



2009:28

Sida Review

Robert Gustafson

# EVALUATION OF THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE'S CULTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2006–2009



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**Robert Gustafson**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

**Sida Review 2009:28**

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Development Partnerships,  
Team for Global Programmes

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**Date of final report:** September 2009

**Printed by:** Edita 2009

**Art. no.** Sida52646en

**ISBN:** 978-91-586-4102-0

**URN:NBN** se-2009-48

This publication can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.sida.se/publications>

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## Executive Summary

The Swedish Institute (SI) is a government agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and since 1988 it has administered a cultural exchange program with developing countries, with funds from Sida. This program creates opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners to build networks and contribute to regional and local knowledge sharing. The cultural exchange aims to build on and contribute to foster views, values and working methods that in a sustainable way advocates human rights, gender equality, democracy, transparency and creativity. Sida considers the program a valuable supplement to its work within culture, and SI views the program as an important part of its international work.

This evaluation was arranged to follow up on Sida's support to SI and as such to serve as a learning tool for both Sida and SI, as well as an instrument for Sida's overall assessment of SI and the cultural exchange program. Less emphasized questions for the evaluation were to provide input to the dialogue on the future relationship between Sida and SI in light of the extended, but not very clear, mandate of the Swedish Arts Council (SAC) as coordinating agency for international cultural cooperation as well as Sida's implementation of the Policy on partner-driven cooperation, and that it would provide input to Sida's further implementation of the Strategy for global development.

Over a six-week period, this evaluation sought to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, outcome (if possible impact), local ownership, reach of target groups, intervention logic, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cultural exchange program for the period 2006–2009. This was achieved through desk review (key agreements and documents, including documentation on 30 sample grant-funded projects), structured and unstructured interviews, web surveys, and field visit to inspect nine projects (Ethiopia and Senegal).

## Findings

It was clear that much had been achieved through the program, and that the stated broad objectives, of cultural exchange, of enhanced cooperation between the people of Sweden and the Developing World, and, to an extent, of improving conditions in the developing world, were being achieved. There was recognition that the promotion of culture was relevant to Sida's overall development objectives, and to its policy for culture and media in development cooperation (2006), but that more could be done to strengthen the relevance to Sida's interests in for example freedom of expression, child rights as well as HIV, gender equality and anticorruption. Indeed, it was found that SI faced some difficulties adapting to Sida's expectations on monitoring and reporting on results.

While Sida was moving towards a more results-based approach to monitoring, SI and the projects operating under its grants continued to report predominantly on the basis of activities. For both SI and Sida, however, a key problem appears to be a lack of clear definitions of expected results: a surprising fourteen major concepts like democracy, human rights labelled "main objectives (plural)", "dialogue questions" and "important aspects" suggest where the project should be heading, but do little to facilitate real change and reporting. This lack of focus makes it difficult to clearly assess both the relevance and outcome of this programme.

The projects assessed in the field, and the desk review of projects, indicated that in general, significant benefits have been realised through the Cultural Exchange program, supporting a large number of projects in many countries. Creating meetings where professionals learn and share is definitely a real outcome of the exchange program. The data collected indicates that many projects continue after the funding one way or another, often in very individual ways.

However, there was a lack of clarity in the aims of these grant-funded projects. It is likely that a stronger-results focus from SI would trickle down to stimulate a stronger results-focus amongst the projects, with the potential for improvement in the achievement of results – both in terms of degree to which results are achieved, and in the direction, the nature of those results. The often positive but fragmented reports need to be a subject of more of intentional planning, and systematic reporting.

There may be a general fear that a shift towards greater accountability and results focus would prove to be a bureaucratic headache with little benefit. The reality is that, subject to objectives and targets being appropriately defined, and subject to indicators for achievement of these being appropriately selected, a more streamlined results focused approach could result in a reduction of bureaucracy, an increase in efficiency, an increase in effectiveness, and a stronger sense amongst all stakeholders that they are working towards something genuinely worthwhile.

Regarding the question whether SI or SAC is the most appropriate institution to administer a culture exchange programme with developing countries, it is neither possible nor appropriate for this evaluation to recommend one institution as administrating agency for a culture exchange. To remediate the current overlapping and confusion of roles between SI and SAC, it is suggested that the two institutions are given clear, separate mandates to complement each other. If that is not possible the alternative is that one institution is designated lead agency for cultural interventions in developing countries.

Interviews with Sida indicate that SI potentially has a role to play in Partner Driven Cooperation.

## **Key Recommendations**

The first priority is that Sida and SI clearly define the objectives, outcomes and outputs of this program. The second priority is that the aims and achievements of this program are spelled out clearly to all stakeholders: to those likely to seek grants, and to the Swedish taxpayer who is funding them. This involves making information about grants more accessible.

The third priority is to review and improve the grant application and selection procedures. A recommended option is a segmentation of applicants, classified according to size of grant sought. For large grant applications, there will be more rigorous requirements in terms of detail, clarity of purpose, identification of beneficiary groups, consideration of sustainability issues, and linking project outputs to the cultural exchange program's broader outcomes and objectives. SI needs to ensure that all applicants provide all the necessary information and have at least thought through a minimum number of key questions relevant to their application.

In all aspects, wherever processes are improved, overriding attention must be given to keeping bureaucratic aspects to a minimum, to requiring only that information that will be used, and keeping forms and formats as simple and accessible as possible, safeguarding SI's unique role as a flexible grant maker.

The fourth priority is to streamline monitoring of the cultural exchange program through a more systematic assessment or reports which will also allow for aggregation of results if reports are broken down to collect data on target groups, key themes etc. SI could consider testing the methodology of Most Significant Change (MSC) which is a narrative method for capturing accounts of change, through stories in a systematic manner, building on stories provided through reports.

In order to consolidate the new program Creative Force in Africa, there is a need for strengthened information flow between local partners. SI also needs to be more visible, to study the context and see what other major players like the EU engage in to look for synergy and avoid duplication.

It is recommended that the two institutions SI and SAC are given clear, separate mandates to complement each other's involvement in cultural exchange with developing countries. If that is not possible the alternative is that one institution is designated lead agent for all international cultural interventions.



## List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Co-operation Directorate
EU	European Union
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MSC	Most Significant Change
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PDC	Partner Driven Cooperation
PGD	Swedish Policy for Global Development
SAC	Swedish Arts Council ( <a href="http://www.kulturradet.se">www.kulturradet.se</a> )
SEK	Swedish Krona
SI	Swedish Institute ( <a href="http://www.si.se">www.si.se</a> )
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency ( <a href="http://www.sida.se">www.sida.se</a> )



# 1. Background

The Swedish Institute (SI) is a government agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that promotes interest in Sweden abroad through activities in different areas of politics. The institute's overarching goal is to create mutual relationships with other countries around the world, whether the issue is culture, politics, trade, or development cooperation. SI's operations are carried out in close cooperation with Swedish and foreign partners, as well as with Swedish embassies and consulates around the world.

The Swedish Institute (SI) has since 1988 administered cultural exchange with recipient countries of Official Development Assistance (ODA-countries), with funds from Sida. The primary objective of the program is to; "through well planned, effective implementation and persistent cultural exchanges introduce approaches, values and methods influencing attitudes and cultures, and promoting transparency, democracy, human rights, gender equality and creative thinking, strengthen people's voices in poor environments through cultural exchanges with Sweden<sup>1</sup>. An important aspect is to create opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners to build networks and contribute to regional and local knowledge sharing. Sida considers the program a valuable supplement to its work within culture, and SI views the program as an important part of its international work.

In the period covered by this evaluation, Sida signed an agreement with SI with a budget of 27 million SEK for 2006–2007 and 28 million SEK for the 2008–2009. SI presents annual reports to Sida covering activities, results and questions related to the management of the program.

In the letter of appropriation 2006 the Government commissioned SI and Sida together to present a proposal on the direction of cultural exchange with recipient countries of Official Development Assistance (ODA) as listed by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). In June 2006 Sida and SI proposed that the point of departure should be Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD).

Up to 2007, SI's cultural exchange program had only been demand driven. In order to increase impact Sida and SI agreed that SI should be more proactive/output driven and look at synergies between projects funded in the same countries and regions. In response to this the program Creative Force was conceived and launched in 2008 focusing on ten countries in West and East Africa with the ambition to achieve increased coordination, impact and follow-up of the interventions.

## 2. Purpose, Scope and Limitations of the Evaluation

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation clearly states that the evaluation has three purposes:

1. To follow up on Sida's support to SI and as such to serve as a learning tool for both Sida and SI, as well as an instrument for Sida's overall assessment of SI and the cultural exchange program.
2. To provide input to the dialogue on the future relationship between Sida and SI in light of the extended mandate of the Swedish Arts Council (SAC) as coordinating agency for international cultural cooperation<sup>2</sup> as well as Sida's implementation of the Policy on partner-driven cooperation<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sida's agreement with SI for support 2006–2007.

<sup>2</sup> See Appropriation Directions and the Budget Bills for the Swedish Arts Council 2008 and 2009, as well as relevant Ordinances for the Swedish Arts Council (Main ordinance: 2007:1186).

<sup>3</sup> Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling – policy för aktörssamverkan inom utvecklingssamarbetet, 2007-12-19, Annex 3.

3. To provide input to Sida's further implementation of the Strategy for global development.

Regarding the scope, the evaluation should cover the period 2006–2009 and review aspects such as relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, outcome (if possible impact), local ownership, reach of target groups, intervention logic, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cultural exchange program.

Only six weeks was allocated for the assignment, during which time an inception report was to be prepared, a full report completed, and a presentation made to Sida. It was a challenge for the consultant within this period to collect and process the vast amount of information involved from a wide range of sources, including a two-week field trip and to produce conclusions and actionable recommendations.

### 3. Approach and Methodology

In preparation of the evaluation, discussions were held involving both Sida and SI where the meaning of key questions were discussed and the consultant presented a plan for the data collection.

A number of sources of data collection have been used for this; interviews with concerned staff at Sida, SI, MFA, MoC, SAC and representatives of organizations visited in Ethiopia and Senegal.

Organizations in Sweden who have received grants from SI as well as their counterparts in ODA-countries have been approached through a web survey which provided input to several of the questions in this report. Of the 160 e-mail invitations sent to contact persons in *Swedish organizations*, 27 were rejected or were to invalid e-mail addresses. 53 people completed the survey, a response rate of 40%. The fact that less than half of the potential respondents have participated creates some uncertainty, but even so, the number of respondents and the quality of their input in open questions make it a valuable resource in assessing the interventions and SI's role in managing the program.

A similar survey was set up for *organizations in partner countries*. It was rather difficult to obtain e-mail addresses since SI has no direct contact with organizations in the cooperating countries. 44 invitations were sent out and although the response rate was not bad at 45%, the sample size was small, with only 20 respondents. It would be inappropriate to determine trends from such a sample size, but the survey did serve as a useful resource for comments. Furthermore, since responses were anonymous, no analysis of representativeness of respondents could be carried out.

Despite these limitations, the responses offered interesting and important contributions from people who have been involved in projects funded through SI over a 3-year period. The entire surveys are annexed (Annex 5,6). In an attempt to make the surveys more dynamic and interactive, respondents were invited to observe the results in real-time with the possibility of editing their answers after completion of the survey, so making it an iterative process. Links to view these evaluations can be found at the end of this document.

The consultant spent a week at SI offices in Stockholm, visiting the premises, interviewing key staff and attending a review meeting where grant applications were screened and discussed, and decisions taken regarding their approval. This provided an insight into the internal deliberations and discussions, as well as the preparation phase of applications.

Nine projects in Ethiopia and Senegal (Annex 3) were also visited during a two-week trip organized in

consultation with both Sida and SI. The program included observations of ongoing projects and interviews with local contact persons and authorities. Through this, it was possible to assess the context in which interventions are carried out, to gauge the extent to which documents (reports, applications, etc.) reflect the realities on the ground, and to assess results from a broader perspective, through talking to a wide selection of people, including both those involved with the projects and outside observers. Swedish embassies were visited and key staff consulted on SI's cultural exchange program.

In addition, a number of important documents have been consulted, including letters of appropriation for SI and SAC, Sida's Policy for Culture and Media in Development Cooperation (2006), and Sida's strategy for global development interventions 2008–2010 (2007-12-27).

