. Street children and problems associated with alcohol, drugs and tobacco are also included in the programme.

Ukraine is a country with long borders. The National Police Board is helping to improve the country's capacity to detect false documents at border controls.

Valentina Matjenko is one of the farmers participating in the Sida-financed agricultural project in southern Ukraine. Her production of vegetables has doubled with the aid of new methods.



UKRAINE

Capital city:
Kiev

Population:
50 million

Life expectancy:
70.1 years (1970)
68.1 years (1999)

GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 3 458 (1999)

Change in GNP:
-9.3 per cent (1990–2000)



Fashions for women at the trade fair in Kiev.

PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

THE WOMEN OF KIEV DEMONSTRATES THEIR CREATIVE POWER

■ One of the purposes of the trade fair for women, which was held in Kiev in the autumn of 2001, was to demonstrate the creative powers and enterprising spirit of women.

The organisation responsible for the fair was the Olga project, named after a queen of Ukraine. Olga works with seminars and management training. The idea is that women should strengthen their positions through cooperating with each other and building networks. The project, which is led by a Swedish consulting group, Språngbrådan (The Springboard), trains

and supports women candidates for Parliament. Språngbrådan also works in other countries with the aim of getting more women into politics.

Sida-supported projects with the specific aim of strengthening the role of women are being run in several places in Eastern Europe. In St Petersburg and Murmansk there are institutes that train women leaders in industry and politics. In St Petersburg the institute cooperates with the Swedish county of Sörmland, and in Murmansk with Centec at Luleå University of Technology.



PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

ENTERPRISING WOMEN AMONG THE TARTARS

■ In the throng of people at the market in Bakhtisaraj, Alieva Leniye sells shoes that she buys in Odessa. She has just obtained a credit of USD 400 from the UNDP's credit programme for the Crimea, a credit programme that is partly financed by Sweden.

"I must buy large quantities to make a profit," says Alieva. "Without the credit I could not afford to buy as much as I need to make a profit."

"The banks do not provide small loans like this," she says, "and if you go to private lenders they want 35 per cent inter-

est per month. Now I am paying 2.5 per cent."

Alieva is a Tartar who was born in Uzbekistan but has returned with her family to the Crimea. Her husband is an invalid and she has two children to support.

The fate of the Tartars in the Crimea was one of the many tragedies of the Stalin era. On one day, May 18, 1944, 200 000 Crimean Tartars were packed into railway wagons and transported to camps in Central Asia. Many died during the transport. This was Stalin's revenge for their alleged cooperation with the Germans.

But the Crimean Tartars never gave up their hope of returning to the Crimea. Their return has taken place in a largely unplanned manner and with limited support.

Therefore, the UNDP is running a programme that has the aim of improving conditions for those who have returned and of reducing tensions between the resident population of Russians and Ukrainians.

Sweden is mainly supporting that part of the programme that helps small-scale entrepreneurs.



PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

Thanks to a credit, Alieva Leniye can earn money by selling shoes.

Slow pace of reform in poor Moldova

Since gaining independence in 1991, Moldova has sunk into a deep economic crisis and is now the poorest country in Europe. The country has been severely affected by a civil conflict and by a steady deterioration in its terms of trade. Since the Communist party won the election in 2001, the reform process has come to a standstill and development cooperation is making slow progress.

Swedish development cooperation with Moldova started in 1996. Sida mainly works with ministries and government agencies. Sida has an office in Chisinau and a member of staff stationed there.

Democracy and the social sector

Swedish support for democracy and the public administration focuses on areas that backs the reform process, democratic development and respect for human rights. A Swedish consulting firm, Sipu, is implementing a project that trains mayors in budget management. The project has been extended into a local development project covering several sectors.

Sida has a far-reaching programme of cooperation with the supreme audit institution in Moldova with the objective of strengthening controls in the public administration. Statistics Sweden is also helping to develop the country's statistics. To reduce the widespread unemployment and to make the labour market more effective, a firm of Swedish consultants, Lernia, is running a programme for vocational training. The Swedish National Labour Market Board is working to develop the labour market and the employment offices.

