

# THE EBA AID REVIEW 2023



THE EXPERT GROUP  
FOR AID STUDIES

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**Design:** Emma Andersen, Seventy-five Year Plan AB.

**English translation:** David Harding. **Printed by:** Elanders Sverige AB.

# THE EBA AID REVIEW 2023

*Annual report from the Expert Group for Aid Studies for the year 2022*

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# PREFACE

The focus of our work this year has been on crisis management capability, the war in Ukraine and Swedish influence over the European Union's development aid policy.

**THE PRINCIPAL ASSIGNMENT** of the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is to contribute knowledge on which the Swedish Government can base decisions concerning development cooperation and humanitarian aid. This is mainly achieved through independent evaluation and analysis. EBA's work is also of relevance to other stakeholders in international development aid.

At the time of writing, even as COVID-19 continues to spread worldwide, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is having major and severe global consequences. Because of this war, the negative impact of the pandemic on people all over the world – on poverty, education, gender equality and health – has not been alleviated; indeed, in many places these inequalities have not only continued but have also been amplified. What is mainly a European security crisis is spilling over into other parts of the world and compounding other global crises in the form of climate change, the energy crisis, the food crisis and the crisis in democracy. Russia's war of aggression clearly risks overshadowing and even exacerbating these other global crises and domestic crises in other countries.

In the context of development assistance, we need to learn more about how these crises interact, so that we can identify the tools best suited to dealing with them. EBA contributes to this through its own studies and by maintaining dialogue with our international sister organisations. Over the course of the year, EBA published studies on crisis management capability, including one on how well development assistance has coped with the pandemic and the importance of social safety nets. We have also made efforts to illuminate how support

for rebuilding Ukraine could and should be dealt with by the international community, with the emphasis on Sweden's role.

During the year, EBA also produced reports on European cooperation and Sweden's role in EU development aid, with the common thread being the influence exerted by Member States. One of the reports analyses the negotiations that led to the adoption of the EU's joint development aid budget.

Studies conducted by EBA are presented on an ongoing basis in reports, working papers and summaries of academic papers. These are discussed at seminars, workshops and on the EBA podcast. Our hope is that the contributions made by EBA will prove useful to a wide range of stakeholders when it comes to targeting, designing and implementing Swedish development cooperation.

Stockholm, March 2023



Torbjörn Becker, Chair

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Torgny Holmgren, Member

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Andreas Wladis, Member



# LOOKING BACK

The trend of increasing poverty has continued, while the war in Ukraine has greatly affected Swedish aid. "In 2022, we went straight from a global health crisis into a security crisis that, while primarily European, is also global," says former Expert Group Chair Helena Lindholm.

## How would you describe 2022 in terms of development cooperation?

– Swedish development cooperation was informed by the prevailing strategies and the decisions made in 2021. However, one of the main topics of discussion during the year was the reappropriation of funds from the aid budget for assisting refugees on Swedish soil, in particular refugees from the war in Ukraine.

– While this type of reappropriation is not new, the percentage involved on this occasion is higher than in previous years. The war in Ukraine itself has been the defining factor in this year's discussion of aid: what kind of aid does Ukraine need in its current situation and going forward? If we know anything about war and armed conflict, it is that the destruction is extensive and fundamental, and that some form of aid to reconstruct the country will be needed.

“We are living in uncertain times and crises are interacting with one another.”

## During the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme poverty in the world increased for the first time in twenty years. Has this trend continued?

– It is true that extreme poverty increased. It looks like this trend will continue, especially now that the cost of living is rising. Poor countries are suffering more from rising energy, fuel and food prices than we are in the western world. In many countries, rising costs are eroding already low incomes.

## One of this year's studies looked at how successfully development cooperation was adapted to the pandemic. What have we learned that might be useful in the next crisis?

– Well, what do we actually learn from crises? We saw during the pandemic that, to some extent at least, aid proved to be flexible and we were able to adapt. It is clear that we are living in uncertain times and that crises are interacting with one another. We went straight from a global health crisis into a security crisis that, while primarily European, is also global. This security crisis is interacting with a climate crisis, an energy crisis, a crisis in democracy and a food crisis. In development cooperation, we need to learn about how these crises interact in order to identify the tools that are best suited to dealing with them. While the pandemic provided us with a better understanding of these correlations, for all of the lessons learned we must constantly replenish our knowledge.

## Much has gone in the wrong direction in the past year: poverty has increased, as have greenhouse gas emissions, and democracy continues to decline. Has delivering development assistance become more difficult?

– On the one hand, development cooperation has always been difficult; by its very nature, it is a matter of creating long-term change. At the same time, the complexity of these interacting crises is also making it more difficult to identify the right tools and the right instruments. For example, take an issue like the correlation between climate change and poverty: how will poor communities cope with climate change when securing access to food is becoming more difficult due to extensive periods of drought or flooding? What kind of aid policy instruments are best suited to dealing with such correlations? And if we factor in democracy, we know that poorer countries often lack the robust societal institutions needed to,



“Poor countries are suffering more from rising energy, fuel and food prices than we are in the western world.”

Photo: Anna Hult

for example, handle distribution policy during food shortages. In this sense, providing aid has become more difficult.

**Have any of this year’s EBA studies revealed anything that surprised you?**

– If I were to highlight anything, it would be the study we conducted on agriculture. In the early days of development cooperation, agricultural aid was very important. While its importance has declined somewhat since then, our report revealed that much of the aid that actually contributes to agricultural investment is not itself defined as agricultural aid but as aid to some other sector. This is interesting because it means that support to the agricultural sector is greater than it first appears. And I think this is important, because it is related to how climate change is affecting food security, ecosystems and biodiversity, and what that means to people’s ability to support them-

selves. In the age of climate change, perhaps there is good reason to focus more on agriculture.

**Sweden holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2023. What work did EBA do concerning the EU during 2022?**

– EBA has produced several reports of relevance to EU cooperation and Sweden’s role in it, including one report on the negotiations leading to the adoption of the EU’s joint development aid budget. This demonstrated that countries holding the office of the Presidency that have expertise and a commitment to an issue and that make their position known early have enjoyed bargaining success. Another conclusion is that Sweden has previously been successful at the negotiating table in matters relating to poverty reduction and gender equality, issues that Sweden identified as important.

# WORKING ACTIVELY WITHIN THE EU PAYS OFF

By working actively within the EU, Sweden can influence the design of EU development aid policy and utilise the EU's geopolitical influence; however, Sweden's efforts in this area could be further developed. These are the conclusions of studies conducted by EBA during the year into Sweden's role in EU development aid.

**T**HE EU IS SWEDEN'S most important platform for developing foreign policy and development cooperation policy. In addition to being collectively the world's largest foreign aid donor, the EU is also an important policy arena. In a series of reports published in 2022, EBA describes Sweden's work within and with the EU on development cooperation. The focus of all of these reports is the extent to which Sweden successfully influences policy to reflect its own priorities. The overall picture that emerges from the reports is that Sweden is active in cooperating with and influencing the EU, both in Brussels and on the ground in joint partner countries worldwide. That said, the studies also identify areas in which Sweden can do even more to increase its influence.

“Sweden cannot take consensus within the EU for granted.”

IN 2021, EBA PUBLISHED a survey of priorities and allocations in EU Member States' foreign aid (*May 2021*). This survey shows that there are considerable differences between Member States in terms of objectives and how policies are implemented. It also shows that Sweden cannot take consensus within the EU for granted. On the contrary, given

the EU's status as an important geopolitical actor, and one of the largest distributors of Swedish aid, it is vital that Sweden actively seeks to shape EU foreign and development aid policy. In 2023, through its membership fee, Sweden will contribute approximately SEK 3.4 billion to the EU development aid budget.

After three years of negotiations, in 2021 the EU decided on a new long-term development aid budget for the period 2021–2027. The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) is an important element of the new budget. With an overall allocation of €79.5 billion, NDICI is the EU's main instrument for regulating EU development cooperation with third countries. The negotiations therefore represent one of the decade's most important international development policy processes. One of this year's studies (*EBA 2022:07*) provides a unique insight into these negotiations.