Finally 30 randomly selected applications to the cultural exchange program from 2006–2009 were reviewed in detail. Each application, along with its respective report, was systematically analyzed in order to evaluate the scope and quality of intervention, as well as reported results. Attention was given to the key questions to be addressed by this evaluation, and provided substantial input to the findings (see relevant headings below).

## 4. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this section of Findings the sequence under each heading – when relevant – will start with a definition of each key word either from Sida's reference literature.<sup>4</sup> The definition will be followed by a summary of the findings from the relevant sources, an analysis and finally recommendations.

### 4.1 Relevance

#### **Relevance**

The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

#### 4.1.1 The relevance of culture for overall development objectives

In interviews with staff from Sida and the foreign ministry, interviewees suggest that the building up of a country on firm foundations includes culture and media and that one has to accept it as a fact that change happens when people meet, an assumption which is true for research and trade as well. It was suggested that Sweden should avoid going only for large scale solutions and instead realize that we can afford this small scale complement. Another suggestion was that culture can be decisive in promoting themes like gender equality by bypassing traditional taboos. Cultural activities also have a potential for entrepreneurship using new technology more likely to create jobs than traditional industrial ventures. Reference was made to the music sector which has grown from a sector based on public support to a substantial export industry in Sweden.

It was also suggested that cultural workers are often in the front line in a change process, and can play a key role in pointing out injustice and questioning society through theatre plays and films etc – highlighting aspects of societal conflicts and change that may not be obvious for other observers like embassies.

<sup>4</sup> Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (2007) or Sida's "Looking Back, Moving Forward" – Sida Evaluation Manual" 2nd Edition, 2007.

It was however emphasized, that cultural actors in development need to clearly show effects of their activities in order to justify support from development funds.

A number of people expressed the opinion that culture plays too small a role in Swedish development cooperation; reduced over a number of years, it has become a parenthesis in the large country programs. The foreign ministry is not giving Sida a mandate or a mission regarding culture and Sida itself has downsized staff and dismantled the culture and media division and is therefore losing its competence in the culture sector.

One interviewee suggested that the only role and justification for culture, has become to promote freedom of expression, and that it does nothing to promote the right to information, which is central in the international human rights conventions.

Sida staff highlighted the fact that in the field of culture – in contrast to many other fields – there are relatively few actors on the international stage, and Sweden has a competitive edge.

#### *Comments from Africa on the relevance of culture*

During the two-week field trip to Ethiopia and Senegal, the question of the relevance of culture was brought up in discussions with local cultural workers and officials (see annexed itinerary). Below follows a summary of the most relevant comments and reflections.

From Ethiopia it was highlighted that Sweden has unique competence in developing children's theatre and that Swedes are more low key and less "preaching" than other major actors. It was also noted that culture should be considered a wealth in itself that is being explored and shared through exchange activities, and so justifies the cost incurred. Cultural support should be a mix of skills development, technical support and job creation; most countries limit themselves to debates on freedom of expression, which is useful but is not enough by itself. It was even suggested that some failed projects (e.g. in tree-plantation) could have succeeded if a cultural dimension had been incorporated for advocacy.

In Senegal several interviewees expressed a strong desire to interact culturally with a country that has not colonized them (such as France). It was further noted that Swedish design and culture is perceived as very functional and practical, promoting individual initiatives and therefore an important complement to the Senegalese culture and society where the state is more omnipresent.

Culture was further seen as a potential locomotive of good governance where cultural workers can function as the new sociologists with a political message communicated through multimedia. Several people noted that the approach with practical workshops for knowledge transfer in fields like music is quite unique and much appreciated. When know-how is transferred successfully it can lead to better production and increased revenues. Handicraft is a priority sector for growth by the government and it was also suggested that the image of a country is very much linked to its culture.

#### **4.1.2 SI's program's relevance to achieve Sida's policy**

Sida's policy on Culture and Media in Development Cooperation (2006) refers to the right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation as universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the international human rights conventions. It further states that "people's enjoyment of these freedoms and rights are both means and ends for Sida's culture and media interventions... There is a positive correlation between enhanced freedom of expression and diminished poverty."

The policy also outlines five concrete goal areas for culture and media support.

Each area has an objective and includes examples of what Sida supports:

##### **1. Cultural freedom and cultural diversity**

2. Freedom of expression and access to means of expression
3. Access to information and ideas
4. Conflict prevention and increased tolerance
5. Local production, economic growth and employment

This policy has been the primary expression of Sida's ambition with cultural interventions for the evaluated period.

For the evaluated period there are two agreements with related documents that express SI's intentions and objectives with the programme. SI's application for 2006–2007 among other things highlights “promoting transparency, democracy, human rights, gender equality and creative thinking, strengthen people's voices in poor environments through cultural exchanges with Sweden”.

In SI's application for 2008–2009 SI elaborates on objectives under several headings in the document. “The objective is to ... strengthen/promote democracy, transparency, gender equality and respect for human rights”. Then reference is made to “profile questions in development work” which at the same time contribute to creating good-will for Sweden such as gender equality, sustainability, new creativity and cross-sector development. These profile questions are supposed to be guiding principles for the development work.

Some of the objectives described in SI's documents are definitely relevant for achieving Sida's policy which Sida confirms in its internal assessment of SI. The problem is the large number of objectives, partly overlapping or pulling in different directions. Under the heading Outcomes, there will be further discussion on the extent to which SI's program is achieving *results* in relation to the five goal areas.

#### **4.1.3 SI's program's relevance for Sida's work with HIV, gender equality and anticorruption**

In the agreement for funding signed between Sida and SI for 2006–2007 it is stated that the questions of HIV-prevention, anticorruption and gender equality will be followed up during the project period to ensure that SI is active in promoting these questions. SI's reports to Sida for 2006 and 2007 have no substantial follow-up on these themes and it is not clear what Sida has done to follow up on the issues. In the 2007 annual report, a general explanation for weak performance from SI is that a major internal reorganization has been the focus. In the 2008 annual report the comment on these themes is that “SI has a continuous dialogue with its partners regarding these questions”. So, there is little substantial content reported on the implementation of these topics.

Indeed, a review of the 30 project documents for the entire period, show that 24 (80%) of the reviewed projects make no mention of these themes. Only 6 of the reviewed projects dealt with a minimum of one of the questions, and gender equality was the most prominent (mentioned in 5 instances. 3 cases were difficult to assess. It might be of interest for SI and Sida to look more closely at projects from 2008–2009 to see if performance has improved.

If these questions are not elaborated in applications or reports, there is very little chance that meaningful activities will take place during the interventions and lead to change afterwards.

A review of the applications of the projects visited in Africa showed that six out of the nine projects had no clear discussion around the focus themes of gender equality, HIV, anticorruption or transparency. When this question was brought up, people from three projects claimed that they dealt with it in discussions, but it was generally very vague. Several people also remarked that they had observed the Swedish groups and how they dealt with women in a different way.





## Conclusion

A review of project documents, visited projects and data gathered from interviews show that the questions of gender equality, HIV, anticorruption and transparency have not been dealt with in a way that will bring about change despite the fact that Sida has insisted on the matter since 2006 (and possibly before that). The problem may be that the focus of the exchange activities is cultural and these questions are rather big and difficult subjects that require a fair amount of reflection, training and skills to be dealt with meaningfully.

On a general level, it has to be recognized that approximately 50% of the 300 projects funded during the period 2006–2009 received less than SEK 50 000 and it may not be realistic to expect delivery on any, let alone all, of these issues. But for the 25% who receive substantial funds, they could be expected to do better. Receiving large funds and organizing festivals or concerts with workshops but not taking the trouble to develop discussions and action plans in some way for at least one of these questions is not good enough. African partners express the view that Sweden has credibility and practical examples to show regarding gender equality but this potential is not being exploited; at best it is being dealt with in an ad-hoc manner that will not lead to change that can be reported upon.

## Recommendations

1. SI needs to revisit the agreement for funding it signed with Sida and draw up a strategy through which it can most effectively accommodate and promote the themes of gender equality, HIV, anti-corruption and transparency. SI needs to decide (perhaps with Sida inputs) whether *references* and/or *specific activities* related to any/all of these are to be *necessary*, or only *desirable*, in applications for grants.
2. Related to the above, SI needs to develop means through which applicants can receive relevant coaching and/or encouragement, to enable them to address these themes in the activities for which they are seeking funding. One option might be for SI to choose one subject per year to focus on and come up with relevant training and a deeper follow-up and analysis, rather than to promise to deal with everything in a general sense.

## 4.2 SI's Intervention Logic

### 4.2.1. General framework

SI's cultural exchange program has historically been totally demand-driven in the sense that organizations have been invited to apply for funding for exchange visits and projects in ODA-countries. In that sense activities could not really be planned. As from mid 2008 a new pro-active approach, Creative Force has been launched where SI takes a new role and more pro-actively encourages programs in West- and East Africa (see 4.10). For 2008, that component consumed 3.6 million SEK while the traditional demand driven projects received 13.9 million SEK, or approximately 80% of project- or programme funds for 2008<sup>5</sup>.

Another major feature is that approximately 50% of the 300 projects funded during the period 2006–2009 received less than SEK 50 000, consist of one-off events, visits etc of a light character. Another 25% are of medium size and the last 25% receive substantial funds. SI today have two main categories of support; support to larger cooperation projects in the area of culture or civil society and support to short contact trips. Instructions and reporting requirements for all projects are similar and SI could consider segmenting interventions with different approaches. Now, even contact trips are required to report how they have contributed to poverty alleviation.

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<sup>5</sup> The total contractual amount for 2008–2009 is MSEK 28. MSEK 2.4 per year is allocated to administration.

#### 4.2.2 Intervention logic, preparations and criteria for assessing applications

SI has expressed intentions with the cultural exchange program in its policy<sup>6</sup> for cultural development activities focusing on the creation of sustainable relations, networks, learning processes between actors in Sweden and internationally in order to strengthen democracy, openness, equality and respect for Human Rights. SI further explains how its cultural policy is based on objectives for the Swedish foreign policy where equality and children's culture should have a prominent place in the dialogue.

A clear intention with the cultural work is also described in *SI's application to Sida for 2008–2010* in terms such as meeting on equal terms, to promote dialogue and inspiration. Participants are to be experts, cultural workers who critically examine their contemporary society, contribute to open discussions, debate and change. The effects are supposed to ultimately reach the poorest, often consisting of children, youth, minorities or women.

SI has an ambition to move towards pro-active projects. SI attaches great importance to address poverty alleviation in the longer term. How that will be done is not clear. SI further seeks a continuous dialogue with Sida to how to improve impact on poverty reduction.

A major thrust was the launching in 2008 of a new, pro-active program called Creative Force as discussed under the heading 4.10. This includes geographic priorities as well as a thematic concentration on; freedom of expression, democracy, transparency, gender equality, and entrepreneurship in the areas of dance, music and the other arts. The thinking and logic behind this move from demand driven interventions to a pro-active approach was to achieve better coordination, follow-up and monitoring of results. Efforts have been made in Sweden to train Swedish organizations and improve coordination, but with the new program using approximately 21 % of the budget, but only a year old, no significant results or change can yet be observed.

For the cultural exchange program, there are three periods a year for submitting proposals. Information, dates and formats are available on SI's web site and the applications are also filled-in on the internet.

SI's program assistant makes copies of all applications and specialists in different forms of arts in SI receive a copy of the application if their assessment is required. One program officer is responsible to coordinate the screening process and he makes the first rough assessment followed by input by subject matter experts. Budgets are discussed as well as relevance and there is a collegial backstopping. Formal and informal meetings are held until a final decision meeting is called for. The entire screening process takes only six weeks.

An internal document with criteria for assessment of applications has been developed at SI with five main headings; Relevance, Effectiveness, Feasibility, Sustainability and Coordination, each one with additional concepts meant to facilitate the assessment.

In reality however, this tool is not systematically applied and program officers make their own informal notes and interpretation of this document in relation to the proposed criteria. It boils down to deciding if the application has some sort of relevant and realistic connection to development in general, possibly with one visible theme or key question. The idea behind the list of criteria to promote quality assurance and build a robust framework for the screening is not working out and the assessment is therefore done on a somewhat ad-hoc basis with weak formal documentation.

