



THE EBA AID REVIEW 2024



THE EXPERT GROUP
FOR AID STUDIES

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THE EBA AID REVIEW 2024

Annual report from the Expert Group for Aid Studies for the year 2023

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FOREWORD

War, crises and humanitarian disasters around the world, including close to home. Reorientation of Swedish policies. These have been distinguishing features of development assistance in 2023, and thus of the work of the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA).

IN INTERNATIONAL AID, and especially humanitarian aid, one must be prepared to tackle rapidly emerging crises. In 2023, multiple major crises increased competition for limited funds: Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which quickly descended into a war of attrition; the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with far-reaching and unpredictable consequences for future human security; and, away from the glare of the media spotlight, ongoing and in many cases deteriorating situations in Yemen, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Myanmar. The list goes on.

In these circumstances, the role of aid becomes even more vital. Meanwhile, there is little to suggest that the international donor community intends to increase aid volumes, limiting the scope for long-term development cooperation. What remains for aid agencies is to do more with less.

EBA's operations reflect our mission: to be relevant to aid policy formation and from an independent position present relevant knowledge as a basis for the Government's governance of aid. At the same time, EBA maintains an appropriate distance from policymaking in order to avoid the risk of evaluating activities that EBA itself has recommended.

Through conversations based on the knowledge developed by us and others, this year EBA's focus has been on Swedish aid policy and its reform. Issues addressed include migration, Sweden's feminist foreign policy, the governance of aid and the organisation of research aid. The intensive political debate concerning aid is reflected in the thematic division of *The EBA Aid Review 2024*.

Founded in 2013, EBA now has a decade of active knowledge production under its belt. The first EBA report was published in April 2014. With over 200 reports of various kinds to our name and a number of studies underway, we hope and believe that there is much here of interest and relevance to a great many people.

Stockholm, *March 2024*



Torbjörn Becker, Chair

Staffan I. Lindberg, Member
Malin Oud, Member
Anders Pedersen, Member
Andreas Wladis, Member

THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

Torbjörn Becker took over as chair of EBA in 2023. Looking back on a year marked by crises, he argues that the role of EBA is increasingly important. As he notes, a good knowledge base is a prerequisite for prioritising aid.

How has your first year in the chair been?

– It has been a very interesting and stimulating learning process, both in familiarising myself with EBA’s operations, secretariat and members, and learning about new issues. It would be impossible to be well-versed in every subject that pops up, so it’s been a bit like going back to school, but in a new way.

How would you describe the aid year 2023?

– Global developments and the role of aid in dealing with these developments have been extremely complicated. After the pandemic, there was hope that things would calm down, but then came the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since then, geopolitical problems and challenges have continued to mount. The impression during 2023 was that some negative trends were being reinforced. There were crises that in various ways demanded the attention of aid donors and the global community as a whole.

What do these multiple challenges and crises mean for EBA?

– We must be realistic about the difference that Swedish aid can make and realise how important it is to prioritise. Even if Sweden is a generous donor country, we always need to consider where our limited resources can be best used, understand what areas we excel in, and be guided by that.

Consequently, I believe that the role of EBA becomes even more clear and important. Being able to prioritise wisely presupposes having a systematic knowledge base on which to stand. As a simple example, when famine strikes, we need to know in advance the best way to send money, the best actors to work with and how best to reach the victims.

Ukraine was the largest recipient of Swedish development assistance during 2023. What is so important about this assistance?

– Firstly, of course, to assist people in Ukraine to survive Russia’s attack. Ensuring that Ukraine has a future in the EU that offers good prospects for its citizens will be one of the most important development projects for Europe as a whole. Then, Ukraine is a very important example of a partner country in which our assistance is of direct importance to ourselves, given the geopolitical implications of developments in Ukraine.

Which other areas should Sweden prioritise?

– Wherever Sweden has the best knowledge and expertise to make a positive difference. In areas such as gender equality, the environment and climate change, democracy and human rights we traditionally have both credibility internationally and a knowledge base that supports our policies.

Then, I think it’s easier for us to do good in countries with which we have more contact channels and exchanges, rather than far-off countries with whom we do little trade or have other exchanges.

”Ensuring that Ukraine has a future in the European Union that offers good prospects for its citizens will be important for Europe as a whole.”



Trade and the business community are expected to play a much greater role in development cooperation. How great a change will this involve?

– The role of trade, the business community and private-sector in development cooperation has been on the agenda many times before. Whether this leads to a major change this time depends on how the policy is implemented.

When many new stakeholders begin working with one another it’s impossible to create the necessary relationships overnight and there may be culture clashes. This means that we must have patience, reasonable expectations and commit human resources to making it work.

EBA has engaged with the issue of the future of research funding from the aid budget. Why?

– Reducing funding reduces opportunities for researchers to focus on aid issues, something that may impact the resource and knowledge base going forward. This affects EBA’s ability to commission studies to guide future aid.

Knowledge can also be used internationally; development cooperation is not simply about money but also knowledge about how we can jointly contribute to development.

A DECADE OF KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Founded in 2013, the Expert Group for Aid Studies, EBA, published its first report the following year. Since then, EBA has published almost 200 reports of various kinds. This knowledge base is added to through regular seminars and other forums for discussion and the exchange of ideas.

OVER TIME, the EBA has conducted a large number of evaluations of the results and effects of Swedish development aid. The view taken is often long-term, as in evaluations of Swedish development cooperation with individual partner countries or overall evaluations of the various areas of aid. EBA also evaluates individual organisations, such as the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Nordic Development Fund and Swedfund. Accountability depends on independent evaluation of the results achieved by aid.

EBA also conducts mapping and analyses that, in combination with knowledge about the results of aid, is crucial to learning and gaining a greater understanding of how aid can be improved. EBA has conducted studies that capture evidence-based knowledge from aid actors, methods for mutual learning and even methods of evaluation.

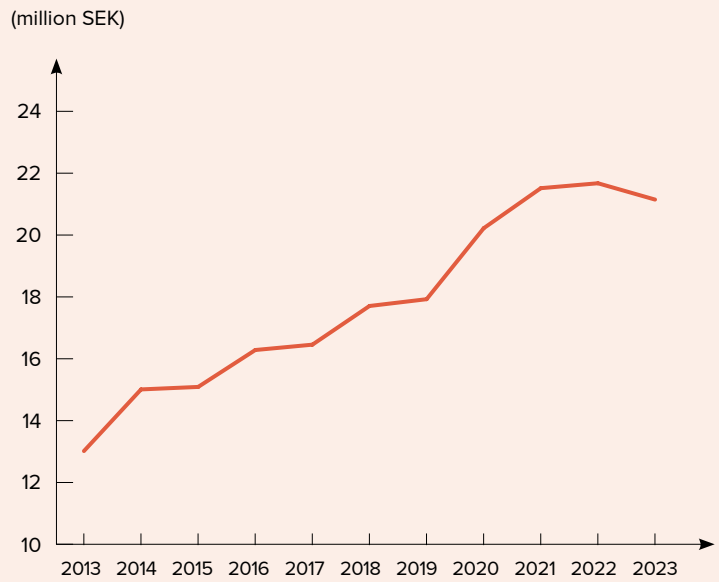
In addition to the 85 studies in the EBA report series, EBA has also prepared over 100 other reports, briefs, summaries and reviews on specific issues or knowledge developed by other stakeholders. While this has broadened and deepened the knowledge base, producing new knowledge is not in itself sufficient for learning, which happens when knowledge is repeatedly applied in various contexts. EBA contributes to various processes by making available and explaining the knowledge developed by the Expert Group in public seminars, podcasts, and discussions with primary stakeholders on issues such as policy reforms, institutional learning in a diplomatic service with a highly mobile workforce, or the implementation and prioritisation of interventions.

