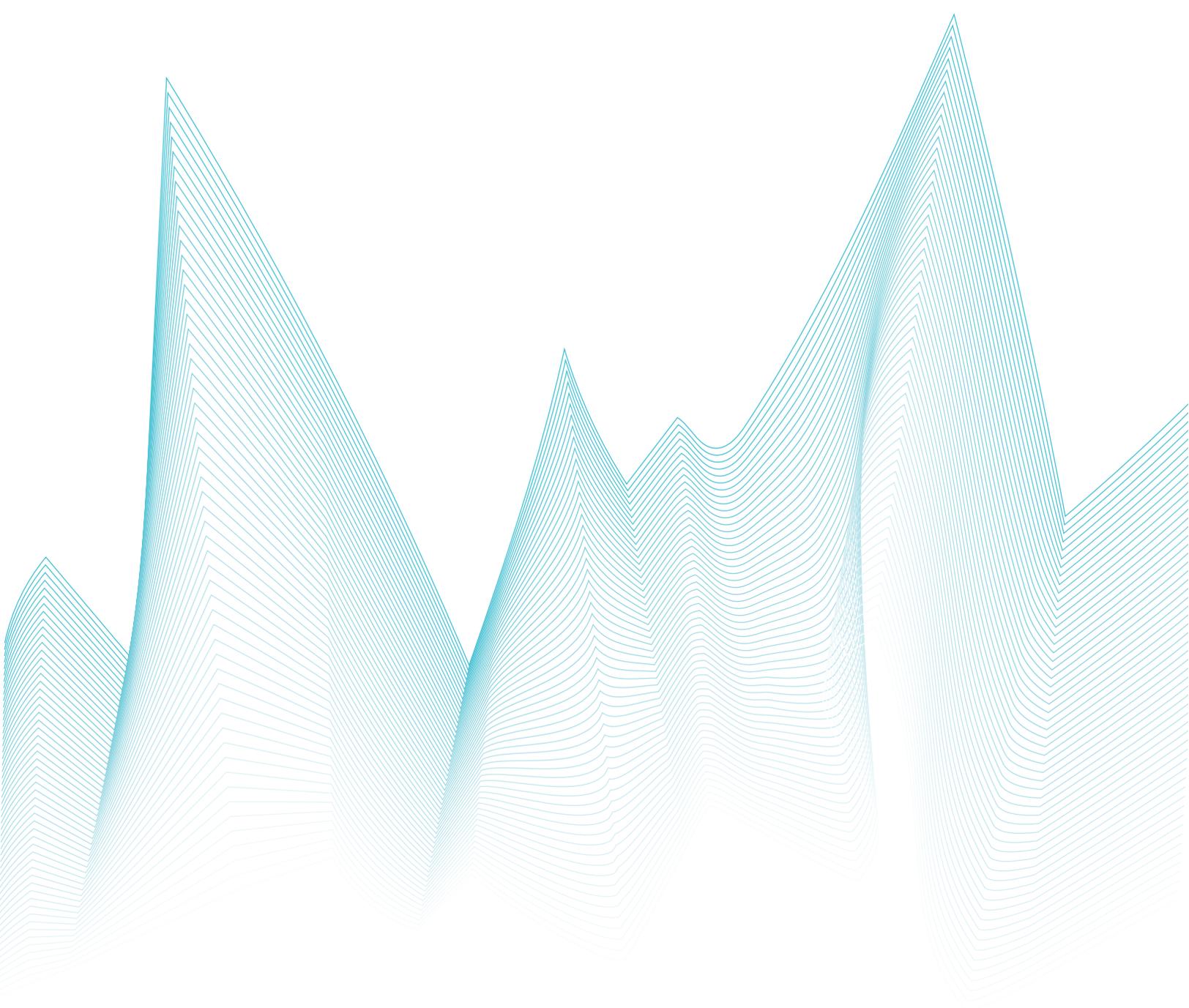




**EXPERT GROUP
FOR AID STUDIES**



2015

THE EBA AID REVIEW

The Expert Group for Aid Studies

In 2013 the Swedish Government set up an expert group to evaluate and analyse Sweden's international aid. The group has adopted the name the Expert Group for Aid Studies, abbreviated to EBA. The EBA currently comprises a chairperson and seven members, plus an expert from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The day-to-day work is carried out by a secretariat.

The EBA has a mandate to evaluate and analyse Sweden's international aid in order to help to develop this aid and build up a long-term, high-quality knowledge base. To fulfil this mandate, the EBA should order, compile, carry out and communicate evaluations, analyses and studies on the implementation, results and effectiveness of aid.



**SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR HEALTH - POLICY
OPTIONS TO SUPPORT THE GLOBAL HEALTH 2035 GOALS**

Gavin Yamey, Helen Saxenian, Robert Hecht, Jesper Sundewall and Dean Jamison



**THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK:
READY TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING AFRICA?**

Christopher Humphrey

Foreword

By 31 March each year, the EBA is to submit a report to the Government summarising the content and conclusions of the evaluations, analyses and studies published in the previous year. In the 2015 Aid Review we present the results of our work in 2014. We also briefly summarise work planned for 2015.