Discussions observed during one such meeting indicated that the group of staff involved maintains a positive attitude towards the applying organizations, and look for ways to enhance projects considered interesting but too weak at that particular stage. Discussions highlighted that applying organizations often lack the required development competence and would need more training. The issue of parallel

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<sup>6</sup> Svenska institutets policy för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete, 2008

funding from Sida and SAC was brought up and it is not clear if there are guidelines and procedures for who gets funding from where. All applicants are asked about other sources of funding but the budgets submitted are not presented according to any standard format and therefore vary greatly in transparency and quality. Surprisingly, no audits are asked for even for grants of SEK 300 000 or more.

Up to 2008 there was no explicit reference in the information to the fact that the funding was related to development and came from Sida. Since mid 2008 additional information has been added on SI's website underlining that funding for this program comes from development funds and therefore need to contribute to the overall goal of poverty alleviation.

Approximately one third of all applications are funded, fully or partly. If an increase in performance is desired there may be a need to publicize availability of grants more aggressively and/or have a stricter selection process in order to increase competition and quality and not to waste time on assessing really bad applications, particularly for larger grants.

### *Conclusions*

SI has an efficient administrative system for its grant management, and the addition of new staff with a development background has increased competence. A number of improvements have been made in the information given to applicants regarding the program's connection to development and poverty alleviation. The information however, still remains brief, with little concrete guidance for applicants on how to approach the developmental aspect in their intervention. The same information and requirements apply for all sorts of projects, from a small travel grant to mid size projects with 300 000 SEK in budget. Attempts have been made to introduce a deeper and systematic analysis into the internal screening process, but with little concrete success: a lot of the discussions regarding if a proposal should be approved or not remain informal and undocumented. There is really no way at this stage that SI can analyze the flow and content of applications in a systematic way.

### *Recommendations*

The application process should be revisited, with consideration given to the following aspects being recommended:

A tiered system should be introduced, such that those seeking large grants will have to provide more detailed information, and have programs more obviously satisfying the development goals of SI/Sida, than those seeking medium-sized or small grants.

More information should be made available to applicants (especially those seeking larger grants) regarding the objectives of the SI/Sida collaboration (what the objectives are, and why they are important), and regarding how it is expected that activities funded through these grants will help in the achievement of these objectives.

Although applicants should be able to keep their freedom of submitting applications in a format they feel comfortable with, SI would make sure that all necessary information is provided, whether in writing or discussions. If the applicants choose not to use a standard template for the application, they should ensure that all required information is provided, perhaps through reference to a checklist of key items, to be made available by SI. Audited financial reports should be requested over a certain budget.

Care should be taken not to overload the process. There is no need for additional bureaucracy, or more documents per se. SI's unique role as a flexible grant maker should be preserved. SI could ensure the systematic analysis by the creation of a simple database where all application components are entered, allowing aggregation and analysis.

### 4.3 Implementation

The question of implementation will here be discussed in a narrow sense, focusing on observations of projects being implemented in Ethiopia and Senegal. The idea is to give complementary information to aspects that need to be considered when projects or activities are being implemented, in addition to what is being commented on, regarding preparations, effects and follow-up.

During the two-week study trip to Ethiopia and Senegal, nine on-going projects were visited which generated the following observations and remarks:

#### *Ethiopia*

**A drama workshop** was conducted June 22–26, led by two prominent Swedish directors/producers. A group of prominent Ethiopian actors and directors went through an action-learning workshop focusing on children's perspectives, creativity and dealing with traumatic subjects. In the end children from an orphanage joined them and developed plays from their lives. The Swedish competence and approach was clearly appreciated and relevant skills were taught during the week. SI was seen as a good support in developing the project and thinking around themes such as democracy and human right. Some synergy observed with SELAM-staff. The project is relevant for freedom of expression and access to information.

**Ethiopian Reflection** is a private company involved in a project of building glass furnaces and glass blowing capacity, supported by a Swedish artist as a consultant. The project partly funded the purchase and assembly of a production unit, as well as training of glass blowers (SEK 490 000). The project has been delayed and faced practical problems, not least in the areas of contracts, responsibilities, insurance for visitors which were not anticipated in the planning process but had to be solved along the way. The developmental aspect depends on if the private owners will carry on plans for training poor youth possibly sponsored by other development agencies. Outcomes in terms of new skills can be observed, potentially also relevant for local production, economic growth and development on a small scale.

**SELAM** runs a number of projects in Ethiopia, funded from Sida, SI and SAC which creates synergy and makes it difficult to separate components and talk about attribution. The Swedish coordinator has a long experience in the country and vast network in the music and cultural scene. The scope of SELAM's interventions is coupled with clear ideas on what it takes to achieve impact in areas such as the legal framework, structural challenges and the market potential for music. During the latest SI-funded project (SEK 360 000), concerts and workshops with a salsa band (including events in Mali) SELAM did not address gender equality in any real way, and did not address freedom of expression in a country with growing fear and auto-censorship. At best, the level of consciousness may have been raised, but it is difficult to assess by how much. More could be expected of key actors like this who receive major grants, operate over time and build programs. Outcomes are mainly new practical skills for musicians and meetings, knowledge of musician's rights, exchange and practical knowledge-transfer. SELAM has learned about LFA from Sida and it was acknowledged (reluctantly) that this triggered deeper analysis and improvements of the activities.

A new project, ARIF Publications does not seem well conceived. There have been major difficulties in registering the Association – and that question was not processed before the application was approved. SELAM recognizes the need to focus on music, and concretize results.

**Circus Debra Berhan** currently has an ongoing project with Angered's theatre through SI and a long history of cooperation with Sweden. A simple but functional center has been built in the remote town of Debra Berhan, providing space for a cultural center for local children, among them hearing-disabled. Outcomes can be observed in terms of the children's competence in different circus-related skills, but also the social support and network that the centre offers. The centre's activities collapsed some five

years ago with a massive defection to Sweden by both leader and children, but have now been rebuilt with a young leadership. Discussions are ongoing with two cultural institutions in Goteborg who have plans for substantial cooperation. Coordination between the two Swedish organizations, thorough organizational analysis and risk analysis of such major projects is critical for success.

The embassy in Addis Ababa has reportedly not been involved in the preparations for the new Creative Force program in East Africa, but was contacted during a major event organized by SELAM in Addis Ababa.

### *Senegal*

**Husby-Dakar** is a project of exchange between various crafts artists that was implemented 2005–2006 in two stages. The objective was to strengthen relations and facilitate exchange mainly around workshops organized in Senegal and Sweden. Themes like gender, HIV and anticorruption were not dealt with explicitly but Senegalese noticed that Swedish women had unusual tasks and roles. The bilateral project has been halted due to problems on the Senegalese side on deciding who should be the appropriate counterpart. Individual contacts have continued and a spin-off project was initiated by one of the participants. Employment and income generation could have been expected outcomes but no such results were visible at this stage. A continuation is being studied.

**The Transit concept** is still in the preparation phase but has attracted great interest from the Senegalese side. Authorities expressed the view that access to new ideas could very well create local growth and employment, and that the concept is fully in line with national needs and plans. It's all about knowledge transfer between institutions and artists, aiming at creating an incubator for designers and artists helping them to create a business.

**Malmö-Dakar** is a project where the Malmö Konstmuseum and the Dakar Biennale engaged in exchange visits between the two countries from 2005–2007. Interviews suggested outcomes in terms of access to ideas, new ideas for the biennale as well as benefits for individual artists. The partnership with Sweden is appreciated because of mutual respect and strong sense of professionalism. No concrete activities around the key themes were reported but it was underlined that arts have a rich potential for creating employment.

**The embassy** reported being aware of and generally supporting SI's activities and projects. From their perspective, West Africa is perceived as a generally neglected area in MFA and Sida policies.

**Ale Möller Band** has made a tour in Senegal coordinated by ZENIT productions. Apart from concerts it was reported that this is the only group working seriously with workshops for musicians, sound technicians and others when doing a tour in Senegal. More of that kind of knowledge-transfer was requested. Target groups were musicians, festival visitors and the general public. There was no sign of other themes or questions being dealt with.

**Empire des Enfants** is a social centre for abandoned children that has cooperated with Interkult and Cirkus Cirkör for training of a trainer around circus skills. Freedom of expression was relevant to the coordinator opening new ways for communication. The gender equality aspect was dealt with through the participation of girls, a rather radical idea in the local society. The original target group of street children stays too short a time at the center to really learn the skills and make up a group – and can therefore not count on this as a job creation which was one of the original objectives. Children in the neighborhood complement the group and provide continuity. The circus activities are an appreciated part of the rehabilitation. The trainer has bigger ambitions which the centre may not be able to accommodate.

### *Conclusion and recommendations*

All the visited activities clearly contribute to exchange and transfer of skills and knowledge. Cultural workers are the primary target group as professionals from Sweden and the partner country meet, share and learn. Most projects have a history of repeated partnerships. On the other hand, themes like gender equality, HIV and anticorruption are not dealt with in depth. The same goes for freedom of expression. The vagueness in plans, agreements and applications makes it difficult to look for and document outcomes in any of these areas.

As Swedish tax-payers' money is being invested in these small projects, more could be done to ensure that these projects aim to achieve appropriate goals in terms of development themes, are achieving what they set out to achieve, and that we can *know* this. The signs of a real program are not there yet, there is little synergy between partners, a lack of information among local partners and a need for SI to be more present, study the context and see what other major players engage in to look for synergy and avoid duplication. Alternatively this context analysis should be provided by the embassies, which is not the case today. Organizational analysis needs to be improved as well as risk analysis especially when moving into larger and more complex activities.

Key recommendations are:

1. In all cases, SI and the parties in receipt of funding should be clear about the objectives of the mini-project under consideration, its target group, its duration, the sources of additional funding (if any), reporting requirements, and exit strategy.
2. Monitoring needs to be improved, both in the regularizing (or at least the content) of reports submitted to SI, and in monitoring through inspection visits, whether these are done by SI staff, by officials from the Swedish Embassy, or other designated personnel.

## **4.4 Outcome (if possible impact)**

### **Outcome**

When impact is used in the narrow sense – as in logframe analysis for example – it is complemented by the word outcome, which refers to short and medium term effects on the attitudes, skills, knowledge, or behaviour of groups or individuals.

Sida's definition of outcome above is fairly straight forward, outcome is about people learning new things or changing their behavior. It is not quite as simple in the cultural exchange program administered by SI and funded from Sida. In the documents regulating the funding from Sida, there are a number of different concepts and terminologies which can be confusing. This evaluation is asked to assess if the funded programs have produced the desired outcomes. Then, we first need to understand what the expected outcomes are, which is not all that clear in the above mentioned references.

For the evaluated period there are two agreements with related documents. For 2006–2007 Sida signed an agreement with SI based on, and referring to SI's application for funding. The agreement summarizes the objectives of the program as follows: "The primary objective(s) of the program is to; through well planned, effective implementation and persistent cultural exchanges introduce approaches, values and methods influencing attitudes and cultures, and promoting transparency, democracy, human rights, gender equality and creative thinking, strengthen people's voices in poor environments through cultural exchanges with Sweden". This is a direct quote from SI's application.



It appears as if the term objectives here includes the whole chain from activities and “how” questions to values and the promotion of five large concepts. The verbs “introduce”, “promote” and “influence” indicate a desire to see change in these areas. The underlying document, SI’s application for funds for 2006–2007 discusses in general terms international development cooperation and culture and the overall goal of contributing to create conditions where poor people are able to improve their conditions. A reference to Sida’s (at the time new) cultural policy is made.

For the second agreement, covering the period 2008–2009, the agreement itself only mentions that “the primary objective of the program is to strengthen people’s voices in poor environments through cultural exchanges with Sweden”. In addition, SI’s application for that period is part of the agreement and further discussed below.

In both agreements, under the reporting section reference is made to something called “*dialogue questions*” including criteria for assessing applications, information, risk assessment but also the need to prove that identified target groups have been reached (children, youth, women, minorities and the poor individual). Another dialogue question in the two agreements is “how gender equality, HIV-prevention, anticorruption and transparency has been addressed (or literary touched upon) in the exchanges”.

The complexity of the matter is further illustrated in SI’s application for 2008–2009 where SI elaborates on objectives under several headings in the document.

“As a small organisation with a key role in Sweden’s Public Diplomacy, focus lies on an active involvement in communication and exchange with the world. The objective is to ... strengthen/promote democracy, transparency, gender equality and respect for human rights”. One of SI’s objectives is to create mutual profitable relations with the world around us through culture, politics, trade and development work. Then reference is made to “profile questions in development work” which at the same time contribute to creating good-will for Sweden such as gender equality, sustainability, new creativity and cross-sector development. These profile questions are supposed to be guiding principles for the development work.