Support to the social sector focuses on building up a social service system and on training social workers and decision-makers, as well as on providing practical vocational training directly in the institutions. One of the results is that the care of disabled and vulnerable children has improved.

Sida and the World Bank are supporting a social investment fund that, among other things, has financed the renovation of thirteen schools.

A Sida-supported project to combat tuberculosis and HIV/Aids is also intended to contribute to the production of a national health policy.

Private sector, infrastructure and agriculture

One project aims at improving the road network in the country and another at developing small and medium-size enterprises.

With Swedish assistance, a strategy has been produced that has the aim of improving Moldova's heating supply, which is of very low standard. A local heating plant has been built in a model project, and Sida plans to support more heating plants. In addition to this, there is a training programme for local politicians in the efficient use of energy in government institutions and buildings.

Debt management

Moldova's debt burden is considerable and Sweden is providing support in the form of advisers to the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. The result of this support has been a favourable outcome in several negotiations and a reduction of 10 per cent in Moldova's foreign debt.



MOLDOVA

Capital city:
Chisinau

Population:
4.3 million

Life expectancy:
64.8 years (1970)
66.6 years (1999)

GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 037 (1999)

Change in GNP:
-9.7 per cent (1990-2000)

TRAFFICKING IS A MAJOR PROBLEM IN MOLDOVA

■ Trafficking of Human Beings is a major problem in many countries in eastern Europe. Young vulnerable women are sold as sex slaves in the Balkans or in western Europe. They don't earn any money and are treated very badly. If they return home they are physically and mentally hurt and, not seldom, infected by HIV/Aids.

Many of the women and children caught up in the European sex trade come from Moldova. Governments and the authorities are aware of the trafficking problem but lack the energy, resources and knowledge to take action. Several organisations are working to prevent trafficking, for example the International Organization

for Migration (IOM), UNDP, La Strada and local organisations in the countries, for example Save the Children.

Sida is mainly working with IOM. In Moldova this work refers to legislation and the institution of legal proceedings, training of professional groups such as the police and social workers, and information and campaign work.

IOM is also working to protect and support women who have been victims of trafficking and have returned home. Sida is also supporting IOM's programmes in Ukraine and Belarus. Support is mainly provided for the rehabilitation and readjustment of women and children

who have been victims of trafficking.

In Kazakhstan, Sida is supporting IOM's work of raising awareness of the risks of taking a job in the West. It is trying to kill the myth that money is easily earned by providing information about the real conditions that await people there.

The project mainly focuses on preventive activities and includes an information campaign, hotlines (telephone numbers people can call for help), training of voluntary organisations and support to amend the legislation.



The Moldovan economy has declined steadily since independence and the country is now the poorest in Europe. Many people try to earn a living by selling things at the market. Sida's support to the country includes improving social care and debt management.

PHOTO: ROBERT BLOMBÄCK

MAKING BETTER USE OF SMALL RESOURCES

■ "Sometimes we are forced to use our own money to cook food for hungry pensioners," says Tatiana Grebineca who is the head of the social department at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour Market and is responsible for the home-help service in Moldova.

In this context it should be pointed out that home help personnel earn just over USD 10 per month. Four fifths of the inhabitants of Moldova live on less than USD 20 per month and most of the country's old people have a pension of six US-dollars per month.

Tatiana Grebineca and other supervisors in the home help services have visited Sweden to study

and learn from Swedish experience. Did the visit give any results?

"We have organised our personnel in such a way that we are making better use of our resources now," she says.

Previously there was a rigid system. Care was based on pensioner categories. Now individual pensioners are in focus and home visits are made to those people who need them most.

"It may sound trivial but for us it is a major change. We are more efficient now and our work feels more meaningful," says Tatiana.



PHOTO: ANDERS HEDLUND

"We are making better use of our resources," says Tatiana Grebineca.