The authors describe the actions and positions of all Member States and dissect how these influenced the final outcome of the negotiations, i.e., how successful, or influential, different Member States were in the negotiations. Sweden comes out remarkably well; the study shows that Sweden succeeded in pushing through virtually all its priority issues. According to the analysis, this was largely the result of the knowledge and expertise that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has accumulated in the field of development cooperation, as well as the resources allocated to the negotiations.



Najim lost a leg when an aircraft attacked his village in Syria. He decided to travel to Türkiye. It took him three days to reach the border where he received help to reach a rehabilitation clinic. Photo: EU.

One conclusion is that smaller EU countries such as Sweden can bring significant influence to bear on EU cooperation by persistently and consistently arguing their positions based on their expertise within a specific policy area.

The same emphasis on the value of expertise and resources recurs in other EBA studies in this area. An evaluation of how Sweden uses strategic secondments of senior personnel to influence EU and UN policy (*EBA 2022:01*) demonstrates that this strategy often achieves good results. Through seconded personnel, Sweden gains important leverage in multilateral organisations as well as gradually cultivating an important resource base in the form of expertise in the internal workings of the EU and other multilateral organisations. This can further strengthen Sweden's ability to achieve its future ambitions within the EU. Still, the evaluation also shows considerable room for improvement,

especially by working more strategically in preparing for and following up secondments.

**A REPORT ON SWEDEN'S ENGAGEMENT** with EU country and joint programming (*EBA 2022:04*) highlights that having human resources with expertise in and experience of EU development cooperation is key to Sweden's success. The study describes the EU's processes for designing its own development assistance and the cooperation in this area between Member States. The author argues that, while Sweden is an active partner in EU cooperation, there is considerable potential to improve Sweden's work in this area. However, this would require more resources both in Stockholm and at Swedish missions abroad. These staff would need competence in working with the EU and a clear mandate to strategically shape Sweden's work with the EU at partner country level. That said, coop-



A member of a cooperative in Nairobi sells coal at a local market. This provides her with income that she can dispose of as she wishes. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment.

#### REPORTS:

O. Karlsson, J. Tallberg (2021), *Like-minded in Principle or in Practice? Priorities and Allocations in EU Member States' Foreign Aid*, **EBA Working Paper, May 2021**

M. Lundgren, J. Tallberg, C. Pedersen (2022), *Member State Influence in the Negotiations on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument*, **EBA 2022:07**

E. Lundsgaarde (2022), *A Team Player and Free Agent: Sweden's Engagement with EU Country and Joint Programming*, **EBA 2022:04**

L. Dellmuth, P. T. Levin, N. Svensson (2022), *Utvärdering av strategiska sekunderingar som del av svenskt påverkansarbete*, **EBA 2022:01**

eration is also affected by circumstances in other countries and by the design of the EU's processes. The EU has launched a new model for development cooperation at partner country level: *Team Europe Initiatives*. Here, especially while holding the office of the Presidency, Sweden will have an important role to play in advocating for new working methods that make the EU's contributions to the development of partner countries more visible.

All in all, EBA's studies of cooperation with the EU demonstrate that, while Sweden's efforts to exert influence often bear fruit, there remains room for improvement. By taking strategic initiatives, Sweden can influence the design of EU aid and benefit from the EU's geopolitical influence internationally and at country level. That said, greater ambition must be built on a solid foundation of human resources with the requisite knowledge of how the EU and EU development cooperation work, something that can only be achieved through the long-term, strategic investment of both money and personnel.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Influence within (and through) the EU is one of the single most important issues in Swedish foreign policy and development cooperation policy. The EU offers Sweden influence far beyond our individual reach. The same also applies in other multilateral contexts.
- Influence within the EU is gained through active engagement at all levels: in Brussels, within the EU's various institutions and in relationships with the EU and other Member States in joint partner countries. Smaller countries such as Sweden can wield significant international influence within and through the EU. Sweden can work more proactively and strategically to achieve this aim.
- Gaining influence demands expertise and resources. Sweden can do more to build its resource base, including by seconding more personnel to relevant organisations.

# AID IS POLITICAL

In development aid, as in the vast majority of policy areas, there are fundamental differences of opinion.

Is aid more politicised than other areas and how has this changed over time?

**T**WO METRICS OF THE LEVEL OF CONFLICT in the Riksdag concerning aid are the parties' policies on the size of the aid budget and the number of announcements on aid in the house. An EBA working paper (*June 2022*) concludes that, while the level of conflict has varied significantly over time, in general it can be viewed as "complex but mainly moderate". Based on these metrics, there is no reason to consider aid more politicised than other policy areas. That said, the Swedish Government has announced major changes since the working paper was written so it is uncertain whether this conclusion reflects the current situation.

In Sweden, one divisive issue historically has been the target of spending 1% of gross national income (GNI) on development assistance. Although Sweden has not met this target in 15 of the last 30 years, the budget for 2023 for the first time abandoned the 1% target as the determining principle for the volume of Sweden's aid. It remains to be seen whether the volume of development assistance will remain a source of conflict.

While EBA has no position on the size of development assistance, it has previously stated that any reform of this magnitude should be preceded by a thorough impact assessment (see *The EBA Aid Review 2020*). As far as EBA is aware, no assessment of this kind has been conducted in this case.

When it comes to other politicised issues in the area of development assistance, there is a body of evidence from research, evaluation and proven experience on which to rely. It is EBA's intention to contribute to this knowledge base.

One such issue, which is dealt with in a working paper (*December 2022*), is the cost of the reception of asylum seekers arriving in Sweden, expenditure that is reported as development assistance. The working paper shows that this reappropriation of funds from the aid budget creates uncertainty

about the amount of funds available for other parts of the aid budget, both between years and within a given year. The fact that unpredictable fluctuations in the flow of aid have negative effects is well-established in existing research. Uncertainty about future funding, or an abrupt halt to the flow of aid, makes it more difficult to plan ahead and runs the risks that development assistance might be more short term. Moreover, such changes have a negative impact on efficiency when agreements must be renegotiated, sometimes repeatedly, during the year, or else shorter agreements must be concluded.

A previous EBA report (*EBA 2018:04*) summarised the effects of a much-debated form of aid, general budget support. The report concluded that general budget support had helped to alleviate non-income poverty and to strengthen national institutions combatting corruption. Despite these findings, Sweden has generally phased out general budget support, among other things arguing that it increases the risk of corruption. This might be viewed as an example of the risk to political reputation in the donor country outweighing the evidence.