If we look at Sida’s internal assessment memo linked to the 2008–2009 agreement, reference is made to an “Objective” followed by “The focus of SI’s work is to actively work with communication and international exchange. The *focus areas are equality, sustainability, democracy, child’s rights, freedom of expression and new creativity*.”

Moreover, Sida’s internal memo states that “The *objectives* of the exchange program supported by Sida is to *promote democracy, freedom of expression and equity*. ... An *important aspect* is to create opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners to build networks and contribute to regional and local knowledge sharing.”

Do we have three groups of outcomes here? First; *Focus areas*; Equality, sustainability, democracy, children’s rights, freedom of expression, new creativity. Then; *objectives* which are partly the same but overlapping. Thirdly there is something called an *important aspect*; create opportunities for professionals to meet and cooperate etc.

All in all, we find around fourteen (14) major themes, objectives, focus areas, dialogue questions, profile questions, outcomes or whatever we like to call them – that SI is expected to promote and deliver on:

anticorruption, children’s rights, creative thinking, democracy, development without boundaries, equity, freedom of expression, gender equality, HIV-prevention, human rights, new creativity, opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation, sustainability, transparency.

It is not obvious to understand how SI is expected to navigate, facilitate change and monitor all of these complex areas. In fact it is impossible. The real risk is that big, abstract words are generated and pushed down the system to local organizations without ever becoming actionable and therefore not producing the desired results. They will then risk being just forgotten or pushed back up through the reporting system and surface as vague, generalized accounts making it impossible to know what has happened.

This evaluation has tried to as systematically as possible, go through some of these concepts and look for evidence of effects in the documents and projects reviewed. Not surprisingly it is difficult to cut through this group of large and partly overlapping concepts and come up with a clear picture both of what Sida expects – and of what SI has delivered.

In a systematic review of 30 project documents, covering the three year period 17 (57%) claimed contributing to at least one of the themes democracy, freedom of expression, child's rights or equity in some way. According to the subsequent *reports*, 16 (53%) of the projects reported having dealt with one or more of the themes, most commonly with freedom of expression (8), followed by children's rights (4). When reporting on how the themes were dealt with, there was little offered in concrete: rather, reference was made to "food for thought", "discussions", "touching upon".

An attempt to gauge activities regarding the key themes democracy, children's rights, freedom of expression, gender equality and equity in the web surveys failed because of a technical mistake making it impossible to draw any conclusions regarding the respondents' rating of this particular question. See question 4 in annex 5 and 6.

In the free comments to the same question, many respondents chose to comment on gender equality and freedom of expression in different ways, with examples such as women leading workshops, promotion of women entrepreneurs, giving opportunity for alternative groups to voice their concerns, projects being practical examples of freedom of expression, bringing up censorship in discussions and involving these topics when training trainers.

Observations during the field trip in Africa revealed that there were few if any accounts of how these themes had been addressed in a way leading to change that could be observed. As reported above, there were anecdotal accounts and reflections around gender equality, children's rights and freedom of expression. These positive but fragmented reports need to be a subject of more of intentional planning, and systematic reporting.

### *Conclusions*

A major question for the evaluation is to assess if the cultural exchange program is producing the desired outcomes. A review of agreements and key documents show that the whole issue of outcomes consists of a host of different, very general and sometimes overlapping concepts. The vagueness in objectives persists right through from applications to reports all the way to the annual reports submitted to Sida and makes it difficult to know if results have been achieved.

Judging from the document review and field observations, key themes describing outcomes are not dealt with in a systematic way leading to change or effects that are reported. Discussions and free contributions indicate that activities contain elements of the topics but mainly limit themselves to topics of discussions and indirect allusions.

### *Recommendations*

SI and Sida need to discuss and agree upon a realistic level of result in terms of outcome that can be expected from this type of interventions. Interventions also need to be segmented according to budget and scope with differentiated expectations on results. As mentioned earlier, SI needs to break down, facilitate and help organizations to plan for limited but realistic activities with a clear idea of the desired change.



Ideally, SI and Sida should design a logical framework. Normally, such a framework would have a large number of outputs, leading towards a limited number of outcomes, that lead to a single objective. However, there can be flexibility. There can be more than one objective, for example. But there needs to be a logical progression from any activity through to at least one of the objectives. SI has initiated an LEA-process in the preparations of its 2008 plan of action that involved applying organizations. This should be continued and developed, by working out a logframe for each major organization feeding into a global framework. If such a framework was made clear at this, the macro level, then it will be easier to demand of those applying for grant funding that they similarly think through their own activities, outputs and objectives at the micro-level, i.e. for their individual projects. Ideally, of course, the outputs of these mini-projects could evolve to be inputs for the achievement of SI/Sida's macro-level results.

A first step in this process would be to revisit the various objectives, 'focus areas' and 'important aspects' and, looking specifically at this SI/Sida collaboration, to place some or all of these within a logical framework,

Overall, there seems to be two key objectives that this SI/Sida collaboration is working towards:

- Objective 1: enhanced understanding and cooperation between the people of Sweden and the people of ODA-countries in the developing world
- Objective 2: sustainable and equitable development facilitated for disadvantaged individuals and groups in (some countries in) the developing world

The awarding of grants (output) will, depending on the nature of the mini-project being supported, work towards one or more of the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1.1: Swedish people have greater understanding of the cultures, needs and interests of those in the developing world
- Outcome 1.2: Those in the developing world have greater understanding of the cultures and interests of the Swedish people
- Outcome 2.1: Enhanced equity between people, regardless of gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.
- Outcome 2.2: Enhanced freedom of expression and creative thought
- Outcome 2.3: Enhanced recognition and adherence to rights, including human rights, women's rights and the rights of the child
- Outcome 2.4: Enhanced support for those living with and/or affected by HIV and AIDS, enhanced awareness about the condition, and, consequently, reduced stigma/discrimination
- Outcome 2.5: Enhanced financial probity, through strengthening of accountability and transparency, and through tackling of corruption

Any application for grants for a project should be able to demonstrate that some/all of the outputs of the project will contribute to one or more of the above outcomes. Decisions as to which of a number of competing projects are awarded grants will depend on, amongst other things, (1) the relevance of the outputs to the achievement of the SI/Sida collaboration outcomes; (2) the impact on the lives of the intended beneficiaries; (3) the distribution of benefit (e.g. number of disadvantaged people who will benefit directly and/or indirectly); (4) the size of grant sought; and (5) the risks entailed.

Once these basics have been decided (all the above are simply illustrative of what could be drawn up), then the streamlining of application processes, the setting of criteria for selection of projects to be awarded grants, the setting of targets, and the monitoring and evaluation of program achievements, will become much more straightforward.

#### **4.4.1 Does the Swedish Institute live up to Sida's objectives?**

Interviews with different stake holders reveal slightly different perspectives. From the foreign office it is stated that SI's cultural exchange program is in line with Sida's objectives and constitute "a modern way to work with poverty alleviation. It is possible to combine promotion of Sweden and relevant interventions. Sida and the Foreign Office need to harmonize their objectives and instructions regarding development support."

Others within Sida highlight that interventions are beneficial for the relatively few people reached, but that there are serious doubts about the long-term effects of the interventions. Generally meeting between different actors is seen as a good thing. Culture is said to have the potential to play an important role in terms of questions like identity, influence and for discussing power relations. In the long term it can be assumed that culture influences societies.

SI argues that activities like a Swedish organization promoting Human Rights or freedom of expression is a relevant activity and also part of Public Diplomacy. SI is targeting agents of change and key persons. One concrete example is Young Leaders' Visitors Program in the Middle East where development funds from the MFA are used to fund a program focusing freedom of expression.

SI further argues that since last year, a group of project managers are exclusively focused on development interventions which assure a stronger focus on poverty alleviation, separated from public diplomacy.

The issue of results has been an issue all along the evaluated period – judging from a review of applications, agreements and reports between SI and Sida. In the application for 2006–2007 SI promises to increase efforts through "more thorough assessment of grant applications, extensive use of LFA and an improved follow-up through the use of indicators of results to capture the breadth and depth of the results". Those are big words and major commitments, but at first sight not so easy to implement. Subsequently not much happened during the two years of the agreement. Sida stated in its memo related to the agreement that "Progress in this area will be closely followed up throughout the agreement period". Did SI know what they promised – and did Sida have an idea whether these measures were appropriate and how they should have been implemented? In any case, nothing much happened and Sida was probably not much of a support. As a matter of fact, the entire development industry is grappling with these issues and getting beyond the buzz words takes relevant skills and hard work. In this type of environment with a very large number of small, often isolated interventions, it is obviously much harder to capture effects, outcomes and change in a meaningful way.

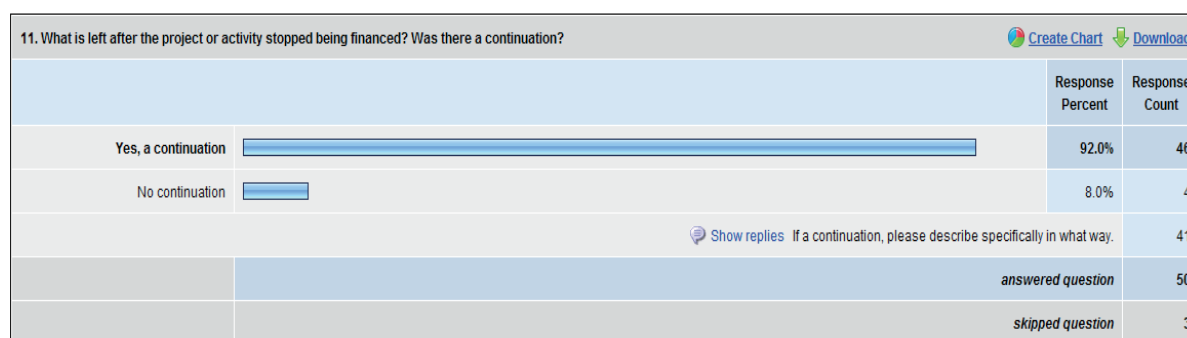
SI has in its 2008 and 2009 Plan of Action tried to work out objectives on three levels, including impact level. It is, however, not clear how the impact will happen, how SI will know if it happened or how it should be reported to donors. Even on the outcome level, there is no systematic collection of data that will enable analysis or more solid report on effects.

From Sida officers involved in the interaction with SI, the conclusion is that Sida gets results from SI on output-level, such as number of implemented activities but no aggregation or real analysis. Glimpses from partner reports are added and then there is a leap up to a global level where SI states that "there is a generally good level of goal achievement" without really giving any proof of the matter. Sida reportedly would like to see more analysis in SI's reports. This frustration and uncertainty about how to handle the matter seems to persist, and in addition there has been no evaluation since 1994 which makes it hard to get additional information about what is really happening. It has been noted that goals may be too ambitious and vague to be possible to follow-up.

The problem with results concerns many development actors and Sida reportedly intends to deal with this and find ways to improve the level of competence and reporting. Result Based Management is being discussed as a solution and but there is a concern voiced in interviews that the demand for results may lead to a situation where only simple things are being measured. Sida is looking for ways to handle this and acknowledges that SI has an experience in measuring cultural interventions.

On the positive side, what is considered *An important aspect*, to create opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners to build networks and contribute to regional and local knowledge sharing – is an aspect of the cultural exchange program which really seems to work well and produce the desired outcome.

73% of the responding Swedish coordinators chose “a lot” to assess goal achievement in this area. 65% of the international respondents indicate “a lot” and 15% “somewhat”.



In the reviewed project documents, an overwhelming 28 of the 30 reviewed project report having: “created opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners...”

The field trip confirmed this impression of professionals meeting and wanting to learn and share their experiences.

Finally, can interventions that SI is involved in produce any impact in the sense of long term change at the macro level? With the majority of interventions being scattered and occasional, it cannot be expected that they will produce systemic change at macro level. Of the projects observed, the cluster of projects (funded from Sida, SI and SAC) around music that Selam operates in Ethiopia may have the potential to create real change in the area of music, addressing areas such as technical skills, markets, institutions and legislation.