Peace is fundamental



GEORGIA

Capital city:
Tbilisi
Population:
5.3 million
Life expectancy:
69.2 years (1970)
72.7 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 431 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-9.3 per cent (1990–2000)



ARMENIA

Capital city:
Yerevan
Population:
3.8 million
Life expectancy:
72.5 years (1970)
72.4 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 215 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-1.9 per cent (1990–2000)



AZERBAIJAN

Capital city:
Baku
Population:
8 million
Life expectancy:
69 years (1970)
71 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 850 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-6.3 per cent
(1990–2000)

The southern Caucasus has the potential to develop into an important trade corridor between Europe and Asia. In parts of the region there are also considerable energy resources waiting to be tapped. At the same time there is political instability – a consequence of ongoing and latent armed conflicts in the region. Finding solutions to the problems of poverty, conflicts and political instability is of critical importance for future development.

There is a clear ambition, above all on the part of Georgia, for integration with Europe.

In the southern Caucasus, Sida is working with transfer of knowledge in support of democratic and economic reform processes, and support for human rights. Contributions are also provided in the social sector and the environmental field.

The support is mostly limited to Georgia where the potential for meaningful work is assessed as good. Hitherto, no bilateral cooperation has been started with Azerbaijan but this country is included in regional contributions.

Georgia

Supporting democracy is the most important objective of Swedish development cooperation with Georgia. After study visits to Sweden, the Georgian Parliament has now been opened up to the public and has obtained access to the Internet.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities is running a pilot project for local democracy that includes support for legislation. The Raoul Wallenberg Institute is helping to strengthen the Georgian Ombudsman Institute.

Social sector

Sida is supporting the reform of the Georgian health care system through extensive training programmes in the fields of primary care and public health. A firm of consultants, Swedish Health Care, is cooperating with the Ministry of Health in Georgia. Sida is planning contributions that will produce alternatives to institutional care for children with disabilities.

There is widespread unemployment in Georgia and the labour market does not function properly. The Swe-

dish National Labour Market Board (AMS) is cooperating with its counterpart in Georgia to improve the organisation and methods of the employment offices. A Swedish organisation, Kvinna till Kvinna (Woman to Woman), receives Sida-funding to support women's organisations in Georgia.

Economic transition

With the aim of facilitating privatisation, Sida is supporting the development of land survey and property registration. A training centre has been established at which everyone working with land survey can be given training.

A dairy project has the aim of helping small dairy farmers to sell their products.

Armenia

The Swedish National Labour Market Board has a project in Armenia which is similar to the project in Georgia. The project also works with facilitating the entry of disabled persons on the labour market.

In connection with a major World Bank initiative, the Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm is training social workers in three pilot municipalities. The aim is to develop alternatives to institutional care.

Sida is also supporting a World Bank project for sustainable forestry, in order to increase the contribution of forestry to the country's economy in an environment-friendly way. Support to the land survey sector consists, as in Georgia, of training programmes.

Regional contributions

Regional contributions in the southern Caucasus are important – an increase in contacts between the three countries can hopefully reduce the risk of conflicts. Sida has supported a cooperation project on statistics which is being implemented by Statistics Sweden and the statistical agencies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

A major project in the field of civil aviation, with a Swedish company, Swedavia, as the Swedish partner, has the aim of creating a common base of knowledge, harmonising legislation and developing a civil aviation organisation that complies with international standards.



PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

In Georgia there are many cows, but Georgians do not drink enough milk. Now this will change.

MORE AND BETTER MILK FOR GEORGIANS

■ There are many cows in Georgia, but the production of milk is small and there are very few dairies. Therefore Georgians do not drink enough milk, and the milk sold on the streets in the capital city of Tbilisi is not pasteurised and often contains too many bacteria.

Sida is therefore financing a project that has the aim of supplying Tbilisi with good quality milk and other milk products and, at the same time, supporting the small-scale farmers in the country. The project is being run by Scanagri, a Swedish company owned by the Swedish

Farmers Union, together with a Swedish company, Tetra Laval, and a private Georgian company. A number of dairy farmers have been trained and a distribution network to bring the milk to Tbilisi has been established. The milk is packed in a newly built modern dairy and will keep for up to six months, even without a refrigerator. At the same time, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, a campaign is recommending people to drink more milk.



FOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

Aleski and Marta are both over 100 years old. They live in Stalin Road in the town of Hasanoaori in Georgia, Stalin's home country. Like many people in Georgia, they long for a return to the Soviet era. "We lived well then, everything was in good order," they say. Meanwhile, Georgia is seeing integration with Europe.

PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIJERSTAM

SOCIAL WORKERS WORK WITH FAMILIES

■ In Armenia, as in all the countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, a growing number of children are ending up in children's homes when their families break down as a result of the financial situation. The only alternative available today is to send the children to children's homes, despite the fact that there is a growing awareness that children growing up in institutions have considerable problems in coping later on in life.

Sida is supporting a project that has the aim of making it possible for children in children's homes to return to their families. Social workers will be trained in assisting families so that they can take care of their children once again. Three pilot projects are taking place with the goal of enabling one hundred children to return home. The idea is that experience gained in these projects shall be spread throughout Armenia. The Department of Social Work at the University of Stockholm is responsible for the Swedish contribution.



PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN

Social workers at the children's home in Alavi who are being trained in a project supported by Sweden. They are learning to help children return to their families.

**KAZAKHSTAN**

Capital city:
Astana
Population:
16.3 million
Life expectancy:
64.4 years (1970)
64.1 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 4 951 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-4.1 per cent (1990–2000)

**KYRGYZSTAN**

Capital city:
Bishkek
Population:
4.8 million
Life expectancy:
63.1 years (1970)
66.9 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 573 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-4.1 per cent (1990–2000)

**UZBEKISTAN**

Capital city:
Tashkent
Population:
24.5 million
Life expectancy:
64.2 years (1970)
68.3 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 2 994 (1999)
Change in GNP:
-0.5 per cent (1990–2000)

**TURKMENISTAN**

Capital city:
Ashgabat
Population:
4.6 million
Life expectancy:
60.7 years (1970)
65.4 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 3 347 (1998)
Change in GNP:
-4.8 per cent (1990–2000)

**TAJIKISTAN**

Capital city:
Dushanbe
Population:
6 million
Life expectancy:
63.4 years (1970)
67.2 years (1999)
GNP per capita (PPP):
USD 1 031 (1998)
Change in GNP:
-10.4 per cent (1990–2000)

Strategic region struggling for water

Central Asia is a heterogeneous region on the outskirts of the former Soviet Union. The five countries declared their independence at approximately the same time in 1991, in connection with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Central Asia is an unstable region and democracy has made little progress, particularly in some of the states.

There is a lack of water and disagreement on how water should be used. Drinking water is a problem in large areas. It has proved difficult to conclude essential inter-governmental agreements on water use and management. There are natural resources in the form of oil and gas but they have not led to an upswing in the economy. The extensive traffic in drugs from Afghanistan and Pakistan has contributed to undermining the rule of law.

Border conflicts and poverty

There are several unsolved border conflicts in the region and, particularly in the densely populated Fergana valley, the inefficient and lengthy border controls create irritation and obstruct trade. There is considerable unemployment and militant Islamic movements are active in taking advantage of the situation.

Poverty is widespread and, in Kyrgyzstan for example, it is estimated that over half of the population live below the poverty line.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan has been severely affected by drought, and this still has an effect on agriculture. Sida has made humanita-

rian contributions, for example for veterinary clinics and for the distribution of seed.

Through the FAO, Sida is helping demobilised soldiers from the civil war to take up farming again.

Kyrgyzstan

In cooperation with the UNDP, Sida is providing support for the production of a strategy for the reform of the public administration. Support is being given to local NOGs in the social sector. Swedesurvey has been engaged in a World Bank project for property registration. Språngbrädan (The Springboard) is implementing a project to promote participation of women in politics.

A Swedish firm of consultants, Lunconsult, has trained social workers working with vulnerable children, and the Institute for Further Education of Journalists at the University of Kalmar (FOJO) is training journalists. As in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Sida is co-financing a statistics project with the EU's development cooperation programme, Tacis.

Kazakhstan

Cooperation focuses on democratic development of society. A contribution to support women parliamentarians and businesswomen is being run with Språngbrädan as the Swedish partner. In the vulnerable regions of Kyzyl-Orda at the Aral Sea and the Semey region in eastern Kazakhstan, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities is working to increase the participation of women in local politics and to strengthen local self-government.