The goal of the EBA's operations is to help develop Sweden's international aid and build up a high-quality knowledge base on development cooperation issues. The studies that the EBA commissions should be such that they over time influence political decisions, primarily in Sweden, but also internationally. One overall aim of activities is to evaluate and analyse the opportunity of aid to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression.

The long-term direction of operations remains, but the focus of work in the years ahead builds on the experience the EBA has gained since it was established. The EBA's work in the coming year will focus on the implementation of aid and its results. These issues are linked in that the effectiveness of implementation is crucial to the results of aid.

The EBA will continue to commission experts, researchers and practitioners with unique knowledge in relevant areas to write our reports. In addition, the secretariat will produce surveys and background reports on certain specific issues.

We seek to offer new perspectives on questions that are important to Swedish aid; perspectives that can stimulate discussion and reflection and which can help to improve the effectiveness of the way aid is designed and carried out. The ambition is to provide the Government and other parties affected with useful, high-quality material on the focus, implementation and results of aid.

In 2015 we will be taking further steps to help disseminate current research on aid through a series of reports and seminars which will present the results of recently published theses. We think that the EBA may have a role to play as a link between research and the implementation of aid. Making relevant research results better known and accessible to those who work with aid is one way of contributing towards this.

In the 2015 Aid Review we summarise the main conclusions of our reports and seminars. More information on these is available on our website: www.eba.se. The website also includes recordings of seminars as podcasts.

Stockholm, 31 March 2015



Lars Heikensten, Chair

Kim Forss

Torgny Holmgren

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Hans Rosling

Julia Schalk

Jakob Svensson

Introduction

2014 was an eventful year for Swedish aid. At the start of the year the Government adopted an aid policy framework. The framework was presented as an attempt to gather a number of different policies on aid in a single document with the aim of clarifying the way aid is steered. The overarching aim of aid, which focuses on people living in poverty and under oppression, was operationalised in the framework through six sub-objectives. There was also a strong emphasis on the results and effectiveness of aid. However, the framework had barely been adopted before the new Government in its 2015 budget announced that it intends to review the focus of aid policy and revise the framework. The purpose of the review, according to the Government, will be to incorporate more perspectives and experiences from the implementation of aid on the ground and ensure that processes from the international development agenda to be shaped during 2015 are incorporated in the framework. As part of its evaluation remit, in the letter of appropriations for 2015 Sida has been commissioned to analyse in more detail different aspects including structural causes of poverty and inequality and the opportunity of recipient countries to mobilise resources.

In 2014 the Government also decided on a large number of new “results strategies” for aid. Since 2013 the results strategies have been the cohesive instrument for steering aid and are one of many expressions of a trend towards a greater focus on the results of aid. The strategies decided following the change of government, however, are merely termed “strategies”. Whether this is to be interpreted as a reduced focus on results is unclear.

In 2014 work on the new Development Goals, what is known as the post-2015 agenda, entered into a more intense phase. During fall a new ambassador was appointed for the process. Sweden’s work on the Development Goals during 2014 was guided by a number of principles. One important principle is that the new development agenda must be universal and apply to and be adopted by all countries. Another central principle is that states should be held accountable to their citizens for the implementation of the agenda. Eight meetings are planned in 2015 for negotiating the goals and it is expected that the goals will be formally adopted at the meeting with the UN General Assembly on 25–27 September 2015.



Both the aid policy framework and the post-2015 agenda influence the conditions for management of aid. However, it is too early to say to what extent these processes will affect the form aid takes or, above all, its results. One factor that directly affects the conditions for implementing aid is, however, increased costs for receiving refugees. The Government has decided that the aid budget is to constitute one percent of gross national income (GNI) and it will thus grow as GNI grows. For 2015, the aid budget frame amounts to approximately SEK 40.4 billion, an increase of approximately SEK 2 billion on the previous year. At the same time, the costs of refugee reception financed within this budget frame is expected to increase from SEK 5 to SEK 8.4 billion in 2015, which means that the funding specifically earmarked in the budget for what are termed aid activities is lower than the previous year rather than higher.

The EBA strives to provide relevant policy recommendations and to help to improve Swedish aid. In this context, we can see that the EBA's operations in 2014 are clearly linked to the important events summarised above. In early autumn a seminar was held which questioned the focus on poverty in Swedish aid, which is highly relevant in that combatting poverty is an overarching goal for Swedish aid. A report on the future Swedish health aid provided forward-looking analyses of how Swedish aid should be designed in order to attain global health aims. Future global health goals and the financing required to attain them are an important topic of debate in work on the post-2015 agenda. One of the most recent 2014 reports surveys what proportion of Swedish aid resources is spent in Sweden. The survey included the costs of refugee reception which are drawn from the aid budget.

In 2014 the EBA decided to publish five reports, and about ten studies are currently in progress. To find suitable authors the EBA carries out outreach work with Swedish and foreign universities and other relevant expert and research environments. Furthermore, the EBA has kept up to date with prevailing trends by attending relevant conferences and seminars in Sweden and abroad. Being present where important questions concerning aid are being discussed has proved to be an effective way of establishing useful contacts in order to attract the best writers for future reports and knowledgeable participants in our seminars.