AUTHOR LOCALISATION (85 REPORTS)

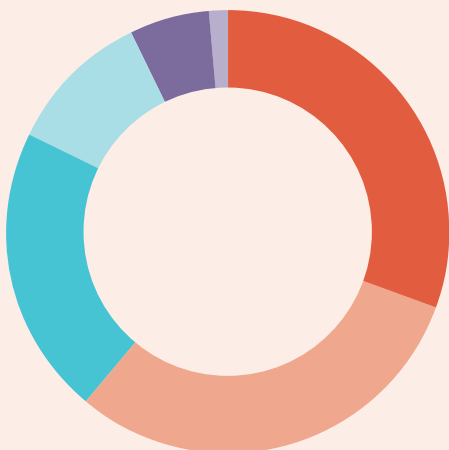


- Sweden (37 reports)
- Abroad (36 reports)
- Both Sweden and abroad (12 reports)

EBA FINANCIAL APPROPRIATIONS (PER YEAR)

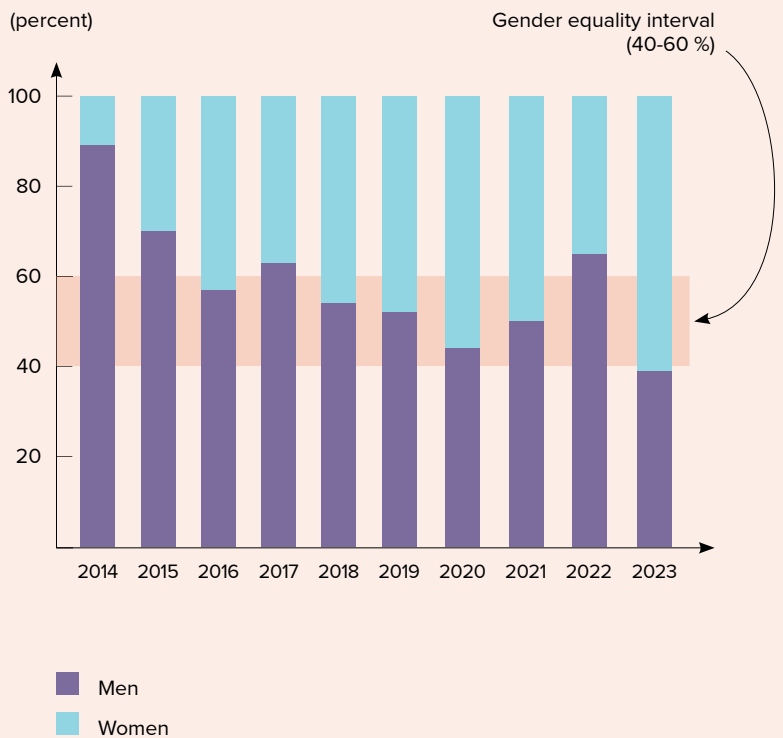


REPORT CATEGORIES (85 REPORTS)



- Evaluation (26 reports)
- Analysis (26 reports)
- Review (18 reports)
- Mapping (9 reports)
- Method study (5 reports)
- Other (1 report)

GENDER, AUTHORS (PER YEAR)



DIRECTING AND REDIRECTING AID POLICY

Sweden's aid policy is affected by both international agreements and shifts and prioritisations in national policy. It also has the stated aim of influencing international actors such as the EU and UN. EBA has studied, and contributed knowledge about, both the driving forces and effects of change processes in aid policy.

SWEDISH AID POLICY is characterised by both continuity and change. While reducing poverty has remained a guiding principle of policy throughout the history of Swedish development cooperation, focus areas and working methods have shifted as new political agendas and directives have been imposed.

The Government's reform agenda clearly underlines the importance of development cooperation as a foreign policy tool to pursue and protect Swedish interests. It is commonly understood that, in practice, aid has always been strongly linked to foreign policy, even when this has not been explicitly stated and documented. This was affirmed as early as the 1962 Aid Bill, which stated that *"Swedish development assistance to underdeveloped countries is a part of Swedish foreign policy and must be assessed in the light of its goals and means. Only then can one obtain a firmer grasp of the priority issues arising here, whether that be achieving a balance between increased development assistance and other appropriation needs, between different forms of aid or between recipient countries"* (page 130).

The reform agenda signals a number of new priorities, from linking development cooperation to trade, to synergies between aid and migration policy. It also gives increased priority to Ukraine and events in Sweden's immediate vicinity. Initiatives are also promised to increase the impact of Sweden's priorities on international institutions such as the EU and UN. On occasion, the term paradigm shift has been used by politicians to describe the reform agenda. However, the overarching thematic priorities are essentially no different to those of previous governments. The ongoing implementation of the policy will reveal how radical the changes actually are. EBA has cast light on many of the reform agenda's priority areas over the years and we will continuously monitor its implementation during 2024.

"Aid has always been strongly linked to foreign policy"



Successful international negotiations require thorough preparation, active participation, commitment and coalition-building. Photo: Cytonn Photography

In 2007, the centre-right government launched its ‘results agenda’, with the stated aim of increasing the emphasis on efficiency and results. In February 2023, EBA arranged a seminar on the impact of the results agenda on the governance of Swedish development cooperation (*EBA podcast #58*). The panel, which included Professor Göran Sundström and former Minister for International Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson, discussed how the implementation of the agenda 2007 - 2013 affected cooperation between politicians and civil servants. According to the panel, lessons learned from the results agenda and earlier research that we would do well to apply to future reforms include the importance of a “functioning administrative contract” – i.e., that the civil service must be responsive to new governance signals and involved in designing policy – and that there must be effective channels of communication between politicians and civil servants.

ANOTHER POLICY INITIATIVE that has had an impact on development cooperation over recent years is the adoption of a feminist foreign policy. The EBA report by *Towns et al. (2023)* examines

the implementation of the feminist foreign policy during the period 2014–2022 in the policy areas development cooperation, trade and national security. The main conclusion is that, despite generally abstract and open-ended government directives, the policy did have an impact on gender-equality work at embassies and government agencies. The use of the term feminist in this policy initiative contributed to joint action within the three policy areas and increased the level of ambition and boosted Swedish leadership within the field of gender equality. That said, there were significant variations in the extent to which the feminist foreign policy was implemented by the various actors. While the policy was rescinded in 2022, it has been adopted by dozens of other countries, which is a measure of its lasting international impact.