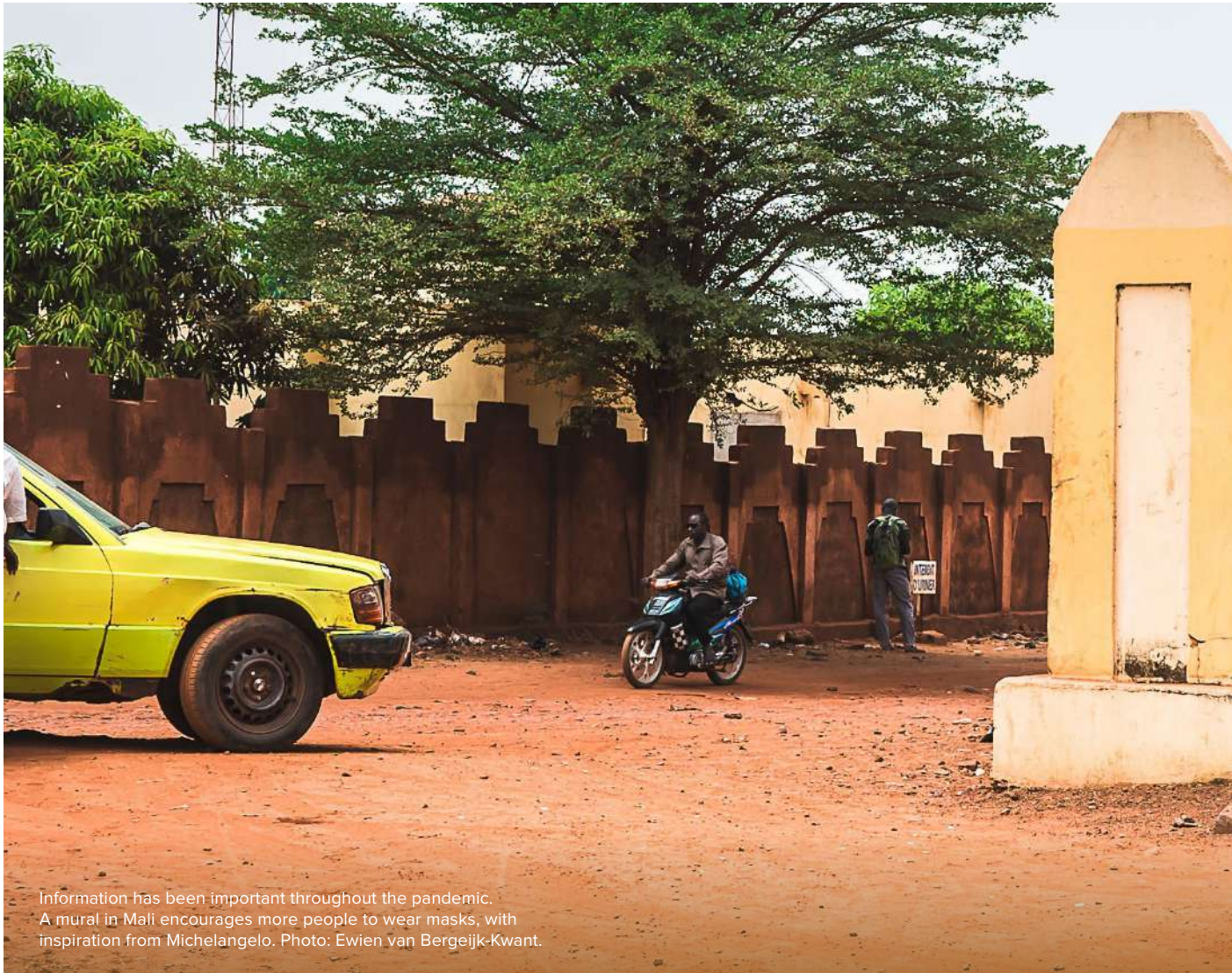
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*The EBA Aid Review 2020, Annual report from the Expert Group for Aid Studies for the year 2019.*

J. Pettersson, H. Malm Lindberg, M. Hårsmar (2022), *Avräkningar från biståndet för migrationskostnader i Sverige: vad vet vi?*, **EBA Working Paper, December 2022**

G. Dijkstra (2018), *Budget Support, Poverty and Corruption: A Review of the Evidence*, **EBA 2018:04**



Information has been important throughout the pandemic. A mural in Mali encourages more people to wear masks, with inspiration from Michelangelo. Photo: Ewien van Bergeijk-Kwant.

# WHEN CRISIS COMES

Recent years have been marked by a number of mutually reinforcing global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the hunger crisis, the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. These crises affect people's living conditions and challenge national systems and the crisis management capabilities of international development cooperation. EBA has published a number of reports in this area.



**T**HE FIRST WAVE OF COVID-19 swept across the world in spring 2020. The EBA report *Swedish Aid in the Time of the Pandemic* (EBA 2020:02) analyses how Swedish aid was managed and adapted to the pandemic during 2020 and 2021. One important aim of the study was to identify lessons learnt for future crises. The study shows that humanitarian and health-oriented aid increased slightly between 2019 and 2020, while the overall focus of Swedish aid remained relatively unchanged. However, the decentralised decision-making structure of Swedish aid was deemed to have contributed to a flexible adaption to the new circumstances. In 2020, support for interventions directly related to COVID-19 amounted to SEK 2.6 billion, or 6% of total development assistance. Part of this aid was spent on interventions to reduce the spread of infection and strengthen healthcare systems, while the rest paid for interventions in areas such as food security, employment, social security and gender-based violence. The authors of the report confirm that these interventions helped

in various ways to mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic. They also conclude that Sweden has been a key strategic partner and donor – especially of core funding – to many multilateral and civil society organisations (CSOs) working to manage the pandemic, making it possible to provide needs-based aid and making a contribution to dialogue and global cooperation. Coordination between development cooperation and humanitarian aid was improved during the pandemic. Among the lessons learnt for future crises are the need for clear communication and coordination between head offices and embassies and, in relation to partners, the importance of a decentralised decision-making structure, data for analysis and decision-making at all stages in the process, as well as providing adequate support for embassy staff.

**THE PANDEMIC ALSO REVEALED** major shortcomings in access to social protection systems in the global South. Such systems may, for instance, include cash benefits, pensions and labour mar-



Mhammad lives alone in Jabel Badro, a poor suburb of Aleppo. Prior to the Syrian crisis, he was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him with a disability. Mhammad is now receiving EU-funded cash support. Photo: Anouk Delafortrie/EU.

ket interventions, which are vital during a crisis when poverty and vulnerability increase. Another of this year's EBA reports (*EBA 2022:08*) shows that international aid to social protection systems increased during the period 2000–2019, especially during crises, but also decreased as a percentage of total aid. The report also shows that development assistance has had a positive effect on the expansion of social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries, but that more can be done where these systems are weak. Sustainable social security systems are a prerequisite for effective social protection during a crisis.

During the year, EBA also conducted a study in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to map refugees' access to social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries that receive large numbers of refugees (*OECD/EBA, July 2022*). The number of refugees worldwide is growing and they increasingly find themselves in protracted refugee situation in which access to public services and local work permits is crucial for integration and dignified living conditions.

The report shows that national social protection systems are often fragile, and even where they are formally open to refugees, in practice access remains limited due to institutional and political obstacles. This report also highlights the need to support the development and long-term financing of social protection systems. The authors of the report also call for better coordination between key actors, and better data on and evaluations of the inclusion of refugees in these systems.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The flexibility of Sweden's support for multi-lateral and civil society organisations helped them to quickly adapt their programmes and to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic.
- The expansion of social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries can help to strengthen the ability to prevent and reduce the vulnerability of poor people during crises and disasters.
- The increasing number of interacting and protracted crises highlights the importance of interventions to prevent crises from arising and to strengthen the ability of countries to manage them when they do, including locally supported humanitarian interventions and their coordination with development cooperation.

## REPORTS:

C. Schwensen, J. Lövkrona, L. Scheibel Smed (2022), *Swedish Aid in the Time of the Pandemic*, **EBA 2022:02**

M. Niño-Zarazúa, A. Horigoshi, A. Santillán Hernández, E. Tiburcio (2022), *The Rise of Social Protection in the Global South: The Role of Foreign Aid*, **EBA 2022:08**

J. Gagnon, M. Ahmed, L. Hjelm, J. Hesemann (2022), *Social Protection for the Forcibly Displaced in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Pathway for Inclusions*, **OECD/EBA, July 2022**



# THE CHALLENGES OF COMBATting SEXTORTION

The abuse of power and position in exchange for sexual favours is called sextortion. It is a form of corruption, as well as a form of gender-based violence. Awareness of sextortion has grown over recent years. However, the question remains: how is the implementation of these guidelines progressing? EBA has attempted to answer this question.

**A**N EARLIER REPORT (*EBA 2020:06*), looked at how the term sextortion should be defined and understood so that it can best be dealt with in policy and practice. While this report added to knowledge and proposed a more systematic approach to the problem, it did not offer any examples of effective measures to combat the issue.

EBA therefore conducted a follow-up study to provide greater insight into the implementation of the measures (*September 2022*). The study examined the implementation of policy against sextortion in Tanzania, a country in which the term is not only relatively well-known but also recognised legally as a social problem.

The study looked at how the new policy is being implemented by Sida's partner non-governmental organisation in the country, Karibu Tanzania Organization (KTO). They run a programme to increase awareness of sextortion, develop guidelines to tackle the practice in cooperation with public authorities and implement the guidelines in Tanzania's Folk Development Colleges. This work is primarily conducted through preventive and awareness-raising measures targeted at students, as well as the introduction of reporting mechanisms.

The study shows that KTO's efforts have led to a common understanding of what sextortion is and how it is linked to other forms of corruption, sexual harassment and abuse. When people do abuse their position to obtain sexual favours, KTO's guidelines provide greater opportunity to take action. That said, one important conclusion of the study is that, unfortunately, classing

sextortion as an offence against morality risks victim blaming. Warning young people not to take part in sextortion on moral grounds can add to the victim's feelings of shame. The transactional nature of the offence may even make them feel complicit, adding to their fear of reporting it.