PHOTO: JULIE GRABER

This fishing boat is lying on what was once the bottom of the Aral Sea. The shoreline has advanced 100 kilometres.

A NATURAL DISASTER

■ The Aral Sea has dried up. This and the problems it has caused are described as one of the greatest natural disasters the world has seen. One of the main reasons behind this situation is the water-intensive cultivation of cotton in the region, which has lowered the groundwater level and reduced the surface area of the Aral Sea to a fifth of what it once was.

Restoring the Aral Sea to its former size is, in practice, impossible. Today, far too many people are dependent for their survival on using the rivers flowing into the Aral Sea for irrigation purposes. What could be done, if the political will existed, is to plant crops which require less



Central Asia is a mixture of developed and under-developed, of rich and poor, east and west, and of modern and traditional. PHOTO: TORGNY HINNEMO

water and to make irrigation more efficient. However, the income from crops of this type is not as high as from cotton.

Today forms of regional cooperation on water issues exist, but attempts to reach the necessary political agreement have met with opposition, despite the fact that all the major donors have concentrated their efforts in the Aral Sea Basin Program.

The drying up of the Aral Sea has had grave consequences for health and the environment in the region. Sida is financing contributions linked to the Aral Sea in all five Central Asian republics. The health and environmental contri-

butions mostly refer to Uzbekistan.

Since 1998, Sida has supported Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), who introduced the Dots method recommended by the WHO to reduce the spread of tuberculosis. The method has been introduced in the regular health care services in the countries around the Aral Sea. The contribution also includes combating the most common children's diseases.

With Swedish financing, the World Bank is implementing a dam safety project which has the aim of promoting efficiency in the use of water and producing a strategy for ten dams in the Aral Sea basin and Lake Sarez in Tajikistan.



PHOTO: JULIE GRABER

The drying up of the Aral Sea has contributed to the spread of diseases. New methods for the treatment of tuberculosis have been introduced in the medical services in the countries around the Aral Sea.

Rapid increase in poverty

After the fall of the Soviet Union, real wages in the area have diminished considerably and income gaps have widened. Today it is estimated that every fifth person living in Eastern Europe is forced to live under the official poverty line of USD 2 per day. In Russia alone there are 30 million poor people.

Four groups of households run the greatest risk of becoming poor: households led by persons with a low level of education, by the unemployed or by single mothers, and households with many children. Even people living in rural areas, in certain geographical areas and ethnic minorities, particularly the Romany people, are severely affected.

The largest proportions of poor people are to be found among children and middle-aged women. Being poor can mean that children cannot go to school - the family cannot afford it or the child is obliged to work to earn money.

Poor today but not ten years ago

Poverty has arrived rapidly in Eastern Europe. Those who are poor today were not poor ten years ago. Then they had a certain degree of security and could hope to get a pension.

At the same time the programmes provided by the state in the form of social help or other forms of support are extremely inefficient. In Russia only 20 per cent of the public transfers reach the poor, compared with 50 per cent in the EU.

Earlier, many regarded poverty in Eastern Europe as a transitional phenomenon. But there is a danger that there will be a large group of permanently poor in the region.

However, the pattern is not the same throughout the entire region. The countries that are the most severely affected are Moldova and Armenia, with over 40 per cent of their population under the poverty line, and the central Asian republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

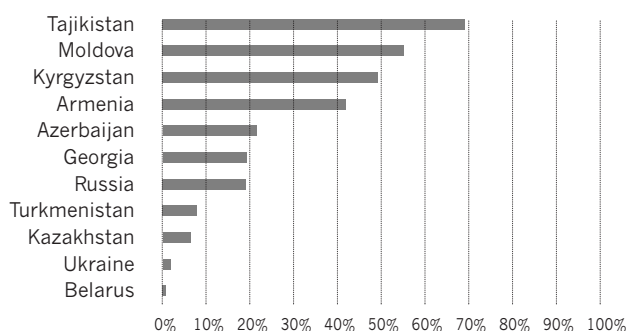
A number of factors have caused many of the countries in Eastern Europe to fall so rapidly into poverty. The exceedingly slow pace of economic reforms is one reason. At the same time the main market for the countries, the Soviet Union, disappeared with its dissolution. It has been very difficult to find new markets since the countries had few contacts and the quality of the goods they produced were often not good enough to interest the EU, for example. Trade barriers and the protection of the agricultural sector in the EU also represent obstacles to exports from countries in Eastern Europe.