The EU and multilateral organisations are key platforms for Swedish aid policy and foreign policy priorities to have an international impact. Sweden is a major donor to the EU, the UN and the World Bank. As one EBA working paper (*Karlsson and Tallberg 2021*) demonstrates, there are pronounced differences in the national aid policy priorities of EU Member States.

Active lobbying is therefore vital if Sweden is to exert influence. The question is, how to go about it? EBA has published a literature review on how influence is exerted within multilateral aid organisations (*Lundgren and Strindvall 2023*). The authors conclude that lobbying must take place through multiple channels, using various strategies and tools, and over an extended period of time. While significant resources are often committed to lobbying, even nations with limited resources – such as Sweden – can exert influence by strategically prioritising issues, creating alliances, securing formal representation on boards, and preparing thoroughly for negotiations.

Lundgren et al. (2022) demonstrate that Sweden was successful in negotiations on the latest EU programme for cooperation with third countries, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). This report also underlines the importance of entering negotiations well-prepared, of active and ongoing participation and engagement in negotiation processes, strategic coalitions with other nations and a strong commitment to both development cooperation in general and to priority issues if one wishes to exert influence. An EBA evaluation (*Dellmuth et al., 2022*) of the secondment of Swedish personnel to the EU and UN notes that Sweden has achieved good results in terms of exerting influence by going down this route. Furthermore, they underline the importance of secondment as a tool for building a Swedish resource base of expertise on multilateral operations, and of working more strategically to design and follow up secondments to strengthen influence.

”Even Sweden can exert influence by strategically prioritising issues, creating alliances and preparing thoroughly for negotiations.”

CONCLUSIONS

- Functioning interaction between politicians and civil servants is one important precondition for effectively implementing major aid policy reforms.
- The abstract and open-ended governance of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy led to a marked increase in gender equality work and a higher level of ambition at Swedish embassies and agencies, even if implementation was somewhat uneven.
- Multilateral institutions are key arenas for Swedish lobbying. Sweden therefore needs to demonstrate greater ongoing commitment to prioritised issues, create alliances with likeminded nations and seek formal representation. This presupposes a high level of expertise and significant resources.

REPORTS:

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

EBA podcast 58 (2023), *Aid governance – experiences from a reform agenda*, Kulturhuset, February 14, 2023

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

Lundgren, M. & I. Strindvall (2023), *Influence in Multilateral Aid Organizations: A Literature Review*, **EBA Working Paper, July 2023**

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

Towns, A., E. Bjarnegård & K. Jezierska (2023), *More Than a Label, Less Than a Revolution: Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy*, **EBA 2023:02**

AID TO UKRAINE AND ITS CHALLENGES

Sweden is one of many actors supporting Ukraine. The challenges are unique and many: support to defend and maintain a country at war; short- and long-term assistance with reconstruction; and support to drive the necessary reforms to combat corruption and bring the country closer to EU membership.

THE WORLD'S ASSISTANCE to Ukraine is military, humanitarian and financial, the two latter defined as development assistance. Financial support is both short-term budget support and long-term assistance to rebuild the country. The needs are enormous. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculated that financial support required to maintain the operation of the state in 2023 amounted to approximately US\$42 billion.

In addition to assistance provided via international organisations, some 40 donor countries also contribute. The largest contributions since the outbreak of war in February 2022 have been made by the EU (€77.2 billion) and United States (€66.2 billion). Of the roughly €2.67 billion contributed by Sweden since the outbreak of war, €0.64 billion has been humanitarian aid, including protection for the civilian population and support for reforms and reconstruction. During 2023, approximately 13 per cent of Swedish aid went to reconstruction and maintaining the energy supply.

NO ONE KNOWS when and how the war will end, only that reconstruction will be necessary. The cost of rebuilding will be huge. According to a study by the World Bank, United Nations, European Commission and the Ukrainian government, rebuilding Ukraine's economy after Russia's invasion is expected to cost US\$486

billion. Development assistance will fall far short of this sum but, used properly, it can mobilise private investment. Compared to other recipient countries, Ukraine has a relatively robust administration and financial sector. This raises the possibility of using aid as a catalyst for private capital (*Olofsgård and Perrotta Berlin, 2023*).

Rebuilding has already started, and planning is underway for how Ukraine can be assisted in this regard now and in future. Coordination is key but, thus far, the G7's coordination initiative has failed to deliver. A more stable and distinct organisation is required. Since the EU opened the way for negotiations on Ukrainian membership, it has been argued that the EU is well placed to take a leading role in coordinating donors. Rebuilding and societal reforms can then be more clearly linked to the demands placed on future EU membership, incentivising the necessary but difficult reforms (*Olofsgård and Perrotta Berlin, 2023*).

A legal system plagued by corruption is one striking example of the need for reform in the country. Since before, Swedish development cooperation with Ukraine is targeted at reform, including supporting decentralisation, and may have an important role to play in this field also for the years to come.

EBA HAS PREVIOUSLY EVALUATED reform efforts in other countries hoping to accede to the EU.



The lessons learned here should be highly relevant to cooperation with Ukraine. EBA's evaluation concerned cooperation between Swedish and domestic government agencies in four countries in the Western Balkans (*Allen et al., 2020*). There, reform efforts were generally deemed to be cost-effective and cooperation between Swedish and domestic civil servants was highlighted as positive. Contributions to sustainable results were especially clear in initiatives related to highly prioritised areas for accession to the EU. Cooperation was most successful in interventions that took an explicitly system-wide approach rather than those focused on a single agency.

The authors of the evaluation also levelled a number of criticisms. Parts of the organisation should have been more focused on important success factors. Good results would have required extended periods of preparation to create understanding and commitment from all involved. It was

important to have ready access to the right expertise for sufficient lengths of time. Broad support from embassy staff was another success factor.

THE REFORMS that Ukraine must implement include combatting deep-seated and extensive corruption at a time when international aid is flowing into the country. Previous experience tells us that, while corruption is difficult to measure, it tends to be more prevalent in countries with significant needs, vulnerabilities and poverty. When large quantities of aid are thrown into the equation, the risk of corruption increases further. Infrastructure, water supply, public procurement and healthcare are particularly vulnerable sectors (*Hede Skagerlind, 2021*).

