



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 6,5 billion in 2018. This makes democracy and human rights Sida's largest thematic area, equivalent to approximately 26 % of Sida's total disbursement 2018.



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 combatting discrimination and oppression, 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 several 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 right 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 2.3 billion or 35% of disbursements within the area of democracy and human rights), and human rights the second largest (SEK 1,2 billion or 19%). In terms of regional distribution, most funds are allocated for development cooperation with countries in Africa (29%) and Asia & MENA (24%). Support to global initiatives, for example international NGOs and global UN programmes, constitutes 27% 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 40 years. About 50 % of the world's population live under some form of democratic rule. However, threats and violations against civil and political rights, in particular freedom of expression, assembly and association, occur in more than 100 countries, including Russia and China, which means that six out of seven individuals live in countries where freedoms are violated.

In many countries the space for exercising 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 countries 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. Despite the negative trend regarding democracy, in many countries where Sweden is engaged in development cooperation, there are positive results at programme and project levels due to 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 2018 include:

- Support to global media actors resulted in the global campaign #Keepiton against Internet shutdowns and important policy shifts regarding gender based violence online.
- Rule of Law programmes in the MENA region have laid the foundation of a future Syrian justice system, e.g. through training of judges and lawyers and have resulted in Palestinian specialised judges and prosecutors, who deal with domestic abuse cases, emphasising women's right to protection in compliance with the law.
- Support to the parliaments in Somalia and Zimbabwe contributed to the adoption of the important Telecommunications Act in the Somalia case and to improved policies in the national budget, including prohibition of child marriages, in the Zimbabwean case.

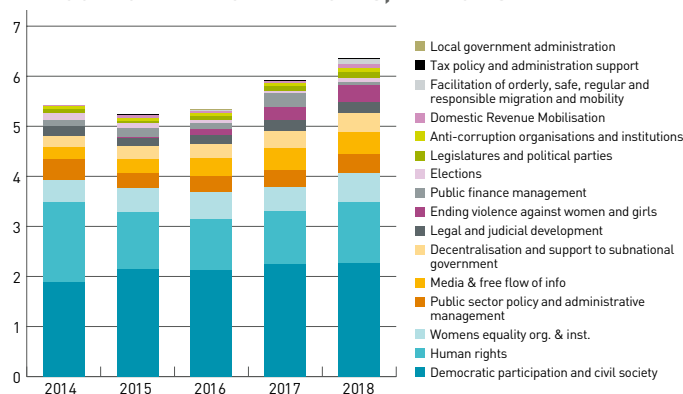
Corruption constitutes a concrete barrier to escaping poverty and oppression. Where corruption is widespread, virtually all sectors and functions of society are affected. Corruption undermines the rule of law and reduces trust in and legitimacy of governance and public institutions.

Sida's support to anti-corruption organisations and institutions amounted to SEK 97 million in 2018. However, this is only a small portion of Sida's support to combating corruption in our partner countries. Other contributions include those to improved public financial management (SEK 63 million), public sector policy and administrative management (SEK 377 million), media support and access to information (SEK 445 million).

A sign of global shrinking democratic space is that the number of countries where democracy is declining is higher than the number of democratising countries. This shift occurred in 2017 according to the V-Dem institute and already in 2006 according to Freedom House. According to the former the number of autocratising countries was 24 and the number of democratising countries 21 in 2018. According to Freedom House, 50 countries were moving in a democratic direction while 68 countries suffered declines in civil and political rights in 2018.¹

¹ Freedom House "Freedom in the world 2018", V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2019.

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, %