The study shows that the method of implementation, which combines prevention with information to students and places the onus on students to report offences, may in fact be counterproductive to the aim of exposing sextortion at the schools.

The authors conclude that there is a need to increase awareness that the responsibility for sextortion always lies with the person abusing entrusted authority; in this case, staff at the colleges. It is also important that the information provided to those at risk of sextortion does not make them less willing to report it. The study stresses that measures also need to target potential perpetrators and that codes of conduct for relevant occupational groups should make it clear that abuse of their power and position to obtain sexual favours is incompatible with working at the colleges.

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Å. Eldén, D. Calvo, E. Bjarnegård, S. Lundgren, S. Jonsson (2020), *Sextortion: Corruption and gender-based violence*, **EBA 2020:06**

Å. Eldén, E. Bjarnegård (2022), *Implementing policy against sextortion: A follow-up study*, **EBA Working Paper, September 2022**

# DILUTING AGRICULTURAL AID

The majority of Sweden’s development cooperation partner countries have substantial agricultural sectors with large shares of low-productivity and subsistence farming. In these low-income countries, poverty remains greatest in rural areas where people depend on agriculture. So, agricultural development is the key to reducing poverty.

**H**ISTORICALLY, TODAY’S HIGH and upper-middle income countries have all passed through periods of agricultural development. An EBA working paper (*April 2022*) supports the hypothesis that agriculture remains the economic sector in which higher growth and productivity will most effectively reduce poverty in low-income countries. However, socioeconomic development demands simultaneous progress in several sectors. Labour must be transferred from agriculture to other sectors with higher productivity, in what is known as a structural transformation of the economy. For this to happen, the agricultural sector must first be developed; higher agricultural productivity releases resources to develop other sectors.

But this does not imply that all investments in agriculture have positive outcomes, as exemplified by upper middle-income country Bosnia-Herzegovina. Poverty was rife in the country after the Balkan Wars and Sweden therefore focused its development assistance on the agricultural sector. However, according to EBA’s evaluation of aid to the country during the period 1995–2018 (*EBA 2018:10*), it would have been more beneficial to target aid at other economic sectors, especially as the country was already industrialised.

The link between agricultural development and poverty alleviation is most apparent in low-income countries. This being the case, the fact that agricultural support has declined to only a small percentage of Swedish aid over the past 15 years appears problematic (*EBA 2022:05*). The decrease is linked to a de-prioritisation by the Swedish Government. However, the EBA report

reveals significant underreporting; a great deal of agricultural aid is also reported under headings such as “Climate”, “Gender equality” and “Market initiatives”, meaning that the actual aid provided is not quite as modest as it might first appear. This brings the share up to 5–6% of total aid rather than 3%. That said, the authors of the EBA report warn that this underreporting presents a risk that agriculture-related thematic expertise at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) may decline.

“Agricultural development is the key to reducing poverty.”

**GEOGRAPHICALLY**, Swedish agricultural development aid during the period 2005–2020 was increasingly focused on countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The authors of the report found that the share of total aid allocated to agricultural development varied significantly between partner countries on the continent. They ask what the reasons for this might be, given that both Sweden’s development cooperation strategies for these countries and their economies appear to be relatively similar. Perhaps the type of expertise stationed at each embassy plays a role?

The survey also shows that, compared to other donor countries, Sweden allocates a smaller percentage of its total development assistance



Ethiopian farmers use a smartphone app developed by agronomists to improve banana harvests. Photo: IITA, Rwanda.



Rice farmers in Bandung, Indonesia.  
Photo: Ramadhani Refid/Unsplash.

to agriculture. However, the authors did not find any indication that Sweden's low level of agricultural development aid could be traced to any obvious division of responsibilities within the donor community. One specific example of the reduced role of agriculture in Swedish development cooperation can be found in EBA's evaluation of cooperation with Ethiopia (*EBA 2022:06*). The authors conclude that some of the most significant long-term effects of Sweden's aid to the country can be found in rural and agricultural development. The Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), for example, increased agricultural productivity locally and some of its components were subsequently scaled up and rolled out as nationwide agricultural programmes. These programmes accelerated the market-oriented transformation of rural areas; however, this development subsequently encountered problems when Ethiopia took a more socialist turn. Other programmes were successful

because they supported decentralisation or a low-cost land registration programme.

The evaluation of development cooperation with Ethiopia indicates that, while Sweden's support for agricultural and rural development might have been considerable in previous decades, in recent years it has decreased in favour of efforts to promote democracy. This is due to changes in both Sweden and Ethiopia. Since the 1990s, Sweden has increasingly emphasised respect for human rights and democracy, while Ethiopia's rural development institutions have grown in strength, thus reducing the demand for foreign aid to agriculture.

**IF SWEDISH AID** is to be effective in helping to reduce poverty through the development of agriculture and other economic sectors, partner countries themselves must drive this development. This all-important 'ownership' by partner countries is needed not only at national level but also locally on the ground, as noted by the authors



of EBA's earlier evaluation of Tanzania (*EBA 2016:10*). The authors concluded that the ownership principle does not always lead to effective aid. For example, it is likely that support for agriculture during the 1970s would have lifted more people out of poverty than Sweden's support for the Tanzanian government's industrialisation policy.

Another aspect is the rise of authoritarianism in certain partner countries. Ethiopia is one example of a goal conflict between demanding respect for human rights and wishing to reduce poverty. Sweden withdrew its support for the Ethiopian government after the Eritrean–Ethiopian War and the controversial elections in 2005, but continued to provide support to the country through multi-lateral organisations and civil society. There was also a significant reduction in poverty during this period. The authors of the Ethiopia evaluation point out that Sweden would have been able to reduce poverty more if its previous support had been maintained. The Swedish Government,

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M. Hårsmar (2022), *Agriculture, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*, **EBA Working Paper, April 2022**

C. Lindahl, J. Lindahl, M. Söderbäck, T. Ivankovic (2018), *Nation Building in a Fractured Country: An Evaluation of Swedish Cooperation in Economic Development with Bosnia and Herzegovina 1995-2018*, **EBA 2018:10**

I. Virgin, A. Castensson, F. Ek, Y. Ran (2022), *Mapping Swedish Aid to Agriculture*, **EBA 2022:05**

B. Kebede, L. Danielsson, H. Elias, G. Köhlin (2002), *Swedish Development Cooperation with Ethiopia: Sixty Years of Lessons Learned*, **EBA 2022:06**

M. McGillivray, D. Carpenter, O. Morrissey, J. Thaarup (2016), *Swedish Development Cooperation with Tanzania – has it helped the poor?*, **EBA 2016:10**

however, had different priorities. Striking a balance is not always easy for donors.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Support for the agricultural sector has the potential to reduce poverty in low-income countries. There are examples of important results achieved by previous agricultural development aid. Despite this, such aid constitutes a small percentage of Sweden's total aid budget.
- The underreporting of aid to the agricultural sector may result in a decline in vital expertise in the administration of development cooperation.
- Agricultural development aid only achieves results when it interacts well with the partner country's own development processes. Success demands skilled analysis and the weighing up of important considerations. This sometimes means abstaining from providing aid.



Students at the Oloika Primary School in Kenya are offered alternatives to traditions such as marriage and female genital mutilation. Instead, they can now finish primary school and continue on to secondary education. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment.

# REALISM IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

One criticism levelled at international development cooperation is that it is often utopian, setting unrealistic objectives in relation to the amount of aid provided. When there is a weak link between overall goals and objectives on the ground and what can reasonably be achieved, such lofty ambitions may create unrealistic expectations.

**A**CCORDING TO an evaluation of aid to Uganda (*EBA 2016:09*), the average annual Swedish aid to that country between 1998 and 2014 was SEK 308 million, the approximate cost of building a medium-sized bridge in Scandinavia. According to the development cooperation strategy for Uganda, this sum was supposed to strengthen democracy, increase employment, improve basic health and safeguard human security in a country that at the time had a population of 39 million.

A vision may be needed at a high level to provide motivation and to forge a path, but effective governance needs objectives that are linked to realistic and reasonable results.