In order to identify strategies that can minimise corruption, it is important for aid donors to understand the dominant societal norms in the recipient country and the impact of their own interventions,



REPORTS:

Allen, R., G. Ferrari, K. Loshi, N. Östlund & D. Razić Ilić (2020), *Institution Building in Practice: An Evaluation of Swedish Central Authorities' Reform Cooperation in the Western Balkans*, **EBA 2020:04**

Hede Skagerlind, H. (2021), *Korruption i biståndet: En litteraturöversikt*, **EBA Working Paper, July 2021**

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2017), *Seven Steps to Evidence-Based Anticorruption: A Roadmap*, **EBA 2017:10**

Olofsgård, A. & M. Perrotta Berlin (2023), *Åter ur askan: det svenska och globala bidraget till Ukrainas återuppbyggnad*, **EBA Working Paper, March 2023**

Rebuilding has begun despite the ongoing war in Ukraine. Volodymir Perekhzestenko is busy repairing his home in Bucha. Future reconstruction will demand funding on a massive scale. Coordination must begin immediately. Photo: Ola Torkelsson / TT bildbyrå.

identify agents of change and develop functioning theories of change (*Mungiu-Pippidi, 2017*). EBA is also currently evaluating Sida's efforts to combat corruption that hinders development.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE has created a humanitarian crisis. In addition to rebuilding society, refugees from the war need help to survive and eventually to return to Ukraine. Long-term measures need to be planned at the same time as short-term humanitarian aid is designed and distributed. As far as possible, local organisations should be involved in humanitarian efforts, including local councils, as these will remain on the ground after international organisations have left the country. An ongoing EBA evaluation is looking at how the localisation agenda has been implemented thus far, and how it can be strengthened. A field study is being conducted in Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

- Ukraine is receiving a large amount of aid in a number of vital areas implemented by many actors. Sweden needs to ensure that there is good coordination led by the EU, motivated by bringing the country closer to the EU.
- Development assistance to rebuild the country must be a supplement to other finance flows. Strenuous efforts are required to mobilise private capital and private investment.
- In Ukraine, combatting corruption is key. Swedish and other actors need to understand Ukrainian societal norms, their own role as donors and how the two interact.
- Humanitarian aid must be designed from day one with the long-term challenges of rebuilding and the return of refugees in mind.

CIVIL SOCIETY FACING A DEMOCRATIC HEADWIND

One fifth of Swedish development assistance is targeted at civil society. The Government has indicated that this share will increase, emphasising the importance of supporting democracy and human rights defenders. Meanwhile, the democratic space is shrinking in more and more of Sweden's partner countries. Supporting civil society is becoming both more vital and more difficult.

ASSISTANCE TO and via civil society organisations is vital in, for example, humanitarian interventions, improving sexual and reproductive health and promoting democracy and human rights.

In 2023, an increasing number of countries displayed shrinking democratic space, according to the V-Dem Institute. Authoritarian regimes are restricting the freedom of civil society, academia and the media. A record number of countries, 42, are moving towards autocracy, while only 14 are moving towards democracy.

Sweden is investing heavily in democracy aid, a significant percentage of which is channelled via civil society organisations. An ongoing evaluation is studying the importance of Swedish civil society organisations to strengthening the capacity of their partners in selected African countries.

Generally speaking, the picture is positive. An evaluation conducted in 2020 shows that Swedish and international democracy aid generally has a positive if limited impact on democratic development (*Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020*). The authors also dismiss the idea that aid may have a negative impact on democracy. Democracy aid is found to have a positive effect during democratic upturns. In countries sliding towards autocracy, no effect is found. However, the authors contend that continued assistance may be even more important in the latter situations.

The authors of the report *Swedish Aid in the Era of Shrinking Space: The Case of Turkey* (*Eldén and Levin, 2018*) also argue for continued assistance in authoritarian countries, where aid is vital

to democracy and human rights defenders. The authors suggest a combination of smaller, short-term seed funding and more substantial, longer-term core support to civil society organisations.

Civil society organisations have an important role to play in combating discrimination (*Marcus et al., 2019*). While the results are difficult to measure, the literature does reveal progress in terms of changing attitudes and norms. It is particularly important to cooperate with people in positions of moral leadership and to strengthen the capacity of discriminated-against groups to claim their rights. Lobbying to change laws and policies is also key.

Since EBA published the above-mentioned reports, the democratic space has continued to contract. In many places, the COVID-19 pandemic has been exploited to postpone or cancel elections and restrict freedom of movement and other civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

REPORTS:

Eldén, Å. & P. T. Levin (2018), *Swedish Aid in the Era of Shrinking Space – the Case of Turkey*, **EBA 2018:06**

Marcus, R., D. Mathur & A. Shepherd (2019), *Impact of Civil Society Anti-Discrimination Initiatives: A Rapid Review*, **EBA 2019:05**

Niño-Zarazúa, M., R. M. Gisselquist, A. Horigoshi, M. Samarin & K. Sen (2020), *Effects of Swedish and International Democracy Aid*, **EBA 2020:07**



On the international transgender day of visibility, an activist in Bogotá, Colombia, lights a candle in memoriam of killed transgender persons. Photo: Antonio Caslo/ SOPA Images.



Beatrice Njeri owns a beadwork shop in the Kariokor district of Nairobi, Kenya. Thanks to Swedfund's investment in local microfinance institution Premier Credit, she was able to borrow to finance her business. Copyright Swedfund. Photo: Ignacio Hennigs/ Thought Leader Global.

TRADE AND AID TO PROMOTE GROWTH

The Government's coordination of development and trade policies is intended to stimulate growth and entrepreneurship and create jobs in partner countries. Policy success is predicated on basing activities on the experience gained, research, and evaluations conducted over many years of international development cooperation.

TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT play vital roles in reducing poverty.

Whether and, if so, how such goals can be achieved through public-sector measures such as development cooperation is another question. Direct assistance, such as technical assistance, financing, innovation projects and guarantees, is not obviously more effective than indirect assistance, such as infrastructure investments, strengthening the rule of law or improving education, healthcare or social security. Direct and indirect assistance often complement one another when it comes to promoting economic development. The literature on economic growth is extensive and points to a myriad of influences and prerequisites. It also reveals significant differences between categories of countries.

So, what do we know about the effectiveness of Swedish development cooperation in this regard? EBA's evaluation of Swedish assistance for economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded that the portfolio of interventions was a mixed bag in terms of value for money (*Lindahl et al., 2018*). When Swedfund was evaluated by the EBA's predecessor the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV) in 2008, the organisation's additionality was somewhat unclear. When EBA evaluated Swedfund a decade later, the conclusion was that, while the organisation had probably contributed to reducing poverty, a lack of data made this difficult to determine with any certainty (*Spratt et al., 2018*).

Evaluations of the use of guarantee instruments by other countries in their development cooperation show that design has a significant

impact on results. One conclusion is that guarantees must be adapted to specific local conditions. It is vital to have knowledge of factors such as market failures and local financial markets. Some evaluations of guarantees conducted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have shown weak additionality. For example, guarantees have been given to banks in order to widen their circle of borrowers. In failing to achieve this goal, the guarantees have, at least in part, been ineffectual and could potentially have distorted markets.

When trade and development cooperation are coupled, it is important to identify and deal with conflicting goals. An earlier report published by EBA (*Johansson de Silva et al., 2015*) underlines the potential development gains of more effectively benefitting from the financial resources, expertise and power of innovation of the private sector. The authors list five principles for effective public-private development cooperation partnerships:

- Targeting the most vulnerable countries and population groups.
- Leveraging synergies and complementarities for development.
- Developing, not disturbing markets.
- Ensuring sustainability through local ownership, harmonisation, and coordination
- Measuring results and fostering systemic impact.

