



IN BRIEF...

Cultural funds

In Tanzania, Vietnam and South Africa, parts of Sweden's cultural support are channelled through national cultural funds. These funds coordinate the support and enable even small projects to apply for grants.

Decisions in the cultural funds are taken close to the stakeholders. This provides local backing and the assurance that funds will be distributed in each country's own interests and help to build local capacity. It permits more knowledgeable assessment of support applicants, and enables more initiatives and forms of culture to be included than would be the case if all

decisions were taken in Sweden. Cultural funds can also mould public opinion and strengthen the position of culture in society.

Vietnam

Vietnam's first cultural fund started in 1992, following an agreement between Vietnam's Ministry of Culture and Information and Sida. More than

a thousand cultural projects owe their existence to this fund. The sums provided are usually small — on average, less than SEK 10,000 — but value for money is considerable: hundreds of art exhibitions have been held, cultural heritage has been preserved, works in minority languages have been published and so forth.

From the start, the fund has served both to preserve traditional culture and to promote innovative activity.

Some results of the fund's work:

- Dai Bi (Great Compassion) Pagoda, dating from the 3rd or

PHOTO: THE TANZANIA CULTURE TRUST FUND, LILLEMOR LUNDH, AGNETA SUNDGREN



Cultural projects supported by the cultural funds vary greatly. Alongside the promotion of modern expression, they preserve traditional culture.

4th century AD, restored.

- Artefacts found in the small village Nguyệt Áng, dating back to the Bronze Age, preserved.
- Poems by authors belonging to ethnic minorities translated and published.

Tanzania

In 1998, the Swedish and Tanzanian governments jointly formed the Tanzanian fund *Mfuko wa Utamaduni* ('Bag of civilisation', the Tanzania Culture Trust Fund). The fund has supported hundreds of cultural projects in Tanzania — from small handicraft projects to publishing and museums. The Tanzania Culture Trust Fund also awards prizes for outstanding achievements in the cultural sphere. The prizewinners include, for example, actors, photographers, writers and leading figures in children's theatre.

The fund focuses on quality, rather than quantity. The aim is to assist in building a democratic culture where human rights and equality are respected, and offset the negative aspects of commercialism and globalisation.

Some examples of projects supported by the Tanzanian fund:

- The development of a Tanzanian sign language for the deaf,
- an arts festival in Bagamoyo,
- the founding of the Zeze Award for outstanding achievements in the cultural sphere.

South Africa

Preparations for a joint South African/ Swedish cultural fund are

under way and it is expected to start work in early 2004. The fund, to be managed by the South African and Swedish arts councils, will exemplify a different kind of cooperation — one with reciprocity as the keynote. South Africa are both responsible for the fund's financing. Thus, the cooperation between cultural institutions and individuals in South Africa and Sweden, already of many years' standing, can live on when development cooperation is phased out.

Purposes

The funds are adapted to conditions in each country. In Vietnam, where the fund works in parallel with the Ministry of Culture and Information, support goes mainly to independent groups and individual initiatives. In Tanzania, where governmental support for culture is weaker, the Culture Trust Fund — to which, besides Sida, the Norwegian and Finnish aid organisations also contribute — also helps to finance cultural institutions and businesses. The purpose of the South African/Swedish cultural fund is, through the national arts councils, to make the two countries' joint cultural efforts reciprocal and sustainable in the long term.

Sida's priorities

The cultural funds can channel support to all forms of culture, focusing particularly on certain target groups: children and young people, women, minorities, journalists and cultural workers. Fund activities must comply with the overriding objective of Swedish

development assistance — to combat poverty — and also the specific aims adopted for Sida's cultural cooperation. Activities must also be in line with the countries' own cultural policies.

Formal basis

The cultural funds' activities are based on cooperation agreements that regulate planning, follow-up and implementation of activities. The funds regularly report on their activities and finances to Sida or the local Swedish embassy.

Preliminary work is important when a new fund is established. Through proper steering documents for the funds, Sida can ensure that their activities are conducive to sustainability and long-termism, and comply with the objectives of Swedish aid. Sida also continuously monitors the functioning of the funds and checks that their management practices are democratic and that each fund's governing board has a balanced gender composition. Sida's long-term goal is for the countries' own governments to assume responsibility for cultural support and, accordingly, the funds' activities.

Policy

The overall objective of Sida's cultural cooperation is to create scope for cultural diversity, creative activity and sustainable development based on human rights.

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Weblink: The Tanzania Culture Trust Fund,
www.mfuko.org.

EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL FUNDS' SUPPORT

Preservation of craft traditions in Tanzania

One key task of the Tanzanian fund is to preserve ancient craft traditions and pass them on to new generations. Every year, it provides support for activities such as production of leather, knitted and embroidered items, traditional clothes, arts and crafts exhibitions and competitions, and handicraft courses for children and young people.

Support for Vietnamese opera

The role of *Chèo*, Vietnam's traditional folk opera, and *Tuồng*, the country's classical opera, in Vietnamese society is increasingly obscure.

Other culture forms — film, TV, karaoke, sports events and so on — have taken their place.

The Vietnamese cultural fund has supported school projects involving traditional opera in three areas. In the first phase, groups of pupils and opera performers were formed. Next came joint public opera productions. In the third, concluding phase, opera clubs were set up in schools and the young performers received professional training, musical instruments and equipment for their theatres. These clubs have enabled two objectives to be realised: new performers have been recruited and the traditional forms of opera have reached new audiences.

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.



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