In Swedish development cooperation, geographical and thematic strategies are key governance documents. It is, however, questionable whether these can be seen as strategies in the strictest sense, since they provide very limited (if any) guidance on how to achieve the objectives of development cooperation. The strategies consist of broad, ambitious, cross-cutting target areas, and these are operationalised later at government agency level. In order to create a stronger link between the Government's objectives and their operationalisation, government agencies are now expected to formulate theories of change linked to each strategy.

Theories of change can be viewed as written-down or visualised ideas on how interventions are intended to bring about change, where resources are converted into activities as well as short-term and long-term results.

Audits conducted by the Swedish Agency for

Public Management and the Swedish National Audit Office in 2020 and 2022 called for clearer theories of change in Sida's work. In simple terms, they wanted Sida to clarify how set objectives were to be achieved. A study (*EBA 2021:02*) evaluated Sida's decentralised evaluations during the period 2017–2019. The author recommended that Sida should take a more comprehensive, systematic approach to evaluating the contributions of interventions to achieving the stated objectives.

To support these and similar processes, EBA has produced an anthology (*EBA 2022:03*) in which researchers and consultants explore the use of theories of change in development work. One conclusion is that ambitions to develop theories of change should be based on an analytical and critical perspective, so that Sida can avoid the risk that these theories serve a legitimising and controlling purpose, rather than analytical and knowledge-building. Working with theories of change in detail can provide coherent narratives on which to base internal and external dialogues on the implementation and results of development cooperation.

One way of identifying the long-term results of development cooperation and helping to make expectations more realistic is to perform analyses of the value added by Swedish aid in various environments and situations beyond individual strategy cycles. EBA's country evaluations are examples of just such an analysis (*EBA 2022:06, 2019:04, 2019:03, 2018:10, 2016:10, 2016:09*). An evaluation of Sweden's long-term development cooperation with Liberia is in progress.

The long-term perspective is important because aid and development processes often take a long time to deliver results, and because reporting on short-term performance and impact is often unfeasible.

EBA's working paper on cooperation with Afghanistan (*August, 2021*) contributes knowledge about what can and cannot be achieved in fragile and conflict-affected states. One lesson learned was that a distinction needs to be made between the different levels of complexity of development cooperation problems, since aid has proved to be more successful in well-defined interventions such as building schools, providing healthcare, and clearing mines, than in more general interventions to promote gender equality and good governance.

One area in which research, evaluation and best practice have generated a broad evidence base is work with social security systems. In an EBA report on the role of aid in social security systems (*EBA 2022:08*), the authors highlight how important these systems are, and will be, to the populations of recipient countries in being able to cope with a crisis. The poorest countries often lack the capacity and systems required to build and manage sustainable social safety nets. The report discusses how the donor community can and should work to support low-income countries in this regard. One key issue is expanding and improving the efficacy of partner countries' taxation systems in order to strengthen the recipient country's own capabilities.

Knowledge of how sudden tumultuous events have been handled may provide some information about what aid can and has the power to do. In a study of adjustments to Swedish aid during the pandemic (*EBA 2022:02*), the authors note that the pandemic acted as a kind of 'stress test', one that Sida's organisation passed with flying colours. In their opinion, this positive outcome was due to the organisation's flexibility and adaptability.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Aid should focus on what is possible and realistic to achieve given the available resources, something that is highly contextual.
- Sida's work with theories of change should take into account the risk that the process might develop into what is largely an exercise in legitimisation that is poorly grounded in the organisation's everyday working methods, processes and needs.
- Development assistance can strengthen social security systems in low- and medium-income countries. One important question that needs to be answered if aid is to support social security in low-income countries is how the donor community can assist in building sustainable systems.

## REPORTS:

M. Niño-Zarazúa, A. Horigoshi, A. Santillán Hernández, E. Tiburcio (2022), *The Rise of Social Protection in the Global South: The Role of Foreign Aid*, **EBA 2022:08**

K. Forss, N. Östlund (2022), *Hur förändra världen? En antologi om förändringsteorier i biståndet*, **EBA 2022:03**

C. Schwensen, J. Lövkrona, L. Scheibel Smed (2022), *Swedish Aid in the Time of the Pandemic*, **EBA 2022:02**

M. Burman (2021), *Objectives and Mechanisms: What do Evaluations Say About the Effectiveness of Swedish Development Interventions?*, **EBA 2021:02**

A. Pain (2021), *Punching Above its Weight or Running with the Crowd? Lessons from Sweden's Development Cooperation with Afghanistan, 2002–2020*, **EBA Working Paper, August 2021**

## EBA'S COUNTRY EVALUATIONS:

B. Kebede, L. Danielsson, H. Elias, G. Köhlin (2022), *Swedish Development Cooperation with Ethiopia: Sixty Years of Lessons Learned*, **EBA 2022:06**

A. BenYishay, B. Parks, R. Trichler, C. Baehr, D. Aboagye, P. Prum (2019), *Building on a Foundation Stone: the Long-Term Impacts of a Local Infrastructure and Governance Program in Cambodia*, **EBA 2019:04**

H. Andersen, K-A. Larsson, J. Öjendal (2019), *Supporting State Building for Democratisation? A Study of 20 years of Swedish Democracy Aid to Cambodia*, **EBA 2019:03**

C. Lindahl, J. Lindahl, M. Söderbäck, T. Ivanovic (2018), *Nation Building in a Fractured Country: An Evaluation of Swedish Cooperation in Economic Development with Bosnia and Herzegovina 1995 – 2018*, **EBA 2018:10**

M. McGillivray, D. Carpenter, O. Morrissey, J. Thaarup (2016), *Swedish Development Cooperation with Tanzania – Has It Helped the Poor?*, **EBA 2016:10**

S-E. Kruse (2016), *Exploring Donorship – Internal Factors in Swedish Aid to Uganda*, **EBA 2016:09**



# SIXTY YEARS OF LESSONS LEARNED

One of Sweden's longest development cooperation partnerships is with Ethiopia. A new study shows that the most obvious long-term effects can be seen in rural development and education.

Another conclusion is that, when objectives run in parallel, there is a risk that conflict will arise between them.

**I**N 1954, ETHIOPIA BECAME Sweden's first development cooperation partner country. Since then, the country has seen authoritarian leaders and revolutions come and go, become embroiled in civil war and conflicts with neighbouring countries, and emerged as a fragile democracy. Between 1960 and 2018, Ethiopia received SEK 19.5 billion in aid from Sweden. EBA's evaluation ([EBA 2022:06](#)) was started in a time of hope, but much of it was written during a period of seeming hopelessness. Hopefully, the situation is now such that lessons can be learned for the future.

The report evaluates three areas: rural development, education, and democracy and human rights. According to the authors, long-term development assistance in the first two areas has had positive effects on agricultural productivity and compulsory schooling in more remote areas. Aid targeted at democracy and human rights is deemed to have contributed to Ethiopia's now strong civil society. The authors also identified a number of conflicts between objectives.

While Sweden remained a stable, reliable donor for decades, in principle, aid targeted at reducing poverty, previously the main focus of development cooperation, was terminated around the turn of the millennium as the regime became increasingly undemocratic. Although democracy had faltered before, this time Sweden chose to end cooperation with the Ethiopian state at a time when poverty in the country was at an all-time low and the conditions for reducing poverty may well have been better than ever.

The authors argue for a more pragmatic approach to cooperation with a state partner, especially given the limited influence a relatively small donor such as Sweden can exert on overall structures. By this, they mean that donors should

focus on issues where there is a positive trend in development and consensus between the parties. One option is to work through civil society or multilateral organisations.

The authors emphasise that a rights-based approach requires striking a balance between support for those who have rights and those who are supposed to ensure the fulfilment of these rights, but that such a balance is difficult to strike if cooperation with the state is prohibited.

Sweden has the largest sectoral spread of all donors in Ethiopia. One conclusion is therefore that Sweden needs to review whether it has too many small, unconnected projects spread across different sectors ([EBA 2015:03](#) and [EBA 2015:07](#)). This fragmentation is criticised by some for entailing high transaction costs, while others instead highlight the benefits of small-scale experimentation.

Still, in order to learn, systematic evaluation is needed. If this is lacking ([EBA 2021:02](#)), there is a risk that the potential benefits of fragmented aid will not materialise.