In the following sections the results and the experiences gained from our reports and other activities are reported in more detail.

Photo: Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Mapping Swedish International Aid

There is general interest to learn how Swedish aid is channelled and used. With the aim of determining the statistical information that can be obtained from open sources and the difficulties encountered in producing this information, in autumn 2013 the EBA commissioned a survey of multilateral aid. The task was to describe the flows and proportions of Swedish multilateral aid provided via multilateral organisations during the past 15 years, using public sources. The survey highlighted clear deficiencies in terms of quality and accessibility. The data is not reported accessibly in any of the three open sources of statistics consulted – openaid.se, aidflow.org and the OECD/DAC's aid database. It took a great deal of manual work to obtain the information and the reliability of the data was poor in many cases. Some data could also only be obtained for the most recent years.

Therefore, in the 2014 Aid Review, the EBA noted that continued efforts are needed to render the statistics reliable and accessible to the public and welcomed the Government order to Sida in 2014 to further develop openaid.se with the aim of improving accessibility. Sida reported on this task on 15 January 2015. Sida states that accessibility improved at openaid.se in many respects, partly through a new interface which enables greater selection of information. Quality assurance of the underlying data has also been improved. In the report Sida judges that the likelihood of attaining the overall goal of Sweden being world-leading in international work on transparency at the end of 2015 is high. The EBA welcomes this aim but as a user of aid statistics wishes to emphasise the need to be able to follow aid flows over time. Without good, relevant statistics it is not possible to evaluate aid.

As a further step in its work to survey Swedish aid, the EBA has published the report "Svenskt statligt internationellt bistånd i Sverige: en översikt" (Swedish official development assistance in Sweden: an overview). The report surveys which Swedish actors are involved in Swedish ODA, how much of the aid these actors use in Sweden and the level of employment that is linked to this use. No such overview has previously been built. Knowledge of actors and resource flows is of interest for the same reasons for why it is interesting to know the turnover and employment in, for example, the construction industry or in agriculture, in other words to understand the structure of the Swedish economy and how the economy is affected by different political decisions and measures. Knowledge of what the structures look like is also necessary when analysing the effectiveness of Swedish ODA.

Figure 1 broadly sets out the aid budget for 2013 (SEK 38 billion) divided into spending by Sida, by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and in the form of deductions. The majority of both Sida's and MFA's spending takes the form of transfers to governments, companies or organisations in other countries and is therefore not covered by the survey. On the other hand, 70 per cent of deductions are included in the survey. In total, transfers of funds to actors in Sweden amount to SEK 11.9 billion. From this amount it is calculated how much is spent in Sweden, by which actors and how much employment is linked to this spending.

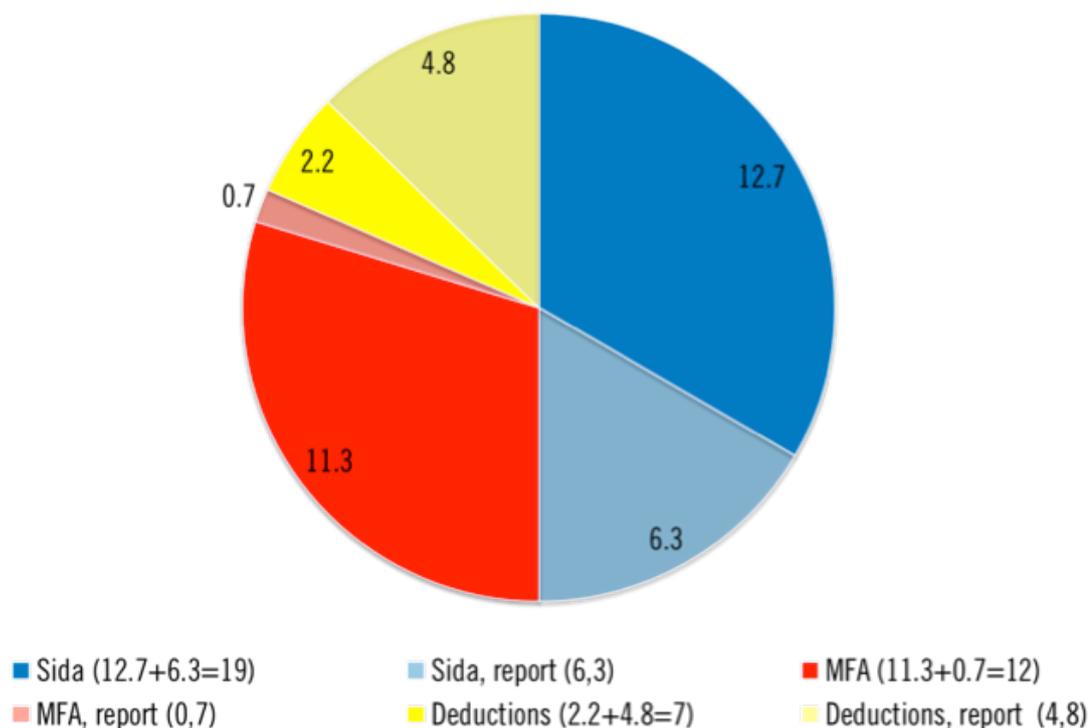


Figure 1. Sweden's aid budget 2013 (SEK 38 billion) via Sida, UD and as deductions

The survey shows that, all in all, 182 actors within civil society, the public and the private sector received more than SEK 1 million each. In addition, 279 smaller actors received a total of SEK 75 million from the aid budget.

