

IN BRIEF...

Urban development

Almost one billion of the world's poor live in inadequate housing in urban slums, and as cities continue to grow, the problem becomes worse. However, urban expansion is not in itself an obstacle to development. Towns and cities are important cogs in the machinery of business and commerce, and it is here where the best part of economic growth is generated. One important mission for development cooperation is to help improve living conditions for the urban poor.

Why does Sweden support urban development?

Joseph Ngoro has every reason to be worried. He is unemployed and has trouble scraping enough money together to pay his rent (about SEK 100 a month) and all his other costs – food, water, school books...

Joseph and his two daughters live in Kibera, a shanty town of about a million people in Nairobi. The residents of Kibera are not allowed to build permanent houses, and so they live in shacks made of clay, wooden poles and sheet metal. Joseph's home, which lacks electricity, water and a toilet, covers about 2.5 square metres. He often chooses to sleep out in the street so that his children can be left in relative comfort. Joseph has no idea how long he can remain since he has no contract, only a verbal agreement with his landlord. Yet in some ways Joseph is lucky: his children have survived the first five years of childhood. Child mortality rates in Kibera are generally much higher than elsewhere in rural Kenya.

The lack of water and sanitation is one of the main reasons for such serious

health problems. Cholera, diarrhoea and typhoid are common diseases in slums like Kibera, a situation that has only been exacerbated by the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The problems with which Joseph has to struggle reflect the many faces of poverty and the day-to-day reality that he shares with hundreds of millions of other people. An estimated 70 per cent of the urban populations of the least developed countries live in slums, where houses lack what would be considered self-evident in richer areas and where infrastructure, such as roads, communications and street lighting, is woefully substandard.

As the towns and cities grow, so do the problems, and if current trends continue, urban areas will see their numbers swell by two billion within the next 25 years.

However, urbanisation is a natural consequence of economic growth, and it is here where much of a country's GDP is generated. Moreover, in the future, towns and cities are expected to have an even great part to play in economic growth. But productivity

could be so much higher and urban contributions to development so much greater if the problems dogging the slums and shanty towns were tackled properly.

In working with such urban problems, Sida helps to combat poverty, stimulate economic growth, and create better health, cleaner environments, and greater democracy. Sida's overall goal is to contribute to cities where all the inhabitants are able to improve their life conditions, and thereby to help bring about national development. In 2005, Sida put SEK 1.2 billion into urban development, much of which went to projects designed to improve the environment.

The Millennium Goals—a joint commitment

Sida's work is based on the Millennium Goals, a pledge by the world's countries to unite to cut world poverty by half by 2015. One of the subsidiary goals is about improving the living conditions of at least 100 million residents of slum areas by 2020 and giving many more people access to clean water and better sanitation. Sida's contributions to environmental improvement in towns and cities also lead to better health – another of the Millennium Goals.

Sida's policy for urban development is also based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The target group for work in this area includes people like Joseph and, perhaps more importantly, poor women and children, who are often more disadvantaged.

What does Sweden do to promote urban development?

In developing countries today, there is already a lack of the resources, and often the political will, needed to provide their urban poor with even the most rudimentary services. What will it be like for the estimated two billion people who will be joining them in the coming 25 years?

Sida works with urban issues at a global, regional, national, and local level, and has opted to concentrate on:

- Urban development
- Infrastructure and local services
- Land and housing
- Environmental sustainability

Urban development

Many problems can be avoided with better residential planning and infrastructure, especially with the involvement of the people concerned. Sida is working to improve democracy, respect for human rights, and urban environments, primarily in conjunction with the local authorities. This often involves giving support to capacity development as regards town planning, a process in which local participation is of the utmost importance. Sida is also helping to improve the coordination of different national and local development plans.

- Sida has contributed to the introduction of better local planning in cities around Lake Victoria in east Africa. A broader development philosophy has been brought to traditional physical planning, which has increased the flow of resources to underprivileged areas and to problems prioritised by local people.
- In the past few years, Kosovo has experienced a building boom,

and its towns and cities are mushrooming. As the authorities are unable to handle the planning and regulation of such rapid growth, Sida is in place advising local councils on integrated town planning.

Infrastructure and local services

Effective urban infrastructure, such as roads, sanitation and waste management, is essential. Sida supports projects that give more poor people access to local services at a reasonable cost.

- In Africa, Sida is supporting the Water Utility Partnership, a global network that runs a regional capacity and know-how programme for municipal water companies. The goal is to reform and streamline water and sanitation services.
- The Indian government has an ambitious reform programme for decentralisation and urban development. Sida is supporting their efforts through the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme, which is targeted at services for slum residents.

Land and housing

A common problem of slum areas is who owns the land and/or the homes. Sida gives support to property register projects, to the development of clearer rules for the acquisition of land and to projects dealing with land issues from a rights and gender perspective.

Poor people wanting to improve their homes or build new houses usually need small loans, but financial services are often hard to come by as banks refuse to lend money to them.

- The housing programmes supported by Sida in Central America offer small home-improvement or building

loans to poor families. At the end of 2005, some 95,000 families had benefited from the programme.

- Land rights are a hot political issue in Kenya, since so many people are affected by questions of ownership, particularly in the many urban slum areas. Sida supports different public bodies and the civil society in their efforts to improve access to land and homes, and to set up a national property register.

Environmental sustainability

Many of Sida's urban development projects concern the environment, whether it be improving the sorting of waste, reducing exhaust fumes, or preserving and using the countries' cultural environments.

Sida also supports partner countries in their efforts to live up to international environmental protection agreements.

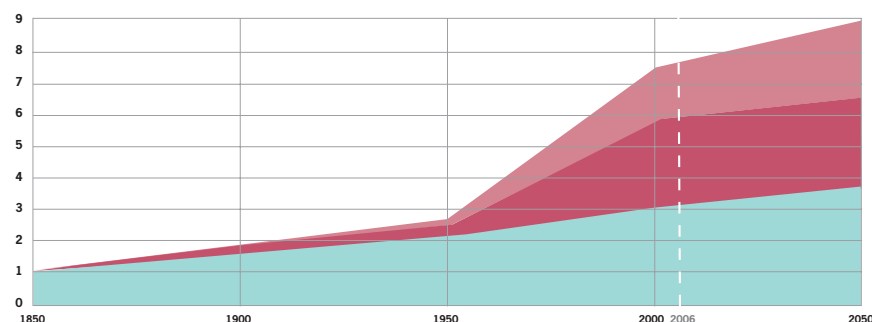
- When a new water treatment plant was commissioned outside St Petersburg in 2005 with the support of Sida, the volume of untreated sewage water pouring into the Baltic Sea was halved.
- Traffic is a major environmental and health problem in Southeast Asia. Sida is working together with the Asian Development Bank on the "Sustainable Urban Mobility in Asia" project to help reduce emissions and improve road safety through the introduction of new transport systems and other such programmes.

An extensive urban development programme

The above examples are just a taste of what Sida is doing to help growing urban populations. Read more on www.sida.se/urban.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM 1850–2050 (forecast)

Of the world's 8.9 billion or so people, some 5.5 billion are projected to be living in cities by 2050. Unless some radical changes are made, about 40 per cent of the urban population (2.2 billion people) will end up living in slum areas.



Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



Sida

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