Difficult to attack the problem

In many countries the production apparatus was run down and a great deal of money was required to keep it going. When the transition from collective to private ownership of the means of production took place, many people became unemployed. Some countries became involved in costly wars which led to large groups of refugees. The states are weak and their tax revenues are low. Today, several of the countries do not have control over parts of their territories. This creates a breeding ground for smuggling and international crime. In addition, there is the extensive corruption which permeates societies from top to bottom.

The governments of the countries in the former Soviet Union are aware of the poverty situation and are trying to attack the problem in different ways. However, their capacity is limited. Some of the states are participating in an initiative led by the World Bank to produce strategies for all sectors to combat poverty. Many donors, including Sweden, are participating in this work and their support is being based on the strategies produced by the governments.

SO MANY PEOPLE LIVE BENEATH THE POVERTY LINE



LAND SURVEY MAKES LAND REFORM POSSIBLE

■ Sweden has supported land survey and property registration in Central and Eastern Europe since 1991, when the Soviet Union still existed but the reform process had started.

A pilot project was started in Novgorod in 1993, with Swedish support. This eventually became a model throughout Russia. Support for land survey in Ukraine was started in 1995 and today Sida is also supporting land survey in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

Land survey has become a profile sector in Sweden's cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. It is a long-term process that has a considerable impact in many areas, for example land reform, banking systems, town planning and the environment.

The projects are being run by the Swedish Land Survey's international consulting company, Swedesurvey, usually in cooperation with the World Bank. Today, in the project in Georgia, Swedesurvey uses former students from Lithuania.



Land survey is an important part of the cooperation.

PHOTO: MARIA SÖDERBERG



There is widespread poverty in Eastern Europe. There are many reasons for this, including wars and ethnic conflicts. Here is a woman in Tchingvale, the capital of the secessionist republic of South Ossetia in Georgia.

PHOTO: BENGT AF GEIERSTAM

SIDA COURSES

■ Sida finances courses in Sweden for participants from Central and Eastern Europe, Moldova, Caucasus and Central Asia in subjects such as democracy, health, the environment, energy and agriculture. Moldova, Caucasus and Central Asia also have access to a number of other courses that are included in Sida's international training programmes.

With the aid of funds from Sida, the Swedish Institute is administering a scholarship programme for higher studies in Sweden for Moldova and the countries in southern Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as a higher education co-operation programme for Moldova and Georgia.

PHOTO: MATS SUNDGREN



Elena Lamanova has attended a course for journalists in Sweden.

"WE HAVE LEARNT TO BE MORE PERSISTENT"

■ "For me, the strongest impression I gained from the course was how the principle of public access to official records is used in Sweden. My colleagues and I have now become more persistent when we want information."

This is the opinion of Elena Lamanova, a news editor at a local TV station in Ukraine. She participated in a course on journalism arranged by the Institute for Further Education of Journalists at the University of Kalmar (FOJO) on behalf of Sida. Elena spent a week at different editorial offices in Sweden and was impressed by the way in which the news was presented.

"Today I try to get the news nearer the people. Previously I didn't care very much if the viewers understood what I said or not."

Since 1993, FOJO has held 120 courses in Eastern Europe, most financed by Sida. In total 1 700 journalists have participated. The courses take up a large number of subjects, from covering the economy to reporting on HIV/Aids, from social issues to the environment.



A burdensome inheritance. When the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, the new states moved in different directions. Some have been accepted as members of the EU. Others have sunk into deep poverty and conflicts. Sweden, through Sida, is supporting the efforts being made by the new states to reform and develop their societies.

This brochure takes up Swedish cooperation with countries in the former Soviet Union, with the exception of the Baltic States.



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