The use of ODA in Sweden by Swedish actors is estimated to amount to SEK 7.4 billion, equivalent to 19 per cent of the aid budget in 2013. The Swedish Migration Board alone accounted for SEK 4.6 billion of this amount. Spending in Sweden is associated with approximately 3 900 full time equivalent employees of which 1 400 work with asylum provision. The assumptions behind the calculations are set out in the report. Information on the computations for each actor is available in a data file which can be downloaded from the EBA's website, www.eba.se.

The starting point for the data collection was to only use easily accessible online sources. However, this proved to provide far too incomplete a picture. Where information on the internet was unavailable, we therefore directly approached

the organisation, if it received at least SEK 1 million from the aid budget in 2013, in order to obtain its financial accounts. A number of organisations, including some associated with political parties, chose not to allow the EBA to access this data. When there is no legal reporting requirement, organisations are free to choose a more transparent approach to reporting. The EBA considers that a public reporting requirement is natural for state grants from the aid budget, particularly in the light of the decoupling of the source of funding (taxpayers) from its use (the organisation fulfils its objectives abroad). Transparent reporting is arguably particularly appropriate for Swedish party-affiliated organisations, since it would help voters and other stakeholders to judge in whose interests the organisation is operating. The EBA therefore recommends that the Government consider introducing a requirement for transparent reporting for those actors who receive more than SEK 1 million from the aid budget.

Photo: Jesper Sundewall



Focus on Poverty in Swedish Aid

Reducing poverty has long been an overarching objective of Swedish aid. Despite this, the focus on poverty in Swedish bilateral aid appears to be relatively weak, according to the background reports produced for the seminar the EBA held on the theme in September 2014. According to these reports, Sweden's bilateral aid is doing relatively well in terms of the focus of bilateral aid at country level, in other words in terms of the choice of partner countries. Sweden is better than the OECD average at focusing its bilateral aid towards poor countries. On the other hand, in the aid portfolios for the twelve countries in which Sweden runs long-term development cooperation only roughly half of the interventions are effective in reducing poverty as assessed against established research findings. The Swedish interventions in these countries are also more focused on combating extreme poverty than on preventing impoverishment, or sustaining poverty escapes.

The conclusions that Swedish aid is not focused on preventing people from falling into poverty or sustaining poverty escapes indicate that Swedish bilateral aid is less well equipped to handle the dynamic nature of poverty. If this is the case in the 12 countries, it would also have a bearing on other aspects of Sweden's bilateral aid, because preconditions for strategic work to combat poverty ought to be better in the countries where we have long-term collaboration than in other country categories. How aid portfolios are shaped thus seems to be affected by factors other than the overarching poverty objective. One conclusion drawn by the EBA is that steering towards the poverty objective seems to be weak, at least in the case of bilateral aid.¹ To achieve the objective set, more interventions would probably need to be focused on reducing poverty, and work should be run more strategically.

An additional problem concerns awareness of where poor people live. This knowledge is weak, despite extensive efforts to improve statistics in this respect. Unless the extent of poverty can be specified further at local level, it will remain difficult to target aid effectively. However, efforts are being made to improve knowledge of where poor people actually are. One interesting example is "poverty mapping" at the SEDAC Center at Columbia University, USA.² The update of the statistics on multidimensional poverty delivered by the Oxford Poverty and Human Initiative (OPHI) in early 2015 is also promising.³ By measuring poverty using ten indicators on three dimensions OPHI has succeeded in mapping multidimensional poverty in 110 countries with a combined population of 5.4 billion

1 No equivalent analysis has been carried out on Swedish multilateral aid.

2 <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/>

3 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/mpi-data-bank/>

people. In 72 of these countries the measurements have been divided up into a total of 803 regions. The countries in which there has been success in measuring poverty at regional level include 29 of the 30 poorest countries.

According to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament), Swedish aid is to be steered by a multi-dimensional concept of poverty. Thanks to the work carried out by ÖPHI, there are now real opportunities to measure multi-dimensional poverty. Analyses based on this kind of knowledge would increase the ability of Swedish aid to more effectively combat poverty, a question that the EBA intends to work on further.

Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park



The Future role of Aid

In an article in *The Lancet* in December 2013 a group of prominent researchers and leaders found that universal health care systems, including insurance systems, are central instruments in reducing poverty. Good health is necessary for people's ability to be active and productive. In addition, universal health care helps to prevent people from falling into poverty. Costs associated with illness are the most common cause of people suddenly becoming poor.

The article also pointed out that as the economies of poor countries grow, the countries' ability to finance their health care increases. As the incomes of people and countries grow, a larger proportion of these countries' GDP is also spent on health care. As a result, the need for aid to finance health care will shrink in line with the countries' economic growth. In addition, the researchers behind the article argue that there are realistic opportunities for a "grand convergence" in global health, i.e. that low-income countries attain the level of health that currently prevails in the medium-income countries with the best health indicators by 2035.