## REPORTS:

K. Kebede, L. Danielsson, H. Elias, G. Köhlin (2002), *Swedish Development Cooperation with Ethiopia: Sixty Years of Lessons Learned*, [EBA 2022:06](#)

M. Burman (2021), *Objectives and Mechanisms: What do Evaluations Say About the Effectiveness of Swedish Development Interventions?*, [EBA 2021:02](#)

B. Rothstein, M. Tannenbergs (2015), *Making development work: the quality of government approach*, [EBA 2015:07](#)

R. Jansen Hagen (2015), *Concentration difficulties? An analysis of Swedish aid proliferation*, [EBA 2015:03](#)



Nancy Kayitare runs an accommodation booking app in Rwanda. It all started at a workshop where young Rwandan entrepreneurs were connected with unemployed young people. Photo: Yagazie Emezi/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The Swedish Government has announced a reform agenda for Sweden's development cooperation. Although at the time of writing it is not yet clear what form this will take, one main focus can be discerned in that the volume of aid has been frozen, with an increased focus on countries in Sweden's immediate vicinity and on results and efficiency. The overarching goal of Swedish development cooperation remains to create opportunities for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression.

**T**HE PRINCIPLES FOR the effective implementation of aid are laid out in international agreements. One milestone in this regard is the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Further agreements have led to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), of which Sweden is a co-chair during 2023. Today, the agreement is based on the four principles of ownership, measurable results, inclusion, and transparency and mutual accountability.

“The poorer part of the world has changed greatly in recent years.”

The poorer part of the world has changed greatly in recent years. ‘Stable’ developing countries, which are moving at different rates towards middle-income status, are becoming fewer and at the same time less democratic.

An increasing number of fragile states are characterised by conflict, repression and refugee streams. In some of these countries, donors are unable to, prohibited from or unwilling to deal with the central government, even though it is in these countries that the poorest and most vulnerable people live. Here, the role of aid is to stave off further drastic deterioration in living conditions, perhaps by contributing to basic education and healthcare. Opportunities for aid to contribute to state-building, working institutions, and changing people's lives become even more limited.

Getting aid to function effectively in these environments is genuinely difficult and requires considerable contextual expertise, risk awareness and risk-taking, as well as a humble understanding of the possibility for aid to contribute to change.

**ANOTHER WAY OF THINKING** about the effectiveness of aid is in relation to donor's objectives: in what context can the objectives of aid best be achieved? If the overall goal is the reduction of poverty, aid needs to be targeted where poverty is greatest. This would mainly be fragile and conflict-affected states. It remains true that the hardest place to successfully implement aid is where it is most needed.

If the overall goal is democratisation, fragile states are equally difficult to assist with aid. Aid targeted at democratisation works best in environments that are already moving towards democracy. A goal of climate change mitigation would steer allocation from low-income countries to the lower middle-income countries that are large greenhouse gas emitters. If the overall goal is economic development driven by trade, candidate countries should have institutions that work sufficiently well for trade to take place in a regulated manner that can create greater prosperity for the benefit of the entire nation. In such environments, aid also has the potential to support the mobilisation of other resources, such as the development of the taxation system, and to mitigate the risks for foreign and domestic investors, by providing guarantees for example.

**UKRAINE IS NOW THE LARGEST RECIPIENT** of Swedish aid. This is an extraordinary priority that includes aid during the ongoing invasion and for



Fenet attends preschool in the city of Woliso in Ethiopia. Her mother Tigist is a teacher at a school where, in addition to regular school subjects, pupils learn about gender equality, health and how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy. Photo: Maheder Haileselassie Tadese/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment.

the postwar reconstruction of the country.

EBA has no position on the total volume of Swedish development assistance nor on the choice of partner countries or the formulation of overall goals. Our remit is to autonomously and independently contribute knowledge on which the Swedish Government can base decisions concerning the direction, governance and implementation of Sweden's official development assistance. Research into past attempts to reform development cooperation has identified the need for politicians and officials to work in harmony if reforms are to be implemented effectively. This type of "contract" demands that politicians demonstrate confidence in officials, but also that officials are responsive to how politicians'

(occasionally vaguely expressed) agendas can be put into practice.

Selecting partner countries in which development assistance can be effectively implemented requires drawing on existing knowledge, as well as developing new knowledge. It therefore remains important for those involved in Swedish development cooperation to study the results of the aid provided in terms of overarching goal attainment, beyond the interventions' direct objectives, even more so than they do today. Such knowledge must be given greater weight in the implementation of development assistance and when reporting the results to the politicians who govern its direction. It is the ambition of EBA to contribute to this important work.

# THE EXPERT GROUP FOR AID STUDIES



**TORBJÖRN BECKER**

Chair

Director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE) at the Stockholm School of Economics.



**JULIA SCHALK**

Vice Chair

Policy Director, WaterAid.



**KIM FORSS**

Member

Consultant in evaluation.



**TORGNY HOLMGREN**

Member

Executive Director, SIWI.



**STAFFAN I. LINDBERG**

Member

Director of V-Dem Institute, Professor of Political Science at University of Gothenburg.



**MALIN OUD**

Member

Director of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law's Stockholm Office.



**ANDERS PEDERSEN**

Member

International Director of the Swedish Red Cross.



**ANDREAS WLADIS**

Member

Professor in Disaster Medicine and Traumatology at Linköping University.

*Anders Trojenborg of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was also a member of the Expert Group for Aid Studies in 2022.*

*The work of the Expert Group is supported by a secretariat of eight full-time equivalents: Anna Florell, Emma Hernborg, Helena Hede Skagerlind, Jan Pettersson (managing director), Lisa Hjelm (until September 2022), Markus Burman, Mats Hårsmar, Númi Östlund and Otto Nilsson Williams (from December 2022).*

# BRINGING IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EASTERN EUROPE

The Government has appointed Torbjörn Becker, Director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics, as the new Chair of the Expert Group for Aid Studies. He is both honoured and humbled by his new role.

**You have recently been appointed the new Chair of EBA. What do you bring to the Expert Group?**

– I bring with me a few different things from my background. When I was at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, I worked with emerging countries, capital market development, and the international financial system which supports countries that are dealing with economic crises.

– Going further back in time, I defended my PhD thesis in economics and of course I look at most things in my work through that lens now. The clearest connection I have to the work of EBA is that I am the Director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics. We are a research institute with a very clear policy direction and have been working with Eastern Europe since 2006.

– I have also been on Sida’s governing board for almost ten years and there have been many discussions during that time about how aid should be designed, what strategies Sweden should use, and how to ensure that aid money ends up where it is intended to go.

”Since the war broke out, I have been very active in discussions about how we can support Ukraine.”

**Your expertise of course lies very much in the countries of Eastern Europe, where Ukraine is a particular case in point at the moment. What does this mean for your role in EBA?**

– As a member of the board of the Kyiv School of Economics, since the war broke out, I have been very active in discussions about how we can support Ukraine in the short and long term. I have also been involved in determining how we can best organise the aid that will go to Ukraine in the future, in terms of the institutions that will need to be established to manage this gigantic level of support.

– As everyone knows, historically Ukraine has had major challenges with corruption. With the war, we are now seeing a change in mentality in many parts of Ukrainian society. But we also need to satisfy ourselves that there is a framework in place to prevent corruption when a lot of money is going to be invested in the country – aid money as well as private sector money.

**Is there any area of Swedish aid or any particular part of the world that lies particularly close to your heart?**

– Naturally, our own immediate area lies close to my heart – countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus and others – because of the work I do on a daily basis. As a member of Sida’s governing board, I have been privileged to travel to places like Rwanda, Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Cambodia, which has greatly broadened my horizons and meant that I’ve learnt about more of the world. So I have been



“Our own immediate area lies close to my heart – countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus.”

Photo: Juliana Wolf Garcindo

able to experience many parts of the world rather than developed an affection for any one country.

