



Democracy and Human Rights

Democracy and human rights are essential for providing people living in poverty and under oppression with power, voice and choice to improve their living conditions. Sida's support to the thematic area of democracy and human rights amounted to SEK 6 billion in 2017. This makes democracy and human rights Sida's largest thematic area, equivalent to approximately 28 % of Sida's total disbursement 2017.



MAIN AREAS OF SUPPORT

Democracy, human rights and the principles of the rule of law is one of the prioritised thematic areas in Swedish development cooperation. A rights perspective (Human Rights Based Approach) and poor people's perspective on development are the point of departure and shall be integrated into all Swedish development cooperation. Support to democracy and human rights plays a fundamental role in combating discrimination and oppression, building democracies and reducing poverty in all its dimensions.

The Agenda 2030 declaration is strong in expressing respect for human rights (primarily in § 8), and all Sustainable Development Goals relate to a number of human rights. Democracy on the other hand is only mentioned in § 9 of the declaration, and not in the Goals themselves. Goal 16 is ambitious and has a broad agenda. It includes promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Examples of targets particularly relevant to the work of Sida within the thematic area of democracy and human rights are:

- 16.6 *Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*
- 16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*
- 16.10 *Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements*

Goal 10 targets promotion of social, economic and political inclusion and reducing inequalities in opportunities and outcomes. Special focus on combating inequalities is highlighted in Goal 10.2 and 10.3:

- 10.2 *By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status*
- 10.3 *Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.*

The rights of persons with disabilities are highlighted under Goal 4.5 and 8.5. The rights of the child are visible under a number of Goals, such as Goal 3, 4, 5 and especially;

- 16.2 *End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.*

The focus of Sida's work within the area of democracy and human rights is reflected in the volume of the support. Democratic participation and civil society is the largest sub-area (SEK 2.2 billion or 38 % of disbursements within the area of democracy and human rights), and human rights the second largest (SEK 1,1 billion or 18 %). In terms of regional distribution, most funds are allocated for development cooperation with countries in Africa (33 %) and Asia (23 %). Support to global initiatives, for example international NGOs and global UN programmes, constitutes 24 % of the total support within the thematic area.

THE GLOBAL GOALS

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development include everyone – and we can all contribute. The goals are interdependent and therefore indivisible. Sida's main contribution is to implement development cooperation, thereby reducing poverty and saving lives. Together we can build a better future where no one is left behind.



Results

DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD

From a global perspective, respect for human rights and democracy has made great advances over the last 27 years. However, serious threats and violations against civil and political rights, in particular freedom of expression, assembly and association, occur in 109 countries, including Russia and China, which means that six out of seven individuals live in countries where their freedoms are violated.

The space for exercising ones civil and political rights is shrinking for civil society actors, environmental and human rights defenders, not least women, anti-corruption activists, as well as journalists and opposition political parties. Sida's partners in many regions continue to face oppression from different actors in the form of violence, threats and increased regulations (related to registration, financing, advocacy etc.) of civil society organisations, media actors as well as increased control of internet access and freedom.

Civil society actors work hard to strengthen their capacity to adapt to these challenges, but the situation has continuously worsened over the last years in an increasing number of countries. Despite this negative trend regarding democracy, in many countries where Sweden is engaged in development cooperation, there are positive results at programme and project levels through Sida's partners' ability to act flexibly and adjust to changing political landscapes and complex, unpredictable developments.

SWEDISH SUPPORT

Sida's democracy and human rights portfolio covers many sub-areas, as reflected in tables 1 and 2. Examples of results from 2017 include:

- Media support resulted in strengthened and more independent media actors in Zambia and Mali. Focus was on local radio to increase access to information in contexts where democratic space is closing and to improve the preconditions for sustainable peace and reconciliation.
- Support in statistics and fiscal reform aiming at increased transparency, communication and capacity to deliver services to citizens resulted in property tax revenue benefiting municipal investments and service. There was a focus on equal access to information and citizens' right to transparency and participation.

Corruption constitutes a concrete barrier to escaping poverty and oppression. Research shows that the problem is more extensive and serious, and its consequences more

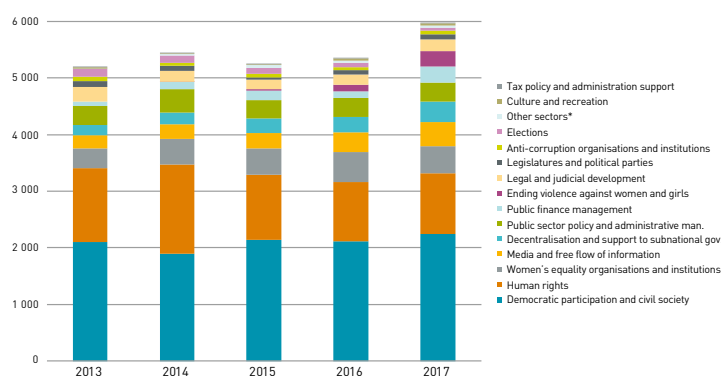
far-reaching, than has previously been known. Where corruption is widespread, virtually all sectors and functions of society are affected. Corruption undermines the rule of law and reduces trust in and legitimacy of governance and public institutions.

Sida's support to anti-corruption organisations and institutions amounted to SEK 61 million in 2017. However, this is only a small portion of Sida's support to combatting corruption in countries where Sida is engaged. Other contributions include those to improved public financial management (SEK 276 million), public sector policy and administrative management (SEK 346 million), media support and access to information (SEK 436 million).

Every year since 2006, the numbers of countries that are moving towards democracy are fewer than the number of countries where democracy is declining. In 2017, only 35 countries were moving in a democratic direction while 71 countries suffered declines in civil and political rights. The number of countries showing a decline in freedoms was the largest since the 12-year slide began.¹

¹ Freedom House "Freedom in the world 2017"

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION PER SECTORS WITHIN DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS, MILLION SEK



The Democracy and Human Rights area includes the OECD DAC Sector classification 'Government and Civil Society' (151xx) and 16061 (Culture and Recreation) from the OECD/DAC Sector group 'Other social infrastructure and services'

TABLE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION, %