The EBA asked some of the researchers behind the article in *The Lancet* to analyse Swedish health aid on the basis of the article's conclusions. In the resulting EBA report "Sweden's Development Assistance for Health – Policy Options to Support the Global Health 2035 Goals" it is argued that health aid should primarily be given to low-income countries. The report finds that Swedish health aid today is relatively well focused on the poor countries. This is thus compatible with aid in general, in line with the background report presented in the previous section. The researchers argue that this should continue target the poorest countries, and that the focus should be on supporting health care systems to cover larger geographical areas and a larger share of the population and simultaneously function better.

Furthermore, the authors argue that there will be a need for health aid in low-income countries for the foreseeable future. Questions concerning how inequity in access to health care in countries can be tackled are crucial to determining where aid is most needed. Health aid will continue to have a role to play in reducing unequal distribution of care resources. For this it is essential that health care issues are addressed within a broader social context. From this perspective, initiatives that are not obviously classified as health aid can be particularly important. The role of health aid in tackling inequalities was also something that several participants highlighted at the seminar held in conjunction with the launch of the report in November.

At the same time, the analyses of the report show that several of the countries that currently receive health aid from Sweden will be considerably wealthier in 20 years' time. As these countries increase domestic funding of health care, Swedish health aid should increasingly be channelled to what the authors define as global functions. Global functions are those functions that are hard or impossible to handle effectively within a country's borders, for example research into new medicines, control of infectious diseases and global leadership and coordination. The authors argue that several of these functions are currently underfunded and should be strengthened.

Health is one of the single largest sectors in Swedish aid. Annually approximately 14 per cent of the aid budget or approximately SEK 4 billion is channelled to partner countries, regional initiatives and multilateral organisations and development banks. Improving people's health is undoubtedly one of the most important measures in effectively combating poverty. The report can be seen as a first step in a broader and more extensive discussion on how Swedish health aid but also aid to other sectors can be shaped in the future. Judging by comments from the seminar, not everyone shares the authors' analysis of how the aid can be used most effectively. In March 2015 additional seminars were held within Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to discuss the issue further.

Photo: UN Photo/Stuart Price



Swedish Aid to Development Banks

Approximately one eighth of Swedish aid is channelled through multilateral development banks. Through their development funds primarily the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are major intermediaries in channelling Swedish aid to low-income countries. The development banks provide aid primarily in the form of subsidised loans. The “business model” on which the multilateral development banks operate means that administrative costs of subsidised loans do not need to be financed with aid funding, which means that donors tend to place less emphasis on these costs. At the same time, the effectiveness of the multilateral development banks in implementing aid is dependent on the business model working.

The business model is based on the organisations being divided into two different parts: a “banking part” loans money to creditworthy countries (medium-income countries) on market terms, while a “fund part” loans money to low-income countries on terms subsidised by aid. The callable capital guaranteed by rich member countries implies that banks can lend at preferential rates and on advantageous terms. The profits that accrue when the development banks in turn loan money to medium-income countries then help to finance the banks’ administration costs, thus including administration of the aid-subsidised loans to low-income countries.

The EBA study 2014:4 on the African Development Bank shows that this model is under great pressure, especially in terms of the banking part. In a situation where the majority of African countries’ economies are growing quickly, the bank’s lending to medium-income countries is not so high. This in turn limits the bank’s opportunities to support low-income countries on the continent in their development efforts. In addition, a strictly internal regulatory framework means that opportunities to start lending on market terms to the new medium-income countries on the continent are limited.

Capital supply to countries on the African continent is currently undergoing major changes. The BRICS countries have decided to start The New Development Bank, with lending to infrastructure projects, partly in Africa. Access to financing from international finance markets is increasing. Despite this, major financing needs remain for low-income countries and development banks have important roles to play. To achieve this, the AfDB faces important reforms. As a member of the bank, Sweden should drive the process forward. If the “banking part” cannot generate income by lending to medium-income countries, the “fund part” cannot deliver aid to low-income countries in an optimum manner. As an aid donor, Sweden should be engaged in ensuring that both parts function well.



Support for Democratic Development

Democracy and human rights are important thematic areas in Swedish development cooperation. The financial support for these purposes is significant and accounts for approximately a third of the aid funding passed on by Sida. Support for democratic development consists of a large number of different types of initiatives. The remit of Swedish democracy aid includes, for example, support to strengthen democratic processes and institutions.

In the light of a new strategy for support to political parties and party systems being drawn up in 2015, the EBA has chosen to carry out a study on the knowledge basis regarding this type of aid. Even if international party assistance constitutes a relatively small amount of Swedish democracy aid, some SEK 80 million per year, this is support that has been provided for a relatively long time. Sweden has channelled support to multi-party systems and political parties through party-affiliated organisations since 1995. For this reason the EBA commissioned Professor Lars Svåsand from the University of Bergen to address the question “What do we know about the effects of international aid to political parties?” The EBA report is based both on research and on evaluations and summarises existing knowledge in the field, and includes lessons learned from initiatives that have partly different purposes (strengthening individual parties, the party system, collaboration and dialogue between parties).