## Conclusion

Outcomes in the sense of producing change in behavior around key subjects such as gender equality, democracy etc is a task that SI has not been able to deliver upon. On the other hand, creating meetings where professionals learn and share is definitely a real outcome of the exchange program. Formulating, measuring and reporting meaningful results have been a major problem over the entire period evaluated in this review. Sida keeps asking, and SI keeps promising, but there is very little delivery.

There are some positive signs that SI is addressing the problem in a comprehensive manner, but it’s also an approach that needs adaptation to produce the kind of results and reports Sida is asking for. There is a danger that there will be too many parallel goal-structures, if SI implements an internal logic (four key areas and a monitoring system checking on Awareness, Goodwill and Relation) and then has another structure for reporting towards Sida. Keeping track of all of these and ensuring that goals play an effective role in guiding the work may be difficult. On top of this, SI has at least three other agreements with Sida. SI is also implementing other programs funded directly by the MFA.

## *Recommendations*

Sida will have to be very clear about what kind of objectives should be followed up on, and agree with SI what is realistic to do in terms of all the big concepts floating around.

SI will then have to help applying organizations to clarify the change process they want to be involved in and clearly state the problem, solution and change/outcome their application is intended to contribute to. And then, have them faithfully report on the planned intervention, to what extent change was observed. All this must be done without becoming too bureaucratic and avoiding the temptation of writing up nice things, but instead becoming more skilled in bringing about real change through conscious approaches.

As discussed earlier, a more systematic approach for SI's internal process of assessing and managing both applications and reports could produce at least a minimum of relevant data on outcomes that could be analyzed in depth.

## **4.5 Have Target Groups been Reached as Expected?**

### **Target group**

The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.

Have target groups been reached as expected, and does evidence show that benefits from the cultural exchanges have been able to reach children, youth, women and minorities living in poor conditions?

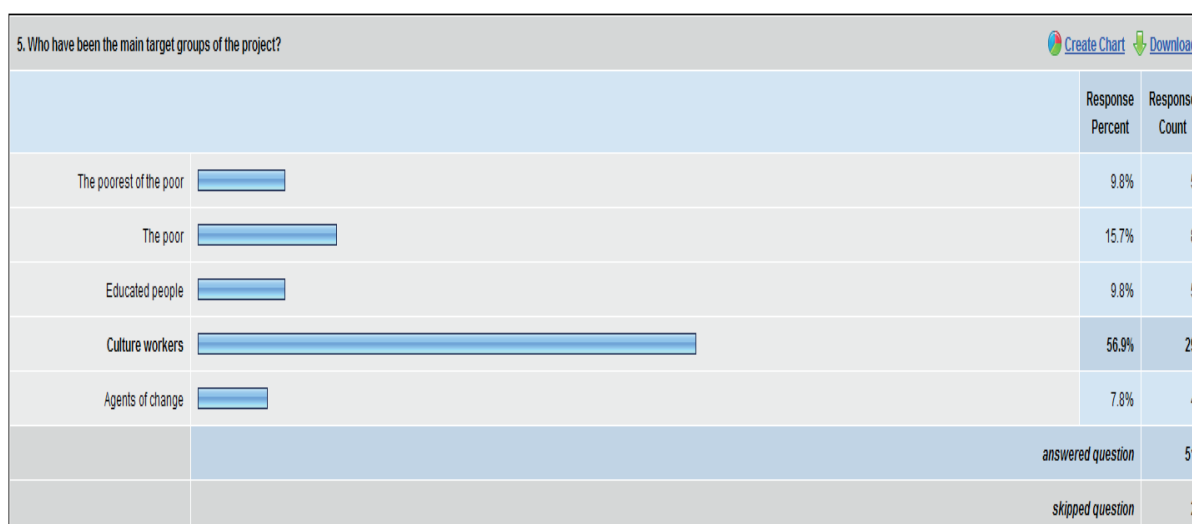
The question of target group is a recurring theme in discussions between Sida and SI. Sida on one side maintains that it wants interventions to have an effect on poverty alleviation. This can be achieved through agents of change with culture as a means to reach and influence them. Sida now accepts the language and idea of change agents but want to see a clear intervention logic that leads to the ultimate target group.

SI on the other hand, has identified the target groups it wants to work with in its 2008 application to Sida as culture workers who should be critical and contribute to change. SI sees young agents of change as its main target group but other target groups like women and children are also identified in the application. Initially the concept was designed for the work of promoting Sweden but SI believes that the concept is also viable for development interventions. For development work SI thinks in terms of a primary and secondary target group. SI however has no systematic monitoring and analysis of the target groups reached and can therefore only report general impressions with anecdotal examples.

It appears as if Sida has gradually changed on this subject and accepts the concept of agents of change. Earlier documents identify four groups (youth, children, women, minorities) as targets with a general addition of "people living in poor conditions".

In the 30 reviewed project documents regarding if the target groups were in line with Sida's priorities, the following can be observed from the project reports: there are 20 cases where Culture workers are the target group, alone or in combination with others, 5 mentioning the general public, 4 of Youth, 2 with Children, 3 instances of Women and 1 mentioning a Minority. The review of applications shows that culture workers are a clear majority and the focus of the reported interventions.

Likewise, when respondents in the Swedish web survey were given a selection of categories to indicate the main target group of their projects, they clearly indicated culture workers as the first choice.



This indicates that the main focus of the interventions is culture workers who meet for an exchange of ideas, skills and experiences.

An anonymous contribution under the open responses in the web survey gives an ideal illustration of creating examples that then in turn influence poor people:

*Through this project we have not been able to change the conditions of people's lives in the poor areas that our target group of youth come from but we have been able to 'model' what is possible for youth from poor areas. The interest of other youth in these areas has shown that there is a shift in peoples' ideas about their choices – artistic expression is in reach. Participation and interest of youth from poorer areas in our public programs have increased a lot.*

## Conclusion

In summary, the evaluation shows that the interventions have on the whole reached culture workers, with individual cases of children, youth, women being affected. SI is not monitoring the reach of those individual groups and can therefore not answer the question based on any systematic evidence only anecdotal accounts of secondary target groups.

The idea of a primary and secondary target groups and the relation between culture workers-change agents – and the expectation that they should change conditions for the poor has probably not filtered down to all applying organizations. At least there are not many signs of that thinking in the reviewed applications and reports.

## Recommendations

SI and Sida basically seem to agree about the concept of target groups but need to talk to each other about these things and formalize the understanding. A clarification is needed for applying organizations regarding which their target group is how they relate to the poor, a clear plan for change and a serious reporting about what actually happened. SI also needs to put in place systematic data collection on which target groups have been reached through different interventions in order to monitor progress and make necessary analyses.

A review of target groups may reveal that there are two conceptually distinct target groups: there are those who are being helped to stimulate change (actively), and those (passive ones) who will benefit from such change. Many international volunteer organisations recognize this reality already, noting that it is not only the target beneficiaries that benefit from the services of a volunteer, but also the volunteer

him-/her-self will gain from the experience, i.e. will also be a beneficiary. In the case of this SI/Sida collaboration, a third category of target group may also be found: the Swedish national who benefits from meeting with those from ODA-countries. This would be in line with Sida's thinking whether around where to allocate the exchange program in Sida's operations, the Swedish resource base could even be considered the primary beneficiary.

## 4.6 Effectiveness

### Effectiveness

The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

In order to review the question of effectiveness, we revert back to the applications, agreements and reports exchanged between SI and Sida. As described earlier, goal achievement has been a constant debate between the two partners. Sida has asked for clearer objectives, better mechanisms for monitoring and reporting and SI have promised to improve things. For the period 2006–2007 not much happened, but from 2008 there have been serious attempts from SI to address the situation as described above. In its report for 2008 to Sida, SI finally follows-up on promises made for the 2006 application where in response the new Creative Force is launched as a pro-active and more programmatic approach with four clear areas that will be clarified for all interventions; objective, activities, target groups, long term goals, a document proving local commitment as well as a more detailed budget in order to live up to Sida's requests for clearer objectives and results. New instructions for applicants have been developed and the implementation of StratSI is described as the solution to the need of result based management, reporting and evaluation.

The gap between theory and practice in terms of objectives, outcome, target groups and key themes has been discussed previously.

In SI's annual report to Sida for 2008, it is claimed that all 56 projects funded in 2008 can be linked to the overall goal of strengthening people's voices in poor environments through cultural exchange with Sweden.

The report further claims that "the target groups children and youth permeates most of the projects", without further proof. Regarding the dealing with themes such as HIV and gender equality, it is reported that "SI has a continuous dialogue with the Swedish partners, while few projects have minorities as primary target groups". In addition regarding target groups, it is stated that "the majority of actors are involved in a critical discussion of their contemporary societies".

### *Conclusion*

During 2006 and 2007 there were few signs of SI improving effectiveness. Since mid 2008 real efforts have been made to improve effectiveness. These measures are relatively recent and it is too early to judge their impact on SI's operations. There are still things to improve in order to move from generalized statements of goal achievement towards reports and claims of progress and change based on real data, rather than assumptions.



## 4.7 Local Ownership

The question of local ownership deals with Sida's concern about to what extent cooperating partners are actively involved in initiating new interventions, how SI ensures this dimension and if the new, more pro-active Creative Force is stronger than other interventions in terms of local ownership.

The systematic review of 30 applications concerning who initiated the project showed that a majority (17) were a Swedish initiative. 8 seem to be a result of some sort of joint Cooperation – but are unclear. 3 are a Swedish initiative but have a strong dimension of cooperation. 2 projects seem to be a product of genuine cooperation around the initiative and 1 single seems to be an initiative from South.

In relation to this, it was reviewed if applications had substantial invitations or written proof of a partner. 12 of the reviewed projects have a clear and substantial document showing an involved partner in cooperating countries. 12 also have no certificate from South and those are projects where it should be relevant to have one. For the other projects a formal certificate is not required as people mainly are visiting Sweden, but a documented relation to an organization might be meaningful even in those cases. There is a tendency of improvement over time and many of the missing invitations or certificates are from the earlier period around 2006.

In the web survey, on the question of who initiated the project, the largest group of respondents (50%) indicated that it was a joint initiative between an organization in Sweden and the cooperating country. 23% of the Swedes indicated it to be a Swedish initiative.

In the international survey, 50% also indicate a joint initiative, while a surprising 20% have chosen "local target groups" as the initiators of a project. In the open responses the story of a dance group looking for support is quoted. Even with the few respondents, that figure would merit additional enquiry.

When asked to assess the strength of the partnership, 51% of the Swedish respondents chose "strong" as the description, while 33% picked "neither strong nor weak". The international respondents had a 63% vote for "strong".

Interviews with representatives from the foreign ministry indicate on one hand that we must respect that local partners need to define their needs and priorities, but on the other hand can be confident that SI is sensitive enough to capture those priorities and that they wouldn't get any participants if activities were not relevant for partners.

Sida officials express a general concern that the program has too much of a Swedish focus and would like to see a stronger link to partners in cooperating countries. All project information is currently in Swedish and it's difficult for local partners to get first hand information about the nature and conditions for grants.

This was confirmed through interviews in Africa where several partners requested more transparent information about SI, the conditions and perspectives of grants in order to have an independent understanding of the partnership. The general impression however of the interviews in Africa was that there is a real and appreciated partnership even if it is unequal in terms of resources.

### *Conclusion*

The fact that all available information regarding grants and applications on SI's web site is in Swedish promotes a situation where Swedes take the initiatives to start activities as they have access to the relevant information. This is clearly an unequal situation that would need attention. Reviewed project documents give an impression of mainly Swedish initiatives, while surveys and interviews tend to give the picture of a joint partnership. Respondents perceive the partnerships as strong and relevant, with the exception of access to information and resources.

## *Recommendations*

SI should consider making information about grants, policies etc available in English and possibly French on its website. In addition, it could consider creating some sort of alumni network, where people who have been involved and received grants would have a chance to connect and exchange experiences, possibly connecting by e-mail in some sort of password protected site. A data base of past and present projects could also strengthen the involvement of cooperating countries as they could pick up ideas and learn from others. It should be kept simple with a summary headline, a short summary paragraph and contact details for the coordinator.

An additional advantage of allowing more people access to information about the grants is that the number of applications may increase, leading to the process becoming more competitive, resulting in applicants being motivated to take greater care in their applications, and forcing decision-makers in SI to be even more diligent in their selection processes.

## **4.8 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program**

Regarding monitoring, there is generally no step in SI's project management between approving an application and asking for a final report. Most projects or events are of a short nature and are expected to be implemented within a year.

