



IN BRIEF...

Performing Arts

Support for the performing arts — which have a key role to play in promoting freedom of expression and a society's democratisation — has long been included in Sida's cultural cooperation with developing countries.

Besides affording tremendous enjoyment, theatre, music and dance can also stimulate debate on political and social issues. Various performing arts have long traditions of giving expression to topics perceived as sensitive or taboo — sexuality, gender roles, injustices — and thereby extending the range of matters discussed openly.

Sida supports a diverse array of pro-

jects and networks that aim to strengthen the performing arts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Support is directed primarily at giving a qualitative boost to skills and at working with and for the public, with a strong emphasis on performing arts for children and young people.

Sida supports:

- institutional and infrastructural

capacity-building of professional theatres, i.e. training of actors, directors, producers, set designers, stage and lighting technicians, etc

- training of drama and music teachers
- drama education and theatre activities for children and young people
- regional and global networks for performing artists
- experience-sharing and exchange programmes, including festivals, among people engaged in the performing arts in various countries.

Sida's priorities

For Sida, the most important target audiences for cultural support for the performing arts are children and young people. Other key target groups are theatre workers and musicians. Sida gives priority to projects that strive to reach the very poorest people — rural inhabitants, the illiterate, neglected minorities and other such groups.

In its support for the performing arts, Sida also gives priority to projects and institutions that work for greater gender equality.

Purposes

Sida endeavours to bring about long-term measures, and gives priority to support through funds, networks and institutional cooperation. This approach affords scope for reaching more people and using resources more efficiently.

Sida's principal cooperation partners in the performing arts are

PHOTO: UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF FILM, RADIO AND THEATRE



An audience of Palestinian girls in Hebron awaiting the start of Theatre Day Production's performance of *The Glass Café*.

"I believe drama education is about complementarity: the emotional, the aesthetic, the physical, the spiritual, all of those faculties that we have as human beings, being developed in a holistic way"

Lynn Dalrymple, Sydafrika, i Drama, Culture and Empowerment. The IDEA Dialogues, red. O'Toole & Donelan, IDEA Publications 1996.



ministries of culture, cultural institutions and independent theatre groups, non-governmental organisations and regional networks. Swedish cultural institutions often take part as well.

Some Sida projects

Since 1996, the University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre has, on Sida's behalf, supported **performing arts in the West Bank/Gaza**, focusing on children and young people.

In these areas, poverty-stricken and ravaged by conflict as they are, the needs are huge and the range of creative activities available has been sorely neglected. Demand for theatrical experience and drama education is strong, and Palestinian performing artists greatly need opportunities to learn new ways of working and technical skills.

Here, Sida has supported:

- education and on-the-job training for actors, theatre technicians, drama instructors, etc

- performance and production support for five performing-arts groups that cater for children and young people, and perform in schools, community centres and refugee camps
- cultural exchanges with Sweden and with theatre workers within the region.

Sida supports a number of **networks in Africa**, with the objective of raising quality and boosting proficiency in theatre and music. These networks often focus specially on marginalised groups of children and young people. They include the Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI), the Eastern Africa Theatre Institute (EATI), the global children's theatre network Assitej, and Music Crossroads, a regional network for young people interested in music. All these networks work offer seminars and on-the-job training in the arts. Many also engage in lobbying to enhance the status of

the performing arts in society.

Today, although the performing arts are traditionally a vigorous cultural manifestation in the Central American countries, they are starved of resources and quality is therefore highly uneven. All theatrical activity in the region is based on independent groups and widespread amateur theatrical activities. Sida supports a regional project that provides further **education for theatre professionals and amateur groups**. The project is run mainly by the regional El Puente network in Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama. The University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre is engaged on a consultant basis.

Policy

The overriding objective of Sida's culture work is to lay the foundations of cultural diversity, creative activities and sustainable development based on human rights.

With its support for the performing arts, Sida aims to pave the way for:

- free public access to information and scope to take part in debates on social issues
- institutions, organisations and networks working for a democratic culture
- children and young people participating in creative activities
- professional meetings and regional cooperation among cultural workers in developing countries
- internationalisation, based on countries' distinctive cultural traits, that offsets the homogenising impact of globalisation.

EXAMPLES

Regional support

Sida plans to provide regional support for education and collaboration among performing artists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre will be the Swedish partner in this cooperation.

Network for East Africa and Sweden

Since 2001, Sida has worked to twin East African theatre, dance and music groups with corresponding professional groups in Sweden.

The aim is to develop reciprocal cooperation to promote sharing of experience between, and capacity-building in, Sweden and Africa.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Sida's culture and media cooperation, contact:

Sida's Culture and Media Division, phone +46 8 698 0000.

Web links:

University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre: www.draminst.se,
Assitej International: www.assitej.org;
Southern African Theatre Initiative: www.sati.org.za,
Music Crossroads: www.eayo.org/festivals/safrica.htm,
Palestine: www.ashtartheatre.org,
www.el-funoun.org,
www.inadtheater.org.

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.



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden
Phone: 08-698 50 00
Fax: 08-698 56 15
info@sida.se, www.sida.se