The EBA report highlights the difficulties of demonstrating major effects of international aid, while there are some examples of good results. However, it is unclear how sustainable these results can be in a long-term perspective and whether they contribute towards the development of democracy. The results do not appear to be directly related to the choice of donor model for channelling support but rather to the type of support, whether there are suitable conditions for cooperation, and a good understanding of the context among donors, and whether there is a genuine interest in change among partner organisations.

Overall, the report shows the difficulties of making general statements on whether or not a certain form of support works or not, and the challenges of formulating general lessons from a heterogeneous collection of initiatives. Irrespective of this, the author considers that political parties and party systems perform key functions in a democracy, which in itself justifies continued support, particularly in the form of broader support that can be coordinated with other types of democracy support. The EBA shares this view and argue that when reviewing the strategy the Government should consider Svåsand’s recommendations for closer coordination between different types of aid for democracy.

Methods for Measuring Results of Swedish Aid

In recent years aid has more clearly been steered towards a formal focus on results. Much of the aid policy framework is devoted to emphasising the importance of results-based management as a tool for increasing aid effectiveness. The EBA has therefore identified methods for measuring results in aid as a particularly interesting issue to study.

The EBA's first report in 2014, "Randomized Controlled Trials: Strengths, Weaknesses and Policy Relevance" by Anders Olofsgård from the Stockholm School of Economics concerns the role of one specific method of impact evaluation (randomised controlled trials, RCT) in evaluating aid-financed projects and programmes. The report gives examples of how the method has been used internationally in research and practice to promote evidence-based development policy and discusses to what extent it has been used by Swedish aid practitioners and if there are reasons to expand its use. The author considers that RCT, under the right conditions, is the best method for measuring results. The method should therefore be part of the evaluation portfolio of leading aid organisations together with other quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. The author also offers some tentative suggestions for how to better exploit the opportunities to obtain knowledge provided by the method.

Olofsgård finds that RCT has been used very sparsely, if at all, by the Swedish aid community, which provides scope for improvement. The existing bank of knowledge in the form of already conducted rigorous impact evaluations should be used more systematically. Furthermore, expertise within Sida in procuring rigorous impact evaluations should be improved. Carrying out RCT requires collaboration between the funding body (usually Sida), the partner country and the implementing unit. Here there is an opportunity to combine direct aid operations and support development of rigorous impact evaluation skills at partner country universities and research centres.

The report was presented in May at a seminar on the theme "Finding the effects of Swedish aid: How to do it?" During the seminar other impact evaluation methods were presented and a representative of the UN body IFAD described how the organisation systematically uses both RCT and other methods to evaluate the impact of its activities. During the concluding panel discussion, the importance of having a mixed toolbox of methods for evaluation was emphasised, as was the fact that it is desirable to evaluate initiatives together with local partners. The Director General of Sida said that there was room for

improvement in evaluating initiatives and using knowledge gained from these in strategic work.

The report and the seminar gave rise to a discussion in the media on the advantages and disadvantages of using RCT. One of the elements that emerged was that according to Sida, their mandate does not include evaluating more long-term effects of aid activities on society. The report and the seminar also had an impact in the sense that they contributed to an ongoing discussion within Sida on how evaluation should be organised. The operational plan of Sida's Africa department for 2015 includes a proposal to annually evaluate the impact of at least one activity using randomised control groups. The report has also been used as the basis of a parliamentary motion (2014/15:1130).

The EBA will present other evaluation methods in the future. A study on qualitative comparative analysis will be completed in 2015.

Photo: UN Photo/Martine Perret



Experiences and Looking Forward

The EBA has a mandate to analyse and evaluate Sweden's international aid. The idea is that by doing so we will help to build knowledge and inform policy decisions. A mandate of this nature goes hand in hand with a clear mission: to identify interesting and relevant questions that it is worth shedding light on by means of studies. One clear ambition on the part of the EBA has been to supplement the evaluations and studies carried out by others with broader studies and knowledge reviews.

The knowledge generated by the EBA reports and seminar activities should be useful and applicable in Swedish aid, which in turn raises fundamental questions of what Swedish aid looks like and in which areas there may be a need for information to improve knowledge and decision-making. One conclusion drawn from recent and on-going studies, in which there is a clear remit to link to Swedish aid, is that in virtually every topic or sector it is difficult to describe aid without being either too wide-ranging or too specific. Even if our experience so far is that it is difficult to paint with a broad brush, and even if there will always be tension between general conclusions and their relevance to specific cases, the EBA will continue to have the ambition of conduct studies that take a wider approach to different aid questions. We see it as our task to highlight questions that are significant on an overall level. Reviews that show how much or how little we actually know about the implementation, results and effects of various aid initiatives should also be significant in making decisions on Swedish aid. The EBA will also commission evaluations of Swedish aid in areas of special interest.