As for evaluation, SI reportedly organizes evaluations of larger events that they have initiated and manage. A couple of successful examples<sup>7</sup> have been reported where in-depth evaluations have informed and improved a new phase of a project. SI refers in applications and reports to Sida to its internal monitoring system StratSI as a framework that will ensure monitoring and evaluation. It is too recent to be able to assess its relevance and impact on the cultural exchange program.

For the sample of projects analyzed through the project documents, out of 27 reviewed reports, 16 have an acceptable or good level in terms of following up on objectives or at least outputs. This is a minimum level requiring that they at least follow up on planned activities, on the output level. In the best of cases there is some reflection and account of lessons learned. There is one (1) single account of evaluation. 11 reports are short and generally weak in terms of relating to set objectives and outcomes. With some brilliant exceptions, reports tend to be short and focusing on implemented activities. Again, the great diversity of project content and budgets makes it difficult to assess all reports through one format.

SI has consciously worked on improving internal capacity over the last year, recruiting people with development background and launching an ambitious system for monitoring and follow-up. An important element of the monitoring is the follow-up trips SI staff undertakes to places like Damascus (dance and performing arts), Ethiopia (music), Burkina Faso (film) and Ghana (theatre). During these visits, observations are made as well as interviews as participants and systematic surveys providing valuable input and evaluation. Improvements of the reports have been made by the introduction of a new format in 2009 for more content and consistency.

StratSI is a comprehensive system for measuring results on an organizational-wide level including all of SI's operations. The main focus is to follow up on three areas – as described in SI's internal plan of action for 2009:

- **Awareness/knowledge** – measurable goals for number of grants, projects, events and media coverage.
- **Goodwill** – percentage of the partners who should be satisfied or positive towards SI's services, or in their own assessment indicate that they have gained increased knowledge/interest and capacity to promote questions related to an open, democratic and social development.

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<sup>7</sup> A MENA project-related workshop in Damascus, 2008



- **Relation** – percentage of the cooperating partners who estimate that they will have future active relationships of importance for openness and democracy. Percentage of the local cooperation partners has created active, local networks immediately after an activity. A specific number of projects should be the result of the exchange.

It is good to set specific targets and this is a serious effort to at least capture the attitude and perceived satisfaction of partners and beneficiaries. This system will also, rightly used, secure the collection of a minimum of hard facts on the output level, such as number of events, participants etc. Obviously this has to be complemented with other forms of evaluations, surveys and discussions that penetrate on a deeper level. Despite examples when SI has carried out such in-depth evaluations, evaluations do not seem to have been much used to improve operations, either from Sida's side (who have not evaluated this program for 19 years), or at SI during the evaluated period.

#### *Conclusions and recommendations*

In order to continue improving monitoring apart from what is being done through StratSI and follow-up trips, SI can substantially improve its monitoring through a more systematic assessment or reports which will also allow for aggregation of results if reports are broken down to collect data on target groups, key themes etc.

SI could consider testing the methodology of Most Significant Change (MSC) which is a narrative method for capturing accounts of change, through stories yet systematically, using the fact that each grant will have an audience or participants. Stories of most significant change in an intervention could be put on the web site and people then allowed to vote for them.

Organizations implementing larger projects should be encouraged and possibly trained in conducting simple but relevant auto-evaluations and document them in order to learn lessons and improve performance.

## **4.9 Sustainability**

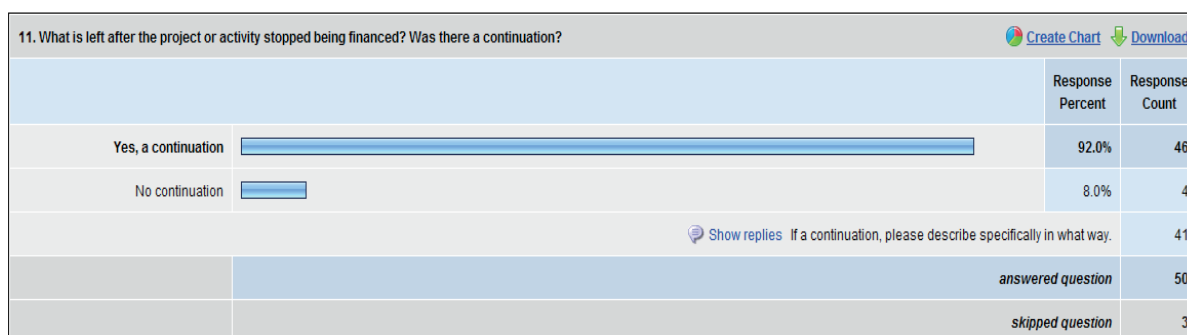
### **Sustainability**

The likelihood that the benefits from an intervention will be maintained at an appropriate level for a reasonably long period of time after the withdrawal of donor support.

On a general level, SI's management has expressed the ambition to develop long-term relations and not only short-term grant making. The question of continuation is also raised in the instructions to applicants.

The question of continuation and sustainability of funded projects is complex. A review of the project reports inspected shows that 8 of 28 projects had clear plans for the future. Another 8 wanted to continue but would require external support. 7 projects had vague ideas or it was impossible to get a clear idea of a potential continuation from the reports. 5 had no plans for a continuation of that specific activity or with that group of people – but the event may be a recurrent Biennale or festival.

Around 90% of the respondents, both in Sweden and internationally in the web survey indicate that projects continue, one way or the other, after the initial funding.



The free comments in relation to this question give a rich variety of cooperation, such as recurrent festivals, cooperation with other funders, ongoing contacts, exchange and new projects as spin-offs from the initial project.

Connected to this issue is the discussion around what kind of expectations in terms of sustainability you can have on cultural activities in general. The Partner Driven Cooperation discussed under 4.13 links to this issue of sustainability since that concept requires that a funded project should be sustainable (in the sense of having other than development funding) after a period of years.

### Conclusions

The data collected indicates that many projects continue in one way or another, in very individual ways. No conclusive figures are available, but it is a fact that many projects come back to SI for funding, or find other ways of financing their activities. SI discusses the question of sustainability with applicants but the issue of auto-financing is not obvious for cultural activities whether in Sweden or partner countries, though in some cases it is possible to access internal public funding to secure the cultural activities.

## 4.10 The Value Added of SI's Output Driven Model

SI's cultural exchange program has historically been totally demand-driven<sup>8</sup> in the sense that Swedish organizations, groups and individuals have been invited to apply for funding for exchange visits and projects in ODA-countries. In that sense activities could not really be planned. As from mid 2008 a new pro-active approach, Creative Force has been launched where SI takes a new role and more pro-actively encourages programs in West- and East Africa. That component received 3.6 million SEK of the 2008-budget while the traditional demand driven projects received 13.9 million SEK (79%).

Since the program has only been in operation just over a year, it is too early to draw any conclusions. The program is still being developed and would probably need more time to produce results in terms of stronger synergy among organizations both in Sweden and partner countries. The potential is definitely there and more work would have to be done in the regions in order to strengthen the program component. The recommendations under the heading local ownership on making information accessible to partner countries has implications for improving an equal program work as well.

<sup>8</sup> As discussed elsewhere, information on grant-application processes is made available in the Swedish language only. This means that Swedes will normally have to be involved in the early stages, and may even be the initiators. Thus the "demand" may in many cases be felt to have come from on-site Swedes rather than the principle beneficiaries themselves.

#### **4.11 Is the Swedish Institute or the Swedish Arts Council the most Appropriate Institution to Administer a Cultural Exchange Program with ODA-countries?**

The question of whether SI or SAC is the most appropriate institution to administer a cultural exchange program with ODA-countries is complex and problematic. The question was not emphasized in the ToR, and it is really not possible to fully investigate this question within this evaluation which is primarily assessing SI's operations and performance.

In the documents referred to in the ToR, (Appropriation Directions and the Budget Bills for the Swedish Arts Council 2008 and 2009, relevant Ordinances for the Swedish Arts Council) especially the budget bill for 2009 reference is made to both the increased role of culture in the international work in general, and the importance to closely link the promotion of Sweden, as well as the promotion of democracy, development work and the private sector to the area of culture.

Reference is further made to SAC's increased responsibility for international cultural activities. The responsibility includes a coordinating role in the field of culture as well as coordination with other political sectors. What exactly this coordinating role in the field of culture is to be is not clear and needs to be clarified.

SAC is in the process of working out a framework for its cooperation with Sida, including a recently signed frame agreement, yet to be filled with more substantial development interventions. SAC has relevant experience in this area for example through the Swedish-South African Culture Partnership programme which was established 2004 with support from both countries. SAC manages the Swedish side of this partnership. In South Africa, the equivalent responsibility lies with the South African Department of Arts and Culture. The final report on the programme is due end of September.

SI's operates in four area of politics; foreign policy, international development cooperation, education and reform cooperation in Eastern Europe. Working with culture is an integral part of its role in the public diplomacy.

SI and SAC have had an established cooperation between the two organisations over many years which seems to have become less intense lately possibly due to competition and unclarity of roles which in turn is a result of SAC's extended but unclear mandate.

It appears only to be in the area of support to translation of Swedish literature that a division of roles between SI and SAC has occurred. Even this was a difficult process ending in a request to the government to clarify conditions and objectives for the international cooperation around literature. The key question appears to be whether promoting Sweden or Cultural Policy should be the prime objective for the interventions. A clarification on this issue is needed from the government which can provide a framework for international cultural exchange.

This evaluation cannot conclude on selecting one institution for administering a cultural exchange programme with ODA-countries. It will provide some input and rather suggest that the two institutions are given clear, separate mandates to complement each other. If that is not possible the alternative is that one institution is designated lead agent for all international cultural interventions and the other could support and follow suit.

A situation of clear roles built on comparative advantages is in the interest of Sweden's international cultural relations and all parties involved.

##### *Ideas for division of roles*

In order to clarify roles, a division could be envisaged where SI focuses on shorter exchange and events with a continued geographical focus on East and West Africa where they can test the program approach. SI could also probably qualify for Partner Driven Cooperation

As for SAC they could focus on heavier programs aiming at institutional support, changing of cultural policies and can also build networks with other countries like EU when appropriate. They could also qualify for Partner Driven Cooperation.

In the light of the above, the following actions are suggested to clarify the situation:

1. The respective ministries have to clarify mandates for each institution
2. Meetings between Director Generals may help clarify roles and build bridges
3. A mapping of projects, sectors, themes and geographical areas where interventions overlap or clash may help sort things out
4. Facilitated meetings between staff could improve cooperation

#### 4.12 Partner Driven Cooperation

*“The objective of actor-driven cooperation is to stimulate and strengthen the emergence of self-supporting relationships of mutual interest between Swedish actors and actors in low and medium income countries in order to contribute to the objective of international development cooperation or the objective of reform cooperation in Eastern Europe.”<sup>9</sup>*

Interviews with key people at Sida responsible to develop Partner Driven Cooperation in the development sector underline that the objective of PDC is to create a win-win situation between Swedish actors and those in Partner countries as well as poor people. There are other possible objectives such as European Integration. It's a specific form of development cooperation where the partners have to meet certain requirements and the intervention should be of catalytic nature, limited in time and have a potential to be sustainable, or at least funded through other channels than development funds.

Sweden wants to be part of fast growing economies and this is one way of being connected with countries like India, China, Vietnam and South Africa who no longer qualify for development assistance. Sweden has an agenda and also values formulated in its public diplomacy regarding gender equality, openness and children's rights. PDC involves all categories of actors and they all have to sign up to the underlying values. One successful cluster has been established in the mining sector where institutes, companies, trade unions and others join forces and create a strong cluster.

Culture is not obvious as a stand-alone component but can be more of a cross-cutting theme and SI has a wide variety of activities relevant to Corporate Social Responsibility. Sustainability is a challenge but possible in fields like media and music, exemplified by the thriving music sector in West Africa.

At the time of the evaluation, the concept of PDC was not quite clear to SI management, but there is an openness to get involved in this type of cooperation and SI has an experience of working with actors who have not previously been involved in cooperation. Partner Driven Cooperation is therefore in line with what SI does and can do and interviews indicate that SI has a potential role to play in PDC, possibly as a facilitator as described below.