**During the first half of 2023, Sweden holds the office of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Government has also announced an increased focus on our neighbouring countries, and Ukraine has become the largest recipient country of Swedish aid. How can EBA contribute in this situation?**

– Generally, EBA’s mission is to contribute to good decisions being made on how we design aid

and that it should rest on a solid evidence base. We should not try to reinvent the wheel each time we develop a new programme or target a new region. Many of the questions that EBA has dealt with over the years are still relevant when considering what kind of aid we can provide in this region. Of course, you need to understand the country’s context in each individual case, but there are still certain lessons to be learned about how to manage aid so that it is as effective as possible. In this endeavour, EBA is an important source of knowledge.

# REPORTS AND SEMINARS IN 2022

## STUDIES IN PROGRESS AS OF 31 DEC 2022

WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GROUP*	AUTHORS
<p><b>Poverty and marginalisation in Bangladesh</b></p> <p><i>Bangladesh has experienced significant economic growth and social development in recent years, but this has not benefited the whole population. The aim of the study is to increase the understanding of the drivers behind and experiences of extreme poverty and marginalisation among ethnic and religious minorities in the country.</i></p>	<p>Reference group to be appointed.</p> <p>Chair: Julia Schalk</p>	<p>Owasim Akram Mathilde Maïtrot Joe Devine Anders Uhlin Ann-Catrin Kristianssen</p>
<p><b>Transparency in Swedish aid</b></p> <p><i>The study aims to shed light on work with transparent Swedish aid. The study will partly follow up the Swedish transparency work, and partly discuss why Sweden has ranked relatively low in international comparisons so far. With this as a basis, the value of international comparisons is discussed.</i></p>	<p>Reference group to be appointed.</p> <p>Chair: Kim Forss</p>	<p>Pontus Hedlin Cristoffer Lokatt</p>
<p><b>Sida's efforts to reduce corruption in partner countries</b></p> <p><i>Corruption is a major hindrance to sustainable development. This evaluation aims to analyze Sida's work against corruption in partner countries and draw conclusions concerning the extent to which efforts are in line with current knowledge of effective approaches and is relevant, coherent and can be expected to contribute to reduced corruption in the longer term.</i></p>	<p>Simone Dietrich Christian von Haldenwang Simon Gill Anki Fritzsche Karolina Jozic Chair: Anders Pedersen</p>	<p>Marina Nistotskaya Anna Persson Marcia Grimes Michelle D'Arcy Adea Gafuri Bo Rothstein</p>
<p><b>Sweden's long-term development cooperation with Liberia</b></p> <p><i>The aim of the evaluation is to gain an in-depth understanding of the relevance, coherence and long-term results of Swedish development cooperation within the areas of (i) conflict, peace, and security; (ii) democracy and human rights, and (iii) inclusive economic development.</i></p>	<p>Mikael Söderbäck Johan Romare Johanna Söderström Ole Winkler Andersen Ida Lindkvist Chair: Helena Lindholm</p>	<p>Christoph Emminghaus Tillman Hönig John Pokoo Kou Meapeh Gbaintor- Johnson Johanna Schaefer-Kehnert Anouchka Baldin Simon Wallisch</p>
<p><b>Land Tenure and Strategies of Climate Resilience</b></p> <p><i>The links between land tenure and adaptation to climate change are now well established. The IPCC as well as UN-Habitat have shown that tenure rights are important preconditions for peoples' and societies' capacity to be resilient to climate change. By studying the variation in tenure systems and rights in Kenya, this study is thought to provide guidance for how improved strategies for climate resilience may be supported.</i></p>	<p>Christian Lund Cathrine Boone Fibian Lukako Margareta Nilsson Andrew Linke Chair: Johan Schaar</p>	<p>Kathleen Klaus Emma Elfversson</p>
<p><b>Sweden's Application of the Localisation Agenda of the 'Grand Bargain'</b></p> <p><i>The agreement between a vast set of government, donors and NGOs at the humanitarian summit in Istanbul 2016 called for major reforms of the international humanitarian system. Some of what was agreed in this 'Grand Bargain' is on the way to be achieved, whereas much still remains to be done. This evaluation will scrutinize to what extent and in what ways Sweden has been able to contribute to and implement the localisation agenda.</i></p>	<p>Reference group to be appointed.</p> <p>Chair: Johan Schaar</p>	<p>Sophia Swithern Charlotte Lattimer Teddy Atim</p>

\* EBA reference groups are strictly consultative. Their members are not responsible for the content of reports and do not necessarily agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out there.



WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GROUP*	AUTHORS
<p><b>The government's results report to the Riksdag</b></p> <p><i>What are the results? This is probably the most recurring question in foreign aid and international development cooperation. EBA's study aims to describe how a combined results report for Sweden's international aid can be designed. This will be done by exploring different reporting models, and then analysing any pros and cons of the different models.</i></p>	<p>Reference group to be appointed.</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Torgny Holmgren</p>	<p>Númi Östlund Helena Hede Skagerlind</p>
<p><b>Acceptance of Green Economy Reforms</b></p> <p><i>Swedish development cooperation shall support a transition to a fossil-free economic development. To achieve this, Sweden gives large support to the Green Climate Fund, UN-organisations, development banks and other actors. However, what do populations in partner countries think? This study will mainly use surveys to find out what the level of acceptance is in a set of East African countries.</i></p>	<p>Steffen Kallenbeck Haileselassie Medhin Eric Coleman Katrin Aidnell Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffen</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Johan Schaar</p>	<p>Daniel Slunge Niklas Harring Anna Nordén</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Sweden's Implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda</b></p> <p><i>In 2015, a conference on Financing for Development was held in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The outcome was the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which provides a common international framework for the financing of the 2030 Agenda. The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate if and how the Addis Agenda has been implemented by Sweden.</i></p>	<p>Måns Felleson Gunnel Axelsson Nycander Andreas Duit Gustav Engström</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Torbjörn Becker</p>	<p>Peter Middlebrook Claes Lindahl Amba Tadaa Jesine Lindahl</p>
<p><b>Swedish development cooperation's response to the HIV epidemic – what can we learn?</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this study is to assess and to learn from the Swedish international response to the HIV epidemic and analyse how it has changed over time. How and where has Sweden contributed resources and influenced systems, organisations, and initiatives?</i></p>	<p>Anders Molin Anna Mia Ekström Sarah Thomsen Dianne Stewart Susanne von Wächter Harriet Pedersen</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Julia Schalk</p>	<p>Pam Baatsen Dennis van Wanrooij Coen Buvelot Hannah Kabelka Thyra de Jongh Gerwin Evers Josefine Olsson Liana Petrosova Noor Tromp</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Swedish aid in Sub-Saharan Africa via CSOs</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of this evaluation is to investigate to what extent and how Sweden's official development assistance, over time, has contributed to sustainably strengthening civil society's capacity to work for democracy and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.</i></p>	<p>Jennifer Brass Stein-Erik Kruse Agnes Cornell Per Nordlund Annette Zimmer Maria Gärtner Nord</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Staffan I. Lindberg</p>	<p>Ola Segnestam Larsson Malin Arvidson Jan Ström Pelle Åberg</p>
<p><b>The Role of Aid in Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</b></p> <p><i>Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in the area of SRHR. However, while these are positive developments, the overall trend hides important differences in outcomes across countries and regions. The purpose of this project is to contribute to an improved understanding of the effectiveness of development assistance in the area of SRHR.</i></p>	<p>Stefan Swartling Peterson Tomas Lundström Ann-Sofie Isaksson Miguel Niño-Zarazúa</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Julia Schalk</p>	<p>Björn Ekman Jesper Sundewall</p>
<p><b>The implementation of Sweden's feminist foreign policy</b></p> <p><i>The aim of this study is to systematically explore the gender equality work that the feminist foreign policy has given rise to. By closely examining how the ambitions formulated in the feminist foreign policy have been translated into increased or improved promotion of gender equality by different Swedish actors in partner countries, EBA hopes that this study will contribute to learning regarding gender equality work at country level.</i></p>	<p>Sofia Calltorp Lena Karlsson Maria Eriksson Baaz Rikard Bengtsson Robert Egnell</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Sara Johansson de Silva</p>	<p>Ann Towns Elin Bjarnegård Katarzyna Jezierska</p>

\* EBA reference groups are strictly consultative. Their members are not responsible for the content of reports and do not necessarily agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out there.

## EBA REPORTS 2022

The EBA decides independently what studies are to be undertaken. The authors of EBA reports bear sole responsibility for the analyses, conclusions and recommendations they contain. Final quality assurance is the responsibility of the Expert Group.