One question which the EBA has identified as important to highlight in the future is learning within aid. An evaluation has recently studied how the EU's aid organisation takes on board knowledge from evaluations initiated by the EU's Evaluation Unit. The evaluation finds that individual studies have led to some lessons being learned but draws the conclusion that the EU's systems for learning from evaluation have far too many deficiencies. The organisation lacks ownership for evaluation. The distance between evaluations and aid practice is far too great. Important stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation process; interest in finding out what has happened is greater than interest in finding out why it happened; there is too great a focus on choosing methods and the results of evaluations are not communicated sufficiently. A similar disconnect between evaluation, obtaining knowledge and research on the one hand, and aid decision-making and practice on the other was identified in an evaluation of DfID's systems for learning in 2014. In previous years, evaluations of Norad



Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park

and of Sida have also led to similar conclusions being drawn. The question of how aid organisations develop into learning organisations thus appears to be a general problem. In 2014 both Sida and Ministry for Foreign Affairs have worked further on how to better make use of knowledge from evaluations, studies and research. A special working group has been appointed within Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has drawn up internal guidelines.

An additional question to study is the accessibility of relevant information on aid. Several of the studies the EBA has carried out or is planning build on the fact that statistics and good quality documentation are available. Before a study is commissioned, the EBA collects information and carries out initial analyses with the help of existing data. Openaid.se has helped to make information easily accessible in a user-friendly way. Ongoing work on harmonising Swedish aid statistics in line with international standards will also make comparative analysis easier. At the same time, the EBA argue that transparency is about more than access to information; it is also about how useable that information is. One example is that according to openaid.se, Sweden provided approximately SEK 1.4 billion in health aid in 2013. However, if we instead look at the portfolio analysis of Swedish health aid produced by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, the equivalent figure is approximately SEK 4 billion. As the EBA understands it, this is not a question of inaccuracies in openaid.se but instead of how data is categorised. The major differences clearly demonstrate the difficulty of presenting easily comprehensible information in a user-friendly manner. The EBA will therefore continue to follow ongoing work to increase transparency in Swedish aid.

During this year one focus area will likely be the new Development Goals. It is reasonable to assume that the process will reach a conclusion and that new

Development Goals will be adopted at the UN General Assembly in September. However, time will tell to what extent the countries feel a sense of ownership of the goals and whether they will constitute goals to which the citizens in countries can hold their governments accountable.

Accountability is a dimension which many people have found to be lacking in the Millennium Development Goals and it is likely that it will be seen as a failure if the new goals do not manage to provide a foundation for this. In Sweden, the Government has announced a reworking of the Policy for Global Development, PGU. In this context Sida has been commissioned to describe how the aid interacts with other policy areas. The Government has also clearly signalled that it intends to increase international climate funding to live up to Sweden's international commitments.

Linked to the new Development Goals is the wider issue of development financing in general. Not all countries consider the aid budget like Sweden, as money earmarked for initiatives in poor countries. Instead aid is treated as part of financing of issues of a broader developmental nature. In July this year these questions will be discussed at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Ethiopia and the outcome of the conference is likely to influence discussion on the form aid will take in the future. The meeting in Addis Ababa is a follow-up of previous meetings in Monterrey (2002) and Doha (2008) and seeks to assess the progress made so far and conduct a discussion on development financing looking ahead. One important question in this context is the new aid landscape, in which more and more countries are moving from being recipients of aid to also becoming donors (e.g. the BRICS countries). Another major issue is the link between different sources of development financing: domestic resources, aid, foreign investment and trade.

A more specific question linked to development financing that will become increasingly relevant is that of the role of aid in the future. The EBA report on future health aid found that as countries become wealthier, the need for Swedish aid in its current form will diminish. This is a positive trend but it also raises many questions. How do we decide when a country should no longer receive aid? How do we handle inequalities and poverty within countries? What should aid finance instead? An increasing number of aid bodies have started to approach this question. For example, the Global Vaccine Alliance, Gavi, has set income levels for when countries are entitled to support and when they are not. This type of broad income measurement is not always appropriate, however, as even within rich countries there may be large groups of poor people and otherwise marginalised population groups in which aid can still play an important role. How Swedish aid relates to inequalities within countries is an interesting question for the EBA to monitor in the years ahead.

Activities in the Future

As described in our operational strategy, in the next few years the EBA plans to focus on studies into the implementation and results of aid. Studies of how aid is implemented in different sectors, e.g. democracy and climate, are already in progress. Wide-ranging studies of public sector reform and the role of institutions in aid are also planned. When it comes to the results of aid, the EBA plans to publish synthesis evaluations within one or more sectors and is moving forward in terms of highlighting the issue of what methods exist for evaluating results. Which further studies will be carried out will largely depend on access to authors with the right skillset. The studies currently in progress are presented below.

Experiences gained in 2014 show that the EBA has an important role to play. Many studies have been completed on the results and implementation of aid but the knowledge from these does not always reach actors involved in the implementation of aid. The expert group can be a link between research and tried and tested experiences and the implementation of aid. In 2015 we will seek to increase our production without compromising on our quality requirements. To ensure that EBA's reports, seminars and other knowledge work continue to be relevant, it is important that the quality of our products remains high throughout. The new Development Goals, development financing and the role of aid in the future are questions that are highly relevant to Swedish aid and which the EBA will attempt to illuminate in future studies.