“Third parties are specifically tasked by Sida to act as *facilitators* without actually managing any forms of support. This task includes providing information, promoting, supporting and facilitating for Swedish actors and actors in cooperating countries to develop their relationships. The task also encompasses involving other actor groups in these activities: business/industry, public administration, research, civil society. This may take the form of larger-scale institutional cooperation (e.g. the Swedish Trade Council) as well as more minor activities such as those of the Swedish Energy Agency in Vietnam.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGU)

<sup>10</sup> Reporting on Sida's activities aimed at the implementation of the Policy for Actor-driven Cooperation within Development Cooperation, June 2009

## 5. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

### *Conclusions*

This evaluation has found that significant benefits have been realised through the Cultural Exchange program, which has seen a large number of projects in many countries supported by grants awarded. Furthermore, during the course of the program, steps have been taken to move away from an activity-based focus, towards a more heavily results-centred focus. It is clear, however, that more can and must be done in this endeavour, to ensure that the Swedish tax-payer realises maximum benefit from the program.

The evaluation itself, both the drawing up of the TOR for the evaluation, and the desk review and interviews, would have been easier to manage and more effective if a clearer results-based framework was in place, for it is difficult to assess the extent to which objectives have been achieved if the objectives themselves are insufficiently clearly defined. If clarity could be enhanced, then there is clear potential for very much more to be achieved through this program.

At first sight, there may be resistance to the idea of setting targets, aiming for results, for fear that this process will necessarily constrain program activities and/or overburden already over-stretched staff. However, if objectives and targets are appropriately chosen and defined, they will be recognised for what they are: not as a cage that restricts, but as a cradle that supports.

### *Recommendations*

#### **5.1 Improvements for SI concerning Intervention Logic, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program**

**The first priority** is that Sida and SI, drawing from the overriding goals and principles of Sida and SI, and taking into account the hopes of this program, define clearly the objectives, outcomes and outputs of this program. On the basis of these, targets can be set with, if appropriate, indicators (quantitative or qualitative) defined so that progress towards these targets can be monitored.

**The second priority** is that the aims and achievements of this program are spelled out clearly to all stakeholders: to those likely to seek grants, and to the Swedish taxpayer who is funding them. More specifically, the following are recommended:

- Make information about grants, policies etc available in English and possibly French (as well as Swedish) on the SI website
- A data base of past and present projects should be maintained and made available on the web. This could strengthen the involvement of cooperating countries as they could pick up ideas and learn from others. It should be kept simple with a summary headline, a short summary paragraph, and contact details for the coordinator
- One aspect of the (alternatively, a separate) database could be designed to allow systematic analysis of key components like target groups, key themes, outcomes etc which would allow aggregation and analysis of results.

**The third priority** is to review and improve the grant application and selection procedures. In particular:

- Have two or three levels of project, classified according to size of grant sought. For large grant applications, there will be more rigorous requirements in terms of detail, clarity of purpose, identification of beneficiary groups, consideration of sustainability issues, and linking project outputs to the cultural exchange program's broader outcomes and objectives. Thus projects that fail to make any effort to relate to key themes such as HIV/AIDS, transparency etc., will not be considered for large grants.
- SI needs to ensure that all applicants provide all the necessary information and have at least thought through a minimum number of key questions relevant to their application: who will benefit, how and why; why it is good for Sweden to support this project; how/when the project will report its results; timing and duration of project; to what (if any) of the themes or outcomes/objectives of the cultural program will the project be related, and how; to what extent (if any) are other partners and/or local/national authorities/organisations involved; what risks are there; budget; etc.
- SI may like to choose one theme per year to focus on, and offer relevant training and a deeper follow-up and analysis. Grant applications for projects addressing the year's theme could be prioritized in some way – perhaps a certain percentage of total funding set aside for projects addressing the chosen theme.
- The SI staff team should set up and manage standard systems, to ensure that the selection process is as fair as possible. They may benefit from learning from experiences of other bodies that are tasked to approve small-grant or small-loan applications.
- In all aspects, wherever processes are improved, overriding attention must be given to keeping bureaucratic aspects to a minimum, to requiring only that information that will be used, and keeping forms and formats as simple and accessible as possible. SI's unique role as a flexible grant maker should be preserved.

**The fourth priority** is to streamline monitoring of the cultural exchange program:

- Apart from what is being done through StratSI and follow-up trips, SI can substantially improve its monitoring through a more systematic assessment or reports which will also allow for aggregation of results if reports are broken down to collect data on target groups, key themes etc.
- SI could consider testing the methodology of Most Significant Change (MSC) which is a narrative method for capturing accounts of change, through stories in a systematic manner, building on stories provided through reports. Stories of most significant change in an intervention could be put on the web site and people then allowed to vote for them, thus making monitoring an essentially interactive and enjoyable function, rather than a burden.
- Organizations implementing larger projects should be encouraged and possibly trained in conducting simple but relevant auto-evaluations and document them in order to learn lessons and improve performance.

*Other recommendations:*

- Create a web-based alumni network, where people who have been involved and received grants would have a chance to connect and exchange experiences, possibly connecting by e-mail in a password protected site. This would serve not only to improve the likelihood of grant-funded projects achieving their intended results, but would also serve the other key objective, of maintaining links between the people of Sweden and the developing world.

- In order to consolidate the new program Creative Force in Africa, there is a need for strengthened information flow between local partners. SI also needs to be more visible, to study the context and see what other major players like the EU engage in to look for synergy and avoid duplication.

## **5.2 Is SI or SAC the Most Appropriate Institution to Administer a Cultural Exchange Program with ODA-countries?**

It is not appropriate for this evaluation to conclude on selecting one institution for administering a cultural exchange programme with ODA-countries. Rather, it suggests that the two institutions are given clear, separate mandates to complement each other.

The current situation of unclarity and overlapping needs to be addressed through clear mandates for the institutions from the relevant ministries, meetings between Director Generals and a mapping of projects, sectors, themes and geographical areas where overlapping may occur.

## **5.3 Recommendations for the Future Relationship between SI and Sida in Relation to Partner Driven Cooperation**

There is significant potential to be exploited where Partner Driven Cooperation (PDC) is concerned. In the light of how new it is, it is not surprising if there are some aspects upon which SI is not yet clear, or if there are some at SI who are yet to be convinced of its value, but the evaluation sees significant benefit in SI's involvement in PDC.

PDC offers an open door, a new field for less orthodox development, through which new actors, even companies, can be invited to enter. In essence, it is a win-win situation, with the added benefit that it will facilitate connection with middle income countries.

Discussions at SI revealed that there is an interest in playing a role in the new forms and structures of development.

Interviews with Sida indicate that SI potentially has a role to play in PDC, and indeed that SI may be well placed to carry out the slightly different role of facilitator expected in the PDC model, to coordinate different actors. Furthermore, SI has experience of working with actors who have not previously been involved in cooperation.

Annexes:

- 1 Terms of Reference for the Evaluation
- 2 Contributors to the Evaluation
- 3 List of Documents Reviewed
- 4 Itinerary for Field Visits
- 5 Web Survey and Responses from Swedish Organisations
- 6 Web Survey and Responses from Organisations in Partner Countries (if you would like access to the entire material on line, please contact [robert.gustafson@visuellanalys.se](mailto:robert.gustafson@visuellanalys.se)).



# Annex 1 Terms of Reference

for the Evaluation of the Swedish Institute's (SI) Culture Exchange Programme

## 1 Evaluation Purpose

The Swedish Institute (SI) has since 1988 administered culture exchange with developing countries with funds from Sida. In the assessment memo dated 26 February 2008 it was proposed that an evaluation of SI and the culture exchange programme should be carried out. The evaluation has three purposes:

1. To follow up on Sida's support to SI and as such serve as a learning tool for both Sida and SI, as well as an instrument for Sida's overall assessment of SI and the culture exchange programme.
2. To provide input to the dialogue on the future relationship between Sida and SI in light of the extended mandate of the Swedish Arts Council (SAC) as coordinating agency for international cultural cooperation<sup>11</sup> as well as Sida's implementation of the Policy on partner driven cooperation<sup>12</sup>.
3. To provide input to Sida's further implementation of the Strategy for global development.

## 2 Background

### Information about Sida

Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, is a government agency. Our goal is to contribute to enabling poor people to improve their living conditions.

As other Swedish government agencies, Sida works independently within the framework established by the Swedish Government and Parliament. They decide on the financial limits, the countries with which Sweden (and thus, Sida) will cooperate, and the focus and content of that cooperation.

For additional information, please visit Sida's website, [www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)

### Intervention background

The Swedish Institute (SI) is a government agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that promotes interest in Sweden abroad. The institute's overarching goal is to create mutual relationships with other countries around the world, whether the issue is culture, politics, trade, or development cooperation. SI's operations are carried out in close cooperation with Swedish and foreign partners, as well as with Swedish embassies and consulates around the world.

The objective of SI's cultural exchange programme supported by Sida is to promote democracy, freedom of expression and equality. An important aspect is to create opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish practitioners to build networks and contribute to regional and local knowledge sharing. The culture exchange aims to build on and contribute to foster views, values and working methods that in a sustainable way advocates human rights, equality, democracy, transparency and creativity. The programme has been considered a valuable supplement to Sida's work within culture. It has also been an important part of SI's international work.

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<sup>11</sup> See Appropriation Directions and the Budget Bills for the Swedish Arts Council 2008 and 2009, as well as relevant Ordinances for the Swedish Arts Council (Main ordinance: 2007:1186).

<sup>12</sup> Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling – policy för aktörssamverkan inom utvecklingssamarbetet, 2007-12-19, Annex 3.



In the letter of appropriation 2006 the Government commissioned SI and Sida together to present a proposal on the direction of culture exchange with recipients countries of Official Development Assistance (ODA) as listed by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>13</sup>. In June 2006 Sida and SI proposed that the point of departure should be Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD). Moreover, SI's work had until then been solely demand driven. In order to increase impact Sida and SI agreed that SI should be more proactive/out-put driven and look at synergies between projects funded in the same countries and regions.

The current agreement between Sida and SI covers the period 2008–2009 with the amount of 28 million SEK. It is funded by Sida's global contribution and is since October 1st 2008 administered by the Team for Global Programmes. The support to SI is guided by Sida's Policy for culture and media<sup>14</sup> and Sida's Strategy for Global Development<sup>15</sup>. Sida's new organisation as well as new policies, strategies and priorities will guide Sida's future support to and relationship with SI. Relevant in this respect is Sida's implementation of the Policy for partner driven cooperation. Moreover that SAC has received a mandate as coordinating agency for international cultural cooperation.

### 3 Stakeholder Involvement

The most important stakeholders are SI, partners in cooperating countries and in Sweden that have benefited from support to and have participated in culture exchange activities, Sida, target groups in cooperating countries and in Sweden, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture.

### 4 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation *must* fulfil three objectives mentioned below (i–iii) and answer to, but not necessarily be limited to answering, the questions stated below. Emphasis *must* be put on i).

- i) to assess the effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and outcome (if possible impact) of the culture exchange programme. Emphasis *must* be put on examining effectiveness, relevance and outcome (if possible impact) although the four criteria mentioned interrelate.
  - What is the relevance of SI's culture exchange programme (goals, strategies, methods) and the work of SI's partners in Sweden and in cooperating countries in relation to Sida's goals?
  - After the completion of the exchange activity/project, is there a continuation and longevity with respect to the development effects resulting from the intervention?
  - How does SI work with local ownership and to what extent is the local ownership of participants from ODA-countries satisfied?
  - Have target groups been reached as expected, and can evidence show that benefits from the culture exchanges have been able to reach children, youth, women and minorities living in poor conditions?
  - Assess and suggest improvements for SI concerning intervention logic, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the culture exchange programme.
  - Assess the value added of SI's out-put driven model (strategy and methods and if possible results) to work more proactively and programmatically versus the demand-driven model.

<sup>13</sup> DAC list of ODA recipient countries: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/48/41655745.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Sida's Policy for Culture and Media in Development Cooperation (2006), Annex 1.

<sup>15</sup> Strategi för globala utvecklingsinsatser 2008–2010 (2007-12-27), Annex 2.

- ii) based on the outcome of i) and an assessment of central governing rules and regulations for SI and SAC assess whether SI or SAC is the most appropriate institution to administer a culture exchange programme with ODA-countries.
- iii) based on the outcome of i) and an assessment of central governing rules and regulations for SI provide recommendations for the future relationship between SI and Sida in relation to partner driven cooperation.

