

gender EQUALITY

Sida's
policy and
methods
at a glance



Key steering documents

**"All human beings are born free
and equal in dignity and rights"**

Gender equality is a key element of the human rights system established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**, CEDAW, defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. CEDAW was adopted in 1979.

The **United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women**, in Beijing 1995, resulted in a Platform for Action, which states:

**"Equality between women and men is a
matter of human rights and a condition for social
justice and is also a necessary and
fundamental prerequisite for equality,
development and peace."**

WEB RESOURCES

The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/
www.iisd.ca/women.html

CEDAW

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/
WomenWatch
www.un.org/womenwatch

Some key words

Gender and sex

Gender is an overarching and fundamental variable. Gender systems are rooted in a place, time and culture and determine what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman/man and girl/boy in these specific contexts. Sex traditionally refers to the physiological and hormonal markers which are used to define humans as either female or male.

Current academic discussions of gender note that the relationship between 'sex' and 'gender' is not entirely straightforward. 'Sex' is viewed today by many as a cultural concept. Power and sex/gender are interconnected – that the dominant role in a relationship is often understood to be more 'masculine' shows this connection clearly.

Gender equality

Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunity for all individuals should not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality is a matter of human rights and social justice for all.

Empowerment

Empowerment of women relates to the process of women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves expansion of choices, and increased access to and control over resources, information and actions.

Gender-based discrimination

Distinctions, exclusions, or restrictions made on the basis of gender stereotypes.

Reproductive rights

The basic right of all individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children. And the right to have access to sexual and reproductive health care services: to seek, receive and impart information in relation to sexuality; to receive sexuality education; maintain bodily integrity; choose one's partner; decide to whether to be sexually active or not; and to have consensual sexual relations.

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*Halving poverty in the world by 2015 is possible.
It calls for 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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Sida's policy for gender equality and development



The Swedish Policy for Global Development, adopted by the Parliament of Sweden in 2003, states that one particular goal for Swedish development cooperation is to “help create conditions that will enable the poor to improve their lives”. This goal puts the focus on individual women and men, as well as on girls and boys.



Gender equality is at the heart of Sida's mission to promote and create conditions for poverty reduction in partner countries. Mainstreaming gender equality is a strategy for achieving sustainable development for all, by supporting the right of choice, empowerment and provision of resources.



For Sida, gender equality involves ensuring that all human beings are considered equal and treated equally in terms of dignity and rights. Gender discrimination is one of the main causes of poverty, and a major obstacle to equitable and sustainable global human development.

FURTHER READING:

Sida's Policy: Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation, Sida 2005.
Download the policy at www.sida.se

Sida's 5 points of departure

Sida's Policy: Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation has five points of departure, that can be used as a key for ensuring that Sida's support and actions contribute to gender equality.

1.

EQUALITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Gender equality strengthens Sida's efforts to achieve poverty reduction. Sida should therefore always ensure that women and men have equal access to and benefit equally from its work.

2.

EQUALITY AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Gender equality is crucial for achieving sustainable democratic development. Sida should therefore promote equal rights to, and participation in, political, economic, religious and social life and decision-making for women and men, girls and boys. Sida should actively combat gender discrimination.

3.

EQUALITY AND POWER STRUCTURES

Power structures are fundamental for working towards equality between women and men, girls and boys. Sida should therefore take into account and act upon unequal power relations between and among women and men.

4.

EQUALITY AND GENDER RELATIONS

Gender equality is about the relationship between women and men, girls and boys. Development is about creating and supporting processes through which human beings are able to realise their full potential. Gender stereotypes often block this process, for men as much as for women. Differences between societies should be taken into consideration in Sida's work, although Sida should always base its efforts on the universal declaration of human rights.

5.

EQUAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Equal opportunity for all is fundamental to achieving sustainable and democratic development and pro-poor growth. Sida should always contribute to removing constraints on the full participation of women and girls in the economy, regardless of whether these constraints are based on social norms, religious values or legal practices.

How to be gender-aware

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming a gender perspective has been the globally accepted strategy for promoting and strengthening gender equality and women's rights since the Beijing Conference 1995. Gender mainstreaming implies that the gender dimension is analysed and understood *before* any decisions are made or plans outlined.

Sida's three main approaches for gender mainstreaming are:

- to actively apply and integrate a gender perspective,
- to target specific groups or issues,
- to conduct a sensitive and gender-aware dialogue with partners (governments, civil society and the international community).

These approaches are equally important and effective, separately or in combination. They can be interlinked and complement each other within a programme, strategy or process.

Key areas for the mainstreaming process are:

- to conduct a gender-aware analysis of the surrounding reality,
- to identify and pinpoint resources,
- to outline clear and achievable objectives,
- to monitor activities and results,
- to take open and transparent participation for all into account.

GENDER-AWARE ANALYSIS

To analyse the distribution of power between the sexes is key when mainstreaming gender into development cooperation. These key areas should be considered when making a gender-aware analysis of any given society.

- 1. The sexual division of labour.** Which tasks and responsibilities are typically undertaken by either women or men, girls or boys? Which of them are paid for? Which tasks are valued culturally?
- 2. Access to and control over resources.** Who controls and/or has access to economic and production resources, political resources and time?
- 3. Gender roles and responsibilities.** This dimension concerns the social relationships. How are families organised? How is sexuality perceived and talked about?
- 4. Practical and strategic needs tied to gender.** Practical needs – such as safe water or health care – differ from strategic needs, such as legal rights or equal pay.
- 5. Living conditions and position in society.** Women and men may share the same conditions, but still have unequal positions.