Table:Ongoing studies

Title and description	Author(s)
<p>"Rethinking Civil Society Support and Support for Democracy"</p> <p><i>Over the past few years we have seen a number of new challenges and opportunities for civil society in developing countries. Should donors such as Sweden, with substantial support for democracy and civil society, rethink this support and if so, how?</i></p>	<p>Richard Youngs Carnegie Endowment Europe</p>
<p>"Swedish Influence in Governance Engagements"</p> <p><i>What are Sweden's specific contributions when we together with the World Bank, UNDP and others support public sector reform in recipient countries? How can evaluations and other lessons learned help to make the reforms more successful?</i></p>	<p>Matt Andrews Harvard University</p>

<p>"Trends in Development Financing"</p> <p><i>Aid to individual countries is too narrow for an increasing number of trans-national development problems. Global programmes risk creating parallel structures that are not sustainable. How can vertical funds be designed so as to meet both these challenges?</i></p>	<p>Margaret Thalwitz Käthe Hamburger Kolleg</p>
<p>"Public-Private Partnerships in Development Assistance"</p> <p><i>What do we know about the effects of different forms of public-private collaboration in the aid sector? What do the Swedish forms of this collaboration look like in practice</i></p>	<p>Ari Kokko Copenhagen Business School</p> <p>Hanna Norberg, och Sara Johansson de Silva Consultants</p>
<p>"Climate Related Aid - a Study of Effects and Evaluation"</p> <p><i>What do we know about the effects of climate-related aid initiatives? And how should such initiatives be evaluated? The study particularly focuses on initiatives concerning forestry and domestic energy but will also contain an overview of Swedish involvement in general.</i></p>	<p>Erin Sills, Subhrendu Pattanyak, Gunnar Köhlin, Madeleine Ostwald och Eskil Mattsson Gothenburg University</p>
<p>"Aid Dispersion, Donor Coordination and Selectivity"</p> <p><i>A study of how coordination and selectivity affect aid dispersion.</i></p>	<p>Rune Jansen Hagen University of Bergen</p>
<p>"Swedish Support for Business and Human Rights in Africa"</p> <p><i>The study focuses on consensus and the integration of human rights in Swedish aid to the mining sector in Africa. The study has a forward-looking perspective drawing on current activities and experiences.</i></p>	<p>Rasmus K Larsen Uppsala University</p> <p>Sandra Adler Consultant</p>
<p>"Quality of Governance - a meta analysis of current knowledge"</p> <p><i>The study seeks to systematically analyse and critically assess the knowledge in the field, and to identify key factors linked to "quality of government" and the importance these can have for policy in the sector.</i></p>	<p>Bo Rothstein and Marcus Tannenber Gothenburg University</p>
<p>"Youth, entrepreneurship and development"</p> <p><i>Very few people in poor countries gain jobs in a formal sector. How can education and credit help to increase their ability to create jobs for themselves?</i></p>	<p>Kjetil Bjorvatn Norwegian School of Economics</p>
<p>"Regional Development in Africa - What Works and Why?"</p> <p><i>For a long time Sweden has contributed towards regional development in Africa alongside other donors. The study relates to how regional development in Africa can and should be promoted through external support, given that there is a large gap between overall goals, initiatives and results.</i></p>	<p>Fredrik Söderbaum Gothenburg University</p>
<p>"Possible Aid"</p> <p><i>Current literature shows that institutional change is a key to development. How should aid be designed on the basis of this insight?</i></p>	<p>Per Molander Consultant</p>
<p>"Qualitative Comparative Analysis"</p> <p><i>A step-by-step guide to applying and quality assuring this method when evaluating aid operations.</i></p>	<p>Barbara Befani Consultant</p>

<p>"Capturing Complexity and Context: Evaluating Aid to Education"</p> <p><i>Education and strengthened human capital are key steps on the road to reducing poverty. What do well-run quantitative and qualitative evaluations say about which initiatives work in aid focused on education? And which evaluations work and for whom?</i></p>	<p>Joel Samoff, Margaret Louise Irving, Jane Rachele Louise Leer, Michele Mary Reddy Stanford University</p>
<p>"Synthesis Evaluation of Education Aid"</p> <p><i>Education and strengthened human capital are key steps on the road to reducing poverty. What do well-run quantitative evaluations say about which initiatives work in aid focused on education?</i></p>	<p>Paul Glewwe, Amy Damon, Suzanne Wisniewski University of Minnesota, Macalaster College, University of St. Thomas</p>

Activities in 2014

In 2014 the EBA decided on the following five reports:

2014:01 – Randomized controlled trials: strengths, weaknesses and policy relevance

2014:02 – Sweden’s development assistance for health - policy options to support the global health 2035 goals

2014:03 – International party assistance - what do we know about the effects

2014:04 – The African Development Bank: ready to face the challenges of a changing Africa?

2014:05 – Svenskt statligt internationellt bistånd i Sverige: en översikt.
(Swedish government international aid in Sweden: an overview.)

Three seminars were also held during the year on the following themes:

16 May: Finding the effects of Swedish aid: how to do it?

1 September: Swedish aid – for the poor?

7 November: How can Swedish development aid contribute to a grand convergence in global health by 2035?

2015

THE EBA AID REVIEW