THE REPORT ALSO WARNS that public-private development cooperation partnerships can prove ineffective or, at worst, even harmful. The authors mention risks such as uncompetitive practices,

”There is a need to deal with goal conflicts”

limited additionality of interventions, low value for money, unsustainable projects, and low partner country involvement and limited local ownership. The desire of the donor country business community to have easy access to investment support may come into conflict with the principles of good management of public funds or the principles of effective development cooperation. When aid is tied to deliverables from the donor country, this has costs in terms of efficiency and typically imposes welfare losses on the recipient country. According to the authors, there is also a risk that tied aid will promote initiatives that are controlled more by the interests of the donor country than the needs of the recipient country. EBA is presently preparing a working paper summarising literature and evidence in the field of Aid for Trade.

Another warning about the need to balance risk and opportunities can be found in EBA’s rebuilding Ukraine study (*Olofsgård and Perrotta Berlin, 2023*). The authors refer to research showing that the aid impact often decreases significantly when funding is motivated by strategic or commercial interests. They conclude that, while private capital will be the key to rebuilding Ukraine, public funds should be used as a catalyst for private investment through public-private partnerships and various types of guarantee instruments.

It is also important to avoid a goal conflict between the greater emphasis on entrepreneurship and the need for transparency. An ongoing EBA study discusses Publish What You Fund’s Aid Transparency Index, in which Swedfund has a very low ranking compared to other international development finance institutions. This is hardly in step with the transparency guarantee for Swedish development cooperation and presents a risk to the legitimacy of business-oriented development cooperation.

In the area of trade, a previous EBA report (*Molander, 2016*) underlines the importance of adopting a broader perspective on development. While the World Trade Organization (WTO) works to increase free trade, the rules it formulates – such as rules of origin and rules on additives and contaminants in foodstuffs, so-called sanitary

and phytosanitary measures – do not always have the best interests of poor countries in mind. EU legislation in areas such as environmental law also constitutes a de facto trade barrier to, for example, African countries.

CONCLUSIONS

- Closer links between trade and development cooperation present both opportunities and risks. When designing interventions, due consideration should be given to the lessons learned from previous research and evaluation.
- While increased collaboration between the public and private sectors on development cooperation creates opportunities, it also leads to goal conflicts that need to be identified and dealt with.
- The impact of investments in the business sector using new funding instruments and collaborative forms should be rigorously evaluated. Issues of additionality and local adaptation are key when using guarantee instruments.

REPORTS:

Johansson de Silva, S., A. Kokko & H. Norberg (2015), *Now Open for Business: Joint Development Initiatives Between the Private and Public Sectors in Development Cooperation*, **EBA 2015:06**

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

Molander, P. (2016), *Revitalising the Policy for Global Development*, **EBA 2016:11**

Olofsgård, A. & M. Perrotta Berlin (2023), *Åter ur askan: det svenska och globala bidraget till Ukrainas återuppbyggnad*, **EBA Working Paper, March 2023**

Spratt, S., P. O’Flynn & J. Flynn (2018), *DFIs and Development Impact: An Evaluation of Swedfund*, **EBA 2018:01**

DO GENDER EQUALITY INTERVENTIONS ACHIEVE RESULTS?

Gender equality is a prioritised long-term goal of Swedish development cooperation. The fight for gender equality and women's rights has faced an increasing backlash over recent years. Sweden's gender equality efforts take the form of targeted interventions, gender mainstreaming and advocacy.

A number of reports published by EBA have looked at the implementation and results of this work.

IN 2014, SWEDEN ADOPTED a feminist foreign policy, as a transformative agenda designed to produce results in people's everyday lives. In 2023, EBA published a comprehensive study (*Towns et al., 2023*) of the implementation of the policy. The study follows the implementation chain from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to Swedish embassies and government agencies. The authors conclude that the policy clearly increased the level of gender equality activities in all three areas of foreign policy: development cooperation, trade and national security. Governance of the policy was loose, leading to variations in how it was interpreted and implemented by different actors, and the policy did not noticeably entail the development of new working methods. Still, the policy did drive joint actions and coordination between policy areas, while the 'feminist' label helped to increase the level of ambition and reinforce Swedish leadership in the field of gender equality.

ALTHOUGH THE FEMINIST foreign policy was rescinded in 2022, gender equality remains an important priority of Swedish development cooperation that must be considered in all interventions. An earlier evaluation (*Bjarnegård and Ugglå, 2018*) of the implementation of Sida's plan for gender mainstreaming showed that this work did yield results. The authors affirm that gender equality was considered in all interventions and that the plan led to an increase in the number of projects for which gender equality was the

principal objective. However, as with the study of the feminist foreign policy, the authors draw the conclusion that implementation was uneven and dependent on individuals. Gender equality work has had greater impact when knowledgeable and dedicated people drive the work. The authors emphasise the need to reinforce support functions and provide training and skills development for more people within the organisation.

”The ‘feminist’ label helped to reinforce Swedish leadership.”

The promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is a vital component of Swedish gender equality efforts. Despite significant progress, there remains a great need for improvement in the field of SRHR. During 2023, EBA published the report *The Role of Aid in the Provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services* (*Sundewall et al., 2023*). The authors study the period 2002–2022, finding that aid has had a positive if minor impact on outcomes in infant and maternal health and access to modern contraception and antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS.

The results suggest that aid has the greatest positive impact in low-income countries and that this appears to have increased over the course of



the 20-year period studied, which is interpreted as an increase in the effectiveness of aid over time. Low-income countries are increasingly reliant on foreign aid for providing SRHR and other health-care services. Aid therefore plays an important role and the authors recommend continued investment in this area. Earlier EBA reports have stressed that progress in SRHR is not simply a matter of committing resources, it is also strongly linked to societal norms and values (*Kågesten et al, 2021*). Discriminatory norms, and how deeply ingrained they are, differ from one country to another. Generally speaking, discriminatory norms are more commonly linked to sexual and reproductive rights than sexual and reproductive health. The study, which mainly focuses on three sub-Saharan African countries, found that discriminatory values and social norms appeared to be

particularly entrenched in relation to LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, women's decision-making, men's control and power over women, violence against children, divorce, and young people's sexuality and right to choose a spouse.

“Promoting SRHR demands knowledge of local norms”

Such norms are, however, both contradictory and unpredictable and not easily compartmentalised into “more” or “less” supportive of SRHR. An individual or group that supports one dimension of SRHR will not necessarily support another; for example, someone may support abortion and



REPORTS:

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Eldén, Å., D. Calvo, E. Bjarnegård, S. Lundgren & S. Jansson (2020), *Sextortion: Corruption and Gender-Based Violence*, **EBA 2020:06**

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Sundewall, J., B. Ekman & J. Schmit (2023), *The Role of Aid in the Provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services*, **EBA 2023:01**

Towns, A., B. Bjarnegård & K. Jezierska (2023), *More Than a Label, Less Than a Revolution: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*, **EBA 2023:02**

A health worker from Action Humanitaire pour le Développement Durable Intégral Congolaise conducts training on family planning and sexual and reproductive health at a market in Kingbwa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: Images of Empowerment.