## 5 Recommendations and Lessons

The evaluation *must* result in:

1. A transparent discussion of conclusions and recommendations related to the evaluation objectives and questions, including how to address shortcomings.
2. Recommendations on whether and how Sida could continue to support culture exchange with ODA-countries and general lessons on how such an exchange programme can be constructed and implemented in a successful way to meet Sida's policies and strategies as well as recent trends in Swedish cultural politics and cultural life. When making recommendations for the future, the review should take into consideration Sida's Strategy for global development.
3. Recommendations on future relationships and areas of cooperation between Sida and SI with regard to Sida's implementation of partner driven cooperation, in particular in selective countries (category 5)<sup>16</sup>.

## 6 Methodology

The evaluator/-s *must* propose a suitable methodology for the evaluation. The evaluator/-s *must* interview the most important stake holders in Sweden and in selected partner countries. The evaluator/-s *must* present a detailed plan for the methodology in an inception report to Sida.

The evaluation *must* be carried out in adherence to Sida's Evaluation Manual 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition 2007 and to Dac's Evaluation Quality Standards.

The analysis is *must* include a study of relevant documentation, e.g. Sida policies and strategies, project documents, applications, assessment memos, reports and evaluations, as well as government ordinances and budget bills (2008 and 2009) for SI and SAC.

The evaluation *must* cover SI's culture exchange programme from 2006 until today (SI's and Sida's last two agreement phases, 2006–2007 and 2008–2009).

A major source of information comes from the Swedish partners. Hence, the evaluator/-s *must*, to the extent possible, try to get a "second opinion" from the non-Swedish partners and informants less at stake in the investigated partnerships, or that in other ways can add a different perspective.

## 7 Work Plan and Schedule

The evaluator/-s *must* specify the work plan and schedule in the tender documents and the contractor *must* present a detailed work plan and schedule in an inception report to Sida. The evaluator/-s *must* make at least one field trip to at least one partner country. The selection of which country/-ies to visit and partners to assess will be done by the evaluator/-s in dialogue with Sida and SI.

<sup>16</sup> See Sida's Policy for partner driven cooperation: Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling – policy för aktörssamverkan inom utvecklingssamarbetet, 2007-12-19, Annex 3.

The time needed for the assignment is estimated to a maximum of six (6) weeks (40 x 6 working hours), including the time required to prepare the inception report, the time for completing the report and a presentation at Sida of the final report.

## **8 Evaluation Team**

Sida estimates that the evaluation should be carried out by one or two persons. The evaluator/-s *must* comprise competence and experience in evaluation, development cooperation as well as cultural cooperation, exchange programmes and the cultural field in Sweden. The evaluator/-s *must* furthermore have excellent oral and written skills in the Swedish language as well as in English. If other language skills are required for the fulfilment of the assignment that the evaluator/-s do not possess, the evaluator/-s *must* make use of professional interpreters and/or translators.

The tender *must* propose a person or persons with academic or other vocational education and work experience adequate for the project. If more than one person is proposed, the tender *must* specify who is to be principally responsible for the performance of the project (team leader). The team leader proposed *must* have at least three years of experience as a responsible manager in charge of the performance of services in the relevant area.

The tender *must* include:

A description in the form of a Curriculum Vitae for the person who is to be responsible for the performance of the project as well as for other personnel. The CV *must* contain a full description of the person's/-s' theoretical qualifications and professional work experience. The CV *must* be signed by the person/-s proposed.

Two written specifications of previously performed similar projects by the proposed person/-s. The specifications *must* be signed by the principal for whom the person performed the similar assignment. The specifications *must* contain information according to the annexed form "Reference for Project Performed by an Individual", Appendix 2.1, and relate to projects performed and concluded within the past four years.

## **9 Reporting and Timing**

The evaluation *must* be started no later than 2009-05-15. An inception report not exceeding three pages elaborating on the plan and methodological design to be applied such as sampling strategies, methods of investigation and data collection must be presented no later than four days after the start of the assignment. The inception report will be subject to discussions and to the approval of Sida. A draft of the full report *must* be presented to Sida/Team for Global Programmes, no later than 2009-06-22. Sida and the Swedish Institute will comment on the draft report after which the Evaluator/-s *must* prepare the final report. When the final report has been submitted and approved by Sida a presentation of the report *must* be held in a seminar at Sida on September 2009-09-11 at the latest.

The report *must* include a presentation of the process in drawing up the evaluation design and choosing methodology. It *must* list all contributors to the evaluation (except those that have opted for anonymity).

The report *must* also include:

- List of acronyms, tables and figures
- Executive Summary
- Evaluation purpose and scope
- Methodology
- Findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations

The final report *must* be delivered by the Consultant to Sida/Team for Global Programmes on August 17 at the latest. The final report *must* not exceed 30 pages excluding Annexes and be submitted electronically and in 5 (five) hard copies.

The report *must* be written in English. The Consultant is responsible for editing and quality control of language. The final report *must* be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. The format and outline of the report *must* therefore follow, as closely as is feasible, the guidelines in Sida Evaluation Manual – 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition.

#### Annex

1. Sida's Policy for Culture and Media in Development Cooperation (2006)
2. Sida's Strategi för globala utvecklingsinsatser (2007).
3. Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling – policy för aktörssamverkan inom utvecklingssamarbetet (2007).
4. Looking Back, Moving Forward: Sida Evaluation Manual, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition.

## **Annex 2 List of Contributors to the Evaluation**

### **People interviewed in Ethiopia and Senegal**

See Annex 4 Itinerary for Field Visit.

#### **Sida**

Maria Arnqvist, Programme Officer, Team for Global Programmes  
Helen Nordenson, Senior Programme Manager, Team Selective Cooperation Southern Africa  
Pia Hallonsten, Policy Specialist, Empowerment/Human Rights and Political Participation Team  
David Holmertz, Senior Programme Manager, Regional Team for Asia.  
Ulf Källstig, Head of Team for Global Programmes  
Georg Andrén, Director, Department for Development Partnerships  
Lena Blomstrand, Head of Team for Partnerships  
Johan Åkerblom, Senior Advisor, Team for Partnerships

#### **Ministry of Culture**

Mikael Schultz, Deputy Director, Division for International Coordination

#### **Foreign Office**

Tomas Brundin, Deputy Director, Department for Development Policy  
Mia Hallén, First Secretary, Embassy of Sweden, Addis Ababa  
Agneta Bohman, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden, Dakar

#### **Swedish Institute**

Olle Wästberg, Director-General  
Thomas Carlhed, Director, Department for Branding and Coordination  
Kurt Bratteby, Director, Department for Intercultural Relations  
Maria Kron, Coordinator, Development Cooperation  
  
Anders Hellgren, Program Officer, Department for Intercultural Relations  
Anders Öhrn, Project Manager, Department for Projects and Events  
Jesper Werner, Program Officer, Department for Intercultural Relations  
Daniel Gustafsson Pech, Program Officer, Department for Intercultural Relations  
Helén Herman, Program Assistant, Department for Intercultural Relations

#### **Swedish Arts Council**

Signe Westin, Unit head, Department of Arts and Culture  
Mika Romanus, Unit head, Department of Arts and Culture  
Ellen Wettmark, Project Manager, Department of Arts and Culture

## Annex 3 A Selection of Reviewed Documents

Sida's Policy for Culture and Media in Development Cooperation (2006)

Sida's Strategi för globala utvecklingsinsatser (2007)

Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling – policy för aktörssamverkan inom utvecklingssamarbetet (2007).

Looking Back, Moving Forward: Sida Evaluation Manual, 2nd revised edition

Appropriation Directions for the Swedish Institute, 2008 and 2009

Svenska institutets policy för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete (2008)

Ansökan om medel för finansiering av kulturutbyte med ODA-länder 2008–2010

Sida's Assessment Memo of SI's Culture Exchange Programme 2006–2007

Sida's Assessment Memo of SI's Culture Exchange Programme 2008 (february 2008)

SI:s Ansökan om medel för kulturutbyte med utvecklingsländer, Balkan, Georgien, Moldavien anseende 2006–2007

Avtal mellan Sida och Svenska Institutet om stöd för kulturutbyte 2006–2007

Avtal mellan Sida och Svenska Institutet om stöd för kulturutbyte under 2008–2009

SI report: Cultural Exchanges with ODA Countries, 2006

SI report: Cultural Exchanges with ODA Countries, 2007

SI' annual report to Sida, 2008

SI's report to the Foreign Office with suggestions for directions of cultural exchange with ODA-countries

List of Projects that have Received Grants 2006–2009

SI:s verksamhetsplan för 2008

SI:s verksamhetsplan för 2009

SI Arbetsplan (kulturutbyte) 2008

SI Arbetsplan (kulturutbyte) 2009

Beskrivning av Utvecklingssamarbetets flödesschema (Internt SI document)

Utvärderingsrapport av Young Leaders Visitors Program

Studie angående Geografiska Prioriteringar, Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete

Appropriation Directions and the Budget Bills for the Swedish Arts Council 2008 and 2009

## Annex 4 Itinerary for Field Visit

Itinerary for Robert Gustafson's field trip to Addis Ababa and Dakar, June 23–July 2nd, 2009

Date	Location	Activity – Project	Local contacts	Swedish contacts
June 23	Addis Ababa			
24	Addis Ababa	Observing Drama workshop running June 22–26 lead by Suzanne Osten and Ann-Sofie Barany.  15–20 local artists, directors etc attended along with 15 orphans the last day.  Reception at the Swedish Embassy	Surafel Wondimu Manager of Aesop Communication, Journalist, Playwrighter and actor	Carin Asplund Abako Arkitektkontor AB
25		Visit to glass blowing project	Meeting Mr Roger Klenell och Ms Tigist Tesfaye from Ethiopian Reflection, both private entrepreneurs in the glass industry.	Roger Klenell Edsbjörke Glasstudio
26		Introduction to SELAM's different projects in Ethiopia and the region.	Discussion with musicians, sound engineer, club owner who were part om implementing the latest project.  Visit to a private jazz school operated by musicians as a complement to public institutions.  Evening visit to the club Alicé which has hosted several Swedish concerts.	Loulou Cherinet, SELAM
27		Visit at Circus Debra Berhan, 130 k's out of Addis Ababa.	Meeting with Mr "Henok" Teklu Ashager Director of Circus Debra Berhan, Writer, Director and some 20 children attending the centre.	
28	Transfer Senegal			
29	Dakar	Morning, planning  Husby-Dakar project	Meeting with Mr Ferdinand Diop. Head of Division at L.A.P.D.A. Project coordinator for Husby-Dakar i Senegal.	
30		10.00  12.30  Afternoon	Ms Ndéye Ngoné Fall Head master for the textile and fashion school a potential partner for Transit.  Mr. Mokhtar Diakhate, Directeur de l'artisanat. Key contact in the administration for the Husby-Dakar project.  Ms Koyo Kouoh, project manager and curator, preliminary project manager for the Transit project.	Thomas Lund Konstfack

Date	Location	Activity – Project	Local contacts	Swedish contacts
1 juli		09.00 The Dakart Biennale	Mr Ousseynon Wade, Head of the Biennale.  Mr Kasse Kalidou, Artist, entrepreneur and director for an art and design school. Meeting also with Mr Piriany, an artist involved in the exchange with Malmö Konsthall.	Malmö konsthall
		16.00 Swedish Embassy	Agneta Bohman, Ambassador. Closely familiar with the projects.	
		19.00 Meeting in Saly with the Musicians union	Mr Sacou NDIAYE Directeur Artistique de Zenith Productions	
		Musik-scenen Ale Möller Band – m m	Meeting Mr Aziz Dieng President of musicians union running a workshop on musicians rights	
2 juli		Afternoon: Empire des Enfants	Meeting with Ms Aminata Kamara (chargé des projets) at Empire des Enfants along with trainers and children at the centre.	Ida Burén
	Transfer Paris–Stockholm			



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## EVALUATION OF THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE'S CULTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2006–2009

Sida has since 1988 supported a culture exchange programme with developing countries administered by the Swedish Institute (SI). The program creates opportunities for professional meetings and cooperation between Swedish and non-Swedish cultural practitioners and aims to build on and contribute to foster views, values and working methods that in a sustainable way advocates human rights, gender equality, democracy, transparency and creativity. The main objective of the evaluation was to follow up on Sida's support to the culture exchange programme during the period 2006–2009, and as such to serve as a learning tool for both Sida and SI.

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