



IN BRIEF...

Education For All —a human right

Despite all the progress made, many millions of people still lack access to education. People equipped with basic skills like reading and counting are more able to improve their lives and escape poverty. Education is also one of the most important building blocks of a democratic society. If the goals that the international community has agreed upon—including free universal schooling by 2015—are to be achieved, greater resources will need to be invested in education.

Even though the countries of the world established education as a human right back in 1948, some 77 million children still lack access to schooling. Even more adults—about 781—are illiterate and have to get by without the keys that come so naturally to those of us who can read and write.

The relationship between poverty and a lack of education is an obvious one. Those who receive no education have limited chances of affecting their lives. Education enables change and improvement and makes it easier for people to build personal opinions and take part in their society's economic, political and cultural activities.

A basic education, especially for women and girls, is one of the keys to economic growth and political and social development. The support of education is therefore one of the cornerstones of international development cooperation.

In recent years, several international agreements have been drawn up to strengthen people's rights to free education. And the situation has improved.

The Millennium Goals—a joint commitment

One point of departure for Sida's work is the Millennium Goals that the world's countries have agreed upon in order to halve poverty and hunger by 2015. Two of the eight goals deal with education. All children are to be guaranteed a basic primary education. Further, in order to improve equality and the status of women, sex discrimination in schools is to be eradicated by 2015.

How long has Sweden been supporting educational development?

Supporting education has been an important aspect of development cooperation since it began in the 1950s. At first, education aid went mainly to new schools and other tangible projects. As time has passed Sida has gradually started to support larger programmes and reforms able to bring about more permanent change.

What does Sweden do to promote educational development?

Sida gives support to education and

school reforms in 16 countries, as well as contributes to a number of regional programmes incorporating several countries. Part of its educational assistance is paid to UN bodies such as Unicef and Unesco. Sida also participates in the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). FTI is a global compact between donors and developing countries that aims at mobilising extra financial resources for the implementation of Education For All plans.

So who is it that usually suffers when education systems are inadequate? Particularly vulnerable groups include poor women in rural areas, orphans, child soldiers, disabled people, and ethnic minorities.

In some of Sida's beneficiary countries, such as Tanzania and Ethiopia, the number of children attending school has risen sharply in recent years. The next challenge is to be able to offer all children a good quality education.

Education programmes are based on the notion that education, democracy and human rights are interconnected and mutually beneficial. Education is fundamental to the creation of a democratic society which shows respect for human rights.

Another important point of departure for international development cooperation on education is the Dakar Framework for Action. This document, which was adopted by 164 countries at a meeting in Senegal in 2000, outlines the strategies for achieving the goal of Education For All (EFA).

The EFA programme specifies six goals. These are, in brief:

- To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- To ensure 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;
- To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- To achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015;
- To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015;
- To improve all aspects of the quality of education.

Many countries have already achieved these goals, while others still have a long way to go. In some countries, HIV and AIDS have pushed costs to unexpectedly high levels. According to calculations by Unesco, external funding requirements for EFA are now estimated at 11 billion USD per year. This is more than three times the current level and twice what recently committed aid increases are likely to total by 2010.

Some fundamental changes have taken place since aid programmes began. The underlying principal of

development cooperation these days is that it is the recipient countries themselves that must take responsibility for preparing and implementing change, while the donor countries provide the knowledge and capital.

In recent years, donor countries have been under increasing pressure to coordinate their efforts. The presence of too many donors each with its own aims risks impeding progress instead of furthering it.

Another major change is that Sida often opts to give budget support instead of individual project support. Budget support improves a country's ability to coordinate the support it receives from a number of countries, to plan and to use the money more efficiently.

In 2006, 926 SEK million (i.e. just over six per cent) of Sida's aid budget went to education.

The following is just a selection of programmes to show some of the problems that development cooperation is trying to resolve.

There are some issues, like environmental impact, HIV/AIDS and equality, that are given particular attention in all programmes.

Education for girls in Afghanistan

The level of education in Afghanistan is low. Only 12.6 per cent of adult women can read and write. Sida is working in Afghanistan to improve access to education (especially for girls), to raise the quality of teaching in the country, and to reduce illiteracy.

Much of the support Sida provides goes to the Swedish Committee for

Afghanistan (SAK). Sida is also promoting education by contributing to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund (ARTF), Unicef and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC).

Education for all

Education reform in Bolivia is part of a more general poverty reduction programme. Amongst other improvements, the reforms are designed to promote multilingual education and to increase the number of children in school. The support is provided in conjunction with Denmark and the Netherlands and is based on the plan drawn up by the Bolivian Ministry of Education. Its achievements include the drafting of a new education act, a literacy programme and a school building programme.

Environmental awareness training in southern Africa

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is running a training programme designed to lift the educational level of decision-makers, so that they can take into account and integrate environmental issues in their work. The programme is an example of regional programmes supported by Sida.

Global adult education – Unesco

The only UN body to focus specifically on adult education is the Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Adult education is an often neglected field.

Sida contributes to the work of the UIL, which in 2006 included a campaign to increase reading skills amongst mothers.

Countries in receipt of bilateral support for education	Percentage of children in compulsory primary education	Adult literacy, 2004 (%)	Education's share of GDP (2004) (%)	Ranking in Human Development Report, 2006
Afghanistan	**	28,1	**	**
Bangladesh	94,1	28,1	2,2	137
Bolivia	95,2	86,7	6,7	115
Burkina Faso	40,5	21,8	**	174
D. R. Congo	**	67,2	**	167
Ethiopia	56,3	45,2	4,6	170
Honduras	90,6	80,0	**	117
Cambodia	91,5	73,6	2,2	129
Laos	84,4	68,7	2,5	133
Mali	46,5	19,0	**	175
Mozambique	83,4	33,5	**	168
Namibia	73,7	85,0	7,1	125
Rwanda	73,2	64,9	**	158
South Africa	88,8	82,4	5,5	121
Tanzania	91,4	69,4	**	162
East Timor	75	**	**	142
Sweden	99	97,7	7	5

Sources: Progress in educational development, Sida's contribution in 2006 (primary). Human Development Report 2006 (UNDP) and the Unesco Institute for Statistics (secondary). Figures for literacy are the latest available for the period 2002–2004, and are based in most cases on each country's own statistics. ** Information not available.

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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