LGBTQ+ rights while justifying men's violence against women. The results of the study clearly show that trends at the population level are not country specific, e.g. the low support for LGBTQ+ rights and high support for contraceptive use were similar in all three countries, showing that it is both possible and important to change norms (Kågesten et al., 2021).

The promotion of SRHR, such as through interventions to combat sexual violence and sextortion (Eldén et al., 2020; Eldén and Bjarnegård, 2022), demands knowledge of local societal norms and values and active collaboration with local actors to counter discriminatory practices and stigmas. However, Dooley et al. (2019) find that, in practice, aid programmes often serve to strengthen prevailing norms and gender roles rather than weaken them.

CONCLUSIONS

- Robust support functions and training and skills development for a broad group of staff are prerequisites for successfully promoting gender equality. Contextual knowledge is crucial to effectively combatting discriminatory norms.
- SRHR interventions should take an approach to relevant values and norms in the context in which the intervention is being implemented. Changing social norms demands initiatives at multiple levels over an extended period of time. Simply focusing on changing individual norms is insufficient.
- A high level of ambition and the prioritisation of gender equality on the part of the government can lead to tangible results, even if governance is loose.

THE TANGLED MIGRATION – AID RELATIONSHIP

Migration is an aid policy priority. The Government has set different and clearer goals related to migration in development cooperation. Development cooperation is aimed to become a tool to combat irregular migration and its root causes and increase the number of migrants returning to their former homelands.

WAR, CONFLICT, climate change and disasters mean that the world is facing mass migration with unprecedented challenges. As of June 2023, the number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide stood at 110 million, 63 million of whom were internally displaced within their own homeland. The average length of time people spend as refugees is over 10 years and rising. The challenge is to both provide short-term humanitarian aid and ensure long-term integration and development in the host country.

Over three quarters of the world's refugees are hosted in low- and middle-income countries. While just over 10 per cent of global aid is spent on alleviating the situation for refugees, this is unevenly distributed in relation to needs. Almost as much aid remains in high-income countries as makes its way to low- and middle-income countries.

People migrate for many different reasons. In addition to those who are forcibly displaced, people emigrate because prospects are more promising in high-income countries, or at least less unfavourable. An EBA seminar on the World Bank's World Development Report 2023 (*Sweden launch, 2023*) looked at how different migration situations should be handled. The report highlights that demographic development is making migration increasingly necessary for countries at all income levels.

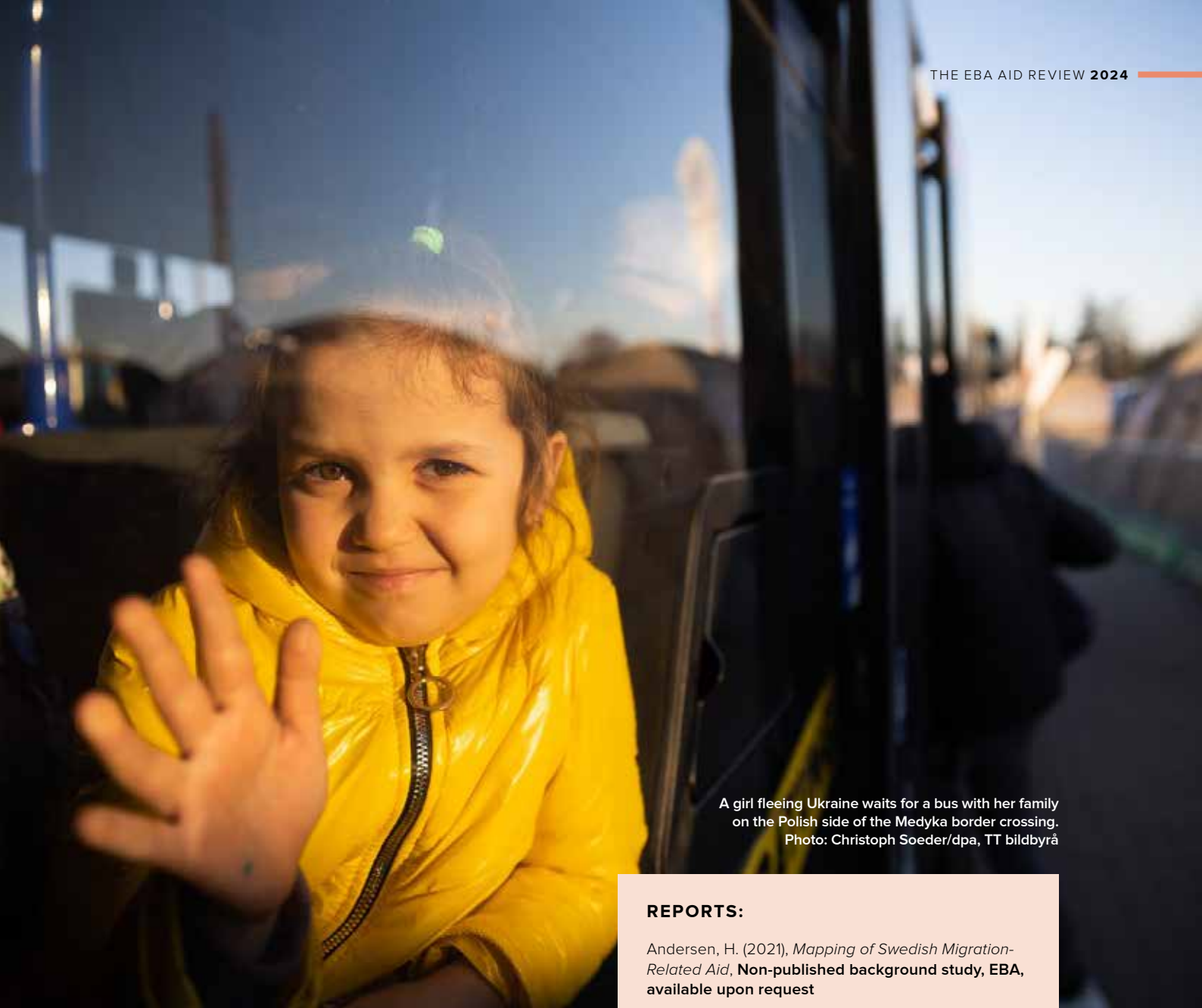
The intersections between migration and development cooperation are many and a comprehensive body of research indicates complicated and difficult relationships. For example, migration may contribute to economic growth, or it may be the result of economic growth. If development

cooperation contributes to economic growth in the recipient country, in the short term it will often increase migration, as poor people have increased economic opportunities to migrate should they feel inclined to do so. Hence economic growth in a developing country generates a migration hump (*Lucas, 2019*).