- 2022:08     **The Rise of Social Protection in the Global South: The Role of Foreign Aid**  
*Miguel Niño-Zarazúa, Ken Opalo, Alma Santillan-Hernandez, Ernesto Tiburcio*
- 2022:07     **Member State Influence in the Negotiations on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**  
*Magnus Lundgren, Jonas Tallberg, Camilla Pedersen*
- 2022:06     **Swedish Development Cooperation with Ethiopia: Sixty Years of Lessons Learned**  
*Bereket Kebede, Leif Danielsson, Hailu Elias, Gunnar Köhlin*
- 2022:July    **Social Protection for the Forcibly Displaced in Low- and Middle-income Countries**  
*Jason Gagnon, Mona Ahmed, Yasmine Rockenfeller, Lisa Hjelm, Jens Hesemann*
- 2022:05     **Mapping Swedish Aid to Agriculture**  
*Ivar Virgin, Alice Castensson, Filippa Ek, Ylva Ran*
- 2022:04     **A Team Player and Free Agent: Sweden's Engagement with EU Country and Joint Programming**  
*Erik Lundsgaarde*
- 2022:03     **How to change the world? An anthology of theories of change in development work (in Swedish, with some chapters available in English)**  
*Kim Forss and Númi Östlund (red.)*
- 2022:02     **Swedish Aid in the Time of the Pandemic**  
*Carsten Schwensen, Jonas Lövkrona, Louise Scheibel Smed*
- 2022:01     **Evaluation of strategic secondments for Swedish policy influence (in Swedish)**  
*Lisa Dellmuth, Paul T. Levin, Nicklas Svensson*

## DEVELOPMENT DISSERTATION BRIEFS (DDBs) 2022

The EBA's DDB series gives newly graduated PhDs an opportunity to summarise their dissertations, with a focus on their relevance to Swedish development cooperation. The aim is to keep the Government, public authorities and other stakeholders updated on both new research and new researchers.

- 2022:07     **Bridge over Troubled Water: Conflict and Cooperation During Water Scarcity**  
*Stefan Döring*
- 2022:06     **Condoning, Condemning or Confronting? Triggers and Responses to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**  
*Karin Johansson*
- 2022:05     **National Human Rights Institutions in Africa: Design and Effectiveness**  
*Karin Sundström*
- 2022:04     **Surgery in Armed Conflicts: Predicting Surgical Treatment Needs and Improving Resource Use in Resource-Constrained Settings**  
*Måns Muhrbeck*
- 2022:03     **War Injuries and Non-Communicable Diseases in Palestine: Burden, Incidence, and Management in the Health System**  
*Marwan Mosleh*
- 2022:02     **International Organizations as Advocates for Children's Rights: Why, How and With What Effects**  
*Johanna von Bahr*
- 2022:01     **Politicizing Women's Health: Consequences of Armed Conflict for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Colombia**  
*Signe Svallfors*

## WORKING PAPERS 2022

*EBA working papers consist of brief syntheses of current knowledge, reviews and analyses. Interim reports from major projects are also published in this series, as are examined masters theses for which the EBA has acted as assistant supervisor. Working papers are not subject to quality assurance by the Expert Group.*

**Avräkningar från biståndet för migrationskostnader i Sverige: vad vet vi?**, December 2022

*Jan Pettersson, Henrik Malm Lindberg and Mats Hårsmar*

**Endringsteori som styringsverktøy: En historisk utforskning av innebygde spenninger**, October 2022

*Hilde Reinersten*

**Implementing Policy Against Sextortion in Tanzania: A Follow-Up Study**, September 2022

*Åsa Eldén and Elin Bjarnegård*

**Engaging with Institutions: Clarifying Goals and Developing Theories of Change**, June 2022

*Adam Pain*

**Thematic Theories of Change Contributing to the Agenda 2030**, June 2022

*Suvi Virkkunen and Alva Bruun*

**Riksdagspartierna och biståndet: konflikt eller konsensus?**, June 2022

*Thomas Larue*

**Between Radical and Realistic: Biodiversity, Transformation and Development Cooperation**, April 2022

*Tilman Hertz*

**Recurring Disasters: Swedish Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopia**, April 2022

*Emma Öståker*

**Agriculture, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction**, April 2022

*Mats Hårsmar*

**An Approach to Theory of Change for Swedish Development Cooperation?**, February 2022

*Joakim Molander and Wolfgang Biersack*

**Assessment of the EBA's Country Evaluations: Quality, Use & Learning**, January 2022

*Elliot Stern and Ole Winckler Andersen*

## THE EBA PODCAST 2022 (IN SWEDISH)

**Episode 56** – Aid in this year's budget: What does the Committee think?

**Episode 55** – Aid during COVID-19: How did it go?

**Episode 54** – Aid in this year's budget

**Episode 53** – Security for refugees in longer and longer limbo

**Episode 52** – How is aid evaluated?

**Episode 51** – Redirection of funds from aid: When, where, how?

**Episode 50** – Jubilee podcast: Everything you didn't know you wanted to know about EBA

**Episode 49** – Addressing the public about aid: Propaganda, information or communication?

**Episode 48** – What does the past mean for the present? A conversation about last year's studies

**Episode 47** – Can we use the word 'nexus'?

**Episode 46** – Audiobook: EBA Aid Review 2022

**Episode 45** – Relevance: On doing the "right" thing

## SEMINARS IN 2022

*EBA seminars offer a natural forum for debate on important aid issues. They place EBA's reports in a wider context and discuss them from both the policy and practice perspectives.*

- 19 Dec     **The International Humanitarian System: Is it up to the challenges?**  
ALNAP report 'The State of the Humanitarian System 2022'
- 8 Dec       **Swedish Development Cooperation with Ethiopia: Sixty Years of Lessons Learned**  
EBA 2022:06
- 25 Nov     **Migration, Returning and Reconstruction: The Consequences of the War in Ukraine**  
Co-organised with Delmi and ESO
- 18 Nov     **Do Refugees Have Access to Social Security Systems?**  
Swedish Forum for Human Rights (EBA 2022:July)
- 27 Oct     **A Team Player and Free Agent: Sweden's Engagement with EU Country and Joint Programming**  
EBA 2022:04
- 21 Sept    **Swedish Aid in the Time of the Pandemic**  
EBA 2022:02
- 20 Sept    **Mapping Swedish Aid to Agriculture**  
EBA 2022:05
- 16 Sept    **Social Protection for Refugees: Utopia or Necessity?**  
EBA 2022:July
- 24 Aug     **Promoting Human Rights: How Effective is the System?**  
DDB 2022:02, 2022:05, 2022:06
- 20 June    **A Spotlight on Learning in Humanitarian Work**  
ALNAP's 25th anniversary
- 11 May     **On the Road to Peace: Lessons Learned from the Folke Bernadotte Academy's Peace Building Efforts**  
EBA 2021:07
- 3 May      **Improved Health and Medical Care in Conflict Zones – Examples from Palestine, Colombia and Red Cross Hospitals**  
DDB 2022:01, 2022:03, 2022:04
- 23 Mar     **Communicating About Aid: A Knowledge-enhancing Strategy?**  
EBA 2021:06
- 10 Mar     **Practising Peacebuilding Principles**  
EBA 2021:08
- 15 Feb     **State-to-state or Bypass?**  
Presentation of the book States, Markets and Foreign Aid by Simone Dietrich.



Clockwise from top left: Anna Tibblin and Johanna Wallmo Wahlgren. Maria Grafström. Emilie Weiderud and Elin Bergenlöv. Margareta Wahlström, Númi Östlund, Alexander Burlin and Carina Staibano. Markus Burman, Linda Öhman and Númi Östlund. Photo: EBA.

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a government committee tasked with independently evaluating and analysing Sweden's international development assistance.

Its remit is to contribute to an evidence base for the management of Swedish development cooperation.

*The EBA Aid Review* is based on the studies published by EBA over the past year. It is our annual report, and is available in digital and printed formats.

[www.eba.se](http://www.eba.se)

**E-post:** [ud.eba@gov.se](mailto:ud.eba@gov.se)

**Twitter:** [EBACommittee](https://twitter.com/EBACommittee)



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