BEYOND GENERAL CORRELATIONS, studies suggest that agricultural aid can increase opportunities to earn a livelihood from farming and thus to remain on the land. Using development assistance to improve healthcare and reproductive health and increase access to basic education can also serve to disincentivise migration (*Lucas, 2019*).

Aid to prevent forced migration, to support neighbouring countries that host refugees and to facilitate return migration appears to be most likely to reduce migration. However, these are underfunded areas. One EBA/OECD study (*Gagnon et al., 2022*) notes that the focus has shifted towards integration of forced displaced with local host communities. Effective integration enables forcibly displaced persons to become more self-reliant and making host communities more resilient (*Burlin, 2021*). In reality, however, the majority of forcibly displaced persons have no opportunity to earn their own livelihoods. In such situations, access to state services, social security and local work permits is critical.

A survey of migration interventions within Swedish development cooperation suggests that activities thus far are difficult to assess, and that it is unclear which types of problems these interventions are expected to solve (*Andersen, 2021*).



A girl fleeing Ukraine waits for a bus with her family on the Polish side of the Medyka border crossing. Photo: Christoph Soeder/dpa, TT bildbyrå

The Government's intention is to condition parts of the development cooperation on partner countries reception of returning citizens who have been denied asylum in Sweden. The authors of a study commissioned by EBA (*Guillaumont et al., 2023*) argue that the research is unequivocal: this type of conditionality is ineffective. According to literature reviews, something that can make aid more effective is to counter and deal with forced displacement. Conflict prevention and support for emergency preparedness and reconstruction can be particularly important (*Guillaumont et al., 2023; Lucas, 2019*).

Since 2023, the percentage of the aid budget that can be deducted for the reception of refugees in Sweden is capped at 8 per cent. *Pettersson et al. (2022)* show that this cap would have had an effect in 11 of the 32 years during which such deductions have been reported. However, the new cap has not yet been reached and, given the more restrictive asylum policy, it is unlikely to be applied.

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Burlin, A. (red.) 2021: *Forced Displacement and the Humanitarian Development Nexus: A Roundtable Anthology, EBA Working Paper, June 2021*

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Guillaumont, P., M. Boussichas & A. Dsouza (2023), *The Evolution of Aid Conditionality: A Review of the Literature of the Last Twenty Years, EBA Working Paper, September 2023*

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

Sweden launch of World Development Report 2023 'Migrants, Refugees and Societies', Seminar, Medelhavsmuséet, May 29, 2023.



Evelyn Syokau and Judith Nthenya live with their parents in Machakos just outside Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Their house is equipped with a d-light Solar Home System that generates and stores electricity. Copyright Swedfund. Photo: Ignacio Hennigs/ Thought Leader Global.

RESULTS REPORTING: AN AREA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Swedish Government has committed to simplifying, improving and clarifying its reporting of results to the Riksdag. The EBA has conducted a number of studies in this field.

REPORTING THE RESULTS of development cooperation is the subject of constant discussion: Which targets have been reached, what is working where, for whom and in what way? But simply achieving results is not enough, one must also verify, review, monitor and report results in a satisfactory manner.

Reliable information about results is a fundamental requirement for reporting results, including on unanticipated and undesirable results and unachieved objectives. A number of studies published by EBA cast light on how the results of development cooperation are evaluated (*Burman, 2021; 2017; Hårsmar and Burman, 2015*) and the methods used (for example, Befani 2021; *Isaksson, 2017*). One recurring conclusion is that there is a need for more impact evaluations of Swedish development cooperation in various environments and situations, especially of long-term results. Among other things, EBA contributes to this knowledge base by conducting country evaluations and major statistical studies of specific areas.

The purpose of country evaluations is to evaluate the contribution of aid to development, keeping in mind the methodological challenges this poses. Many of the processes involved can only be observed after a significant period has passed, including development of the private sector and public institutions. The impact of development cooperation

on these processes is difficult to measure. For example, it is much easier to count the number of teachers than to measure the quality of their teaching. That said, impact evaluations performed using quantitative and qualitative methods can provide a reliable picture of the contribution of development cooperation.

”It is impossible to unequivocally answer the question of whether development cooperation works”

ONE OVERALL CONCLUSION of the EBA’s country evaluations is that, while the long-term impact of development cooperation varies significantly from one country, context, point in time and type of intervention to the next, there are both successful and unsuccessful interventions. Another unavoidable conclusion is therefore that it is impossible to unequivocally answer the question of whether development cooperation works. Rather, the question we should be asking is when, how, for whom and in what contexts does it work?

”There has been a constant hope of finding better reporting categories”

Significantly, quantitative studies have established that development cooperation has improved access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services (*Sundewall et al., 2023*), that democracy aid generally has a positive if limited impact (*Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020*), and that locally adapted, coordinated, decentralisation programmes can have positive, long-term socioeconomic effects (*BenYishay et al., 2019*). This type of studies contributes not only to an understanding of the overall results of development cooperation but also to understanding how the results of individual interventions deviate from the norm.

Results can also be monitored using indicators. One major challenge associated with designing indicators is that they tend to be corrupted so that they neither measure what one wishes to measure nor provide a fair picture of the results of the activities. There are however often logical, natural and obvious candidates for indicators in many organisations. Among the recommendations in the EBA’s evaluation of Swedfund (*Spratt et al., 2018*) was that Swedfund should develop a more long-term follow-up model based on key performance indicators, such as jobs created and tax revenue generated by the companies it invests in. Without such a follow-up model, it is difficult to evaluate the organisation’s impact. EBA has not, however, followed up the development of the model since the evaluation was published. In the case of Sida, one potential improvement might be to use baselines when preparing interventions.

Broader learning and accountability presuppose that the results of development cooperation will be reliably reported. *Vähämäki (2018)* observes that previous initiatives to reform Sida’s results reporting have come in four waves and that a

common feature of the initiatives was the “constant hope of finding better reporting categories, but also the failure to do so” (page 10). *Brolin (2017)* points out the inherent contradiction between the principle of ownership and management by results. This includes the relationship between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, according to Brolin, the results agenda has become an end in itself rather than a means to achieve the objectives of development cooperation. A pending working paper assesses quantitative results concerning job creation in Sida’s Annual Reports based on criteria such as reliability, objectivity and transparency.

THE GOVERNMENT RELIES on results reporting by government agencies to be able to report the results of development cooperation to the Riksdag. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has for many years repeatedly highlighted the need for improved reporting of the results of Sweden’s development cooperation.

In its reform agenda for development cooperation, the Government has stated its intention to simplify, improve and clarify the reporting of results to the Riksdag, a task that one EBA report (*Östlund and Hede Skagerlind, 2023*) is intended to directly contribute to. The study asks three research questions in order to explore the preconditions for improved results reporting to the Riksdag: What are the reporting requirements? Does current results reporting live up to these requirements? And how are results reported in other countries and other policy areas?

The authors find that current reporting: is inadequately adapted to the needs of its intended users; that, despite objectives being formulated in terms of effects, it revolves around

performance rather than impact; and that reporting cannot be characterised as fair. It thus does not live up to the reporting requirements. While they also find that experience from other countries and policy areas can offer inspiration and guidance for improvements, they stress the importance of designing results reporting with due consideration for the specific conditions of Swedish development cooperation. The authors propose a possible way forward, recommending a more comprehensive approach to results reporting that includes both long-term effects and annual reporting and that is an integral part of a system that includes objectives, governance, monitoring and evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

- Reform of the Government's reporting of results to the Riksdag is necessary to clarify what the Government wishes to achieve with activities and development in relation to set objectives.
- The need for reform extends to how government agencies report results.
- More impact assessments are needed of Swedish development cooperation in various environments and situations.

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Brolin, T. (2017), *Results and Ownership in Swedish Development Cooperation*, **Dissertation Brief 2017:10**

Burman, M. (2021), *Målbild och mekanism: Vad säger utvärderingar om svenska biståndsinsatsers målluppfyllelse?*, **EBA 2021:02**

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Hårsmar, M. & M. Burman (2015), *Utvärdering av svenskt bistånd: en kartläggning*, **EBA 2015:01**

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Östlund, N., & H. Hede Skagerlind (2023), *Det är resultatet som räknas: För en bättre resultatredovisning av biståndet*, **EBA 2023:04**

THE POSSIBILITIES OF CLIMATE AID

The Government is keen to increase the amount and efficacy of Swedish climate aid. The intention is that it should contribute to reducing emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. In all likelihood, this will mean changes to how development cooperation is designed and implemented and which countries receive it.

PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS have also had stated ambitions of increasing climate aid. The Swedish Climate Change Initiative 2009–2012 had lasting impacts, largely thanks to being governed by a small number of key principles. Managers and administrators had a relatively free hand in designing interventions (*Colvin et al. 2020*). Over recent years, however, progress has slowed. Despite governance signals that climate aid was to be increased, after a brief rise, by 2021 funding was back at 2017 levels (*Williams, 2023*).

The Government has underlined the importance of development cooperation contributing to a reduction in emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. Studies conducted by EBA show that Swedish development cooperation has previously prioritised interventions in low-income countries with relatively low national emissions, but significant climate adaptation needs. The success of this reprioritisation is predicated on development cooperation contributing to reducing emissions in the (middle-income) countries with the highest emissions.



A solar cell panel in the village of Donggou in the Hebel province, northern China: Photo: Ng Han Guan.

EBA's review of Sweden's multilateral aid shows that, in general and based on their specific mandates, the work of multilateral organisations is relatively well-aligned with the Paris Agreement (*Hårsmar and Hjelm, 2020*). Of all multilateral organisations, development banks have the greatest potential for promoting transformative climate related societal change. While they are working on joint climate guidelines, some of the banks in particular need to increase their efforts.

Sweden is an outlier internationally in its equal division of climate aid between reducing emissions and climate adaptation. This is something that multilateral organisations are striving after, but thus far climate adaptation has received a significantly smaller share of the pot than emissions reduction.

Public-sector aid actors have a vital role to play in mobilising capital. Sweden has a broad portfolio of climate finance, including through Sida, Swedfund and the Nordic Development Fund (NDF). In an ongoing study, EBA is evaluating whether climate finance from these actors is

designed to contribute sufficient emission reductions – in time to make a difference to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement includes, in its Article 6, a mechanism for voluntary international cooperation to reduce emissions. Such cooperation may take place in a market for trading carbon credits, or outside the market. As yet, the system is not fully developed. When it is, it will be possible to compensate for climate impact by buying emission rights from low- and middle-income countries.

One vital question is whether a country can compensate for its emissions with aid funds. *Fridahl (2023)* finds that scope for this is severely limited. Another possibility, that may be counted as aid, is to buy emission rights in low- and middle-income countries but not use them. This would contribute to achieving the aims of the Paris Agreement while at the same time generating domestic financial resources. Article 6 trade in carbon credits can then be one mechanism by which climate aid reduces emissions.

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Colvin, J., M. Mukute, M.A. Habib, J. Burt, M. Kugele & J. Wilson (2020), *Evaluation of the Swedish Climate Change Initiative, 2009–2012*, **EBA 2020:02**

Fridahl, M. (2023), *Klimatbistånd som finansieringskälla för utsläppshandel: Förutsättningar och fallgropar*, **EBA Working Paper, October 2023**

Hårsmar, M. & L. Hjelm (2020), *Alignment of Sweden's Multilateral Aid with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change*, **EBA Working Paper, November 2020**

Williams, O. (2023), *Swedish Climate Aid: What Does the Data Tell Us?*, **EBA Working Paper, June 2023**

LOOKING FORWARD



IN DECEMBER 2023, the Swedish Government presented a new direction for Swedish development cooperation. The document *Development Assistance for a New Era: Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth* is not only central to Sweden's development cooperation but also to the work of EBA going forward.

Swedish aid policy appears to be in a wave of increased polarisation. Naturally, the more polarised a policy area becomes, the more important it is that those implementing the policy comply with formal governance, both to ensure that policy is implemented and to avoid any overinterpretation of political will.

It remains to be seen how the reform agenda will manifest itself over the coming years, and particularly in 2024. EBA will continuously monitor fulfilment of the reform agenda, including studying the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities that are implemented.

The focus of EBA during 2023 was on the design of aid policy. One issue that EBA has particularly engaged with is the conditions for Swedish development research. Aside from the general and long-term importance of research to development in partner countries, and to Sweden's international influence, priorities and knowledge development, EBA has its own reasons for wanting research of good quality to



”Our plan is to focus more on the results of development cooperation.”

Pupils at Oloika School in Kenya.
Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty
Images/Images of Empowerment

be conducted in Sweden. Most of our studies are conducted by researchers. Relevance to and knowledge of Swedish development cooperation presupposes that many of those whose services we engage are based in Sweden.

If 2023 was largely the year of policy, in 2024 we plan to place much greater emphasis on the results of development cooperation, which after all are the point of development assistance. Observing, measuring and describing results is also crucial for accountability and learning. In doing so, EBA and other actors have a vital role to play in ensuring the continuous improvement of development cooperation.

Over recent years, we have learned that conditions can change fundamentally and rapidly. Pandemic, war, climate change and other extreme events change the conditions under which development assistance takes place. We cannot know what comes next. But we do know that aid actors must continuously learn and relearn.

It takes time for an institution to take shape, fulfil its role and create its own identity. A decade of knowledge production has also been a decade of internal learning and development. EBA looks forward to continuing to develop and contribute to improving development cooperation.

REPORTS AND SEMINARS DURING 2023

ONGOING STUDIES AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2023

| WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION | REFERENCE GROUP* | AUTHORS |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Tanzania</p> <p><i>A significant percentage of international development assistance goes to interventions to increase access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Despite major investments, these interventions have had a limited effect. This study is intended to increase knowledge about how stakeholder engagement can help to increase the legitimacy, efficacy and long-term impact of interventions. The study includes a survey of WASH interventions in Tanzania during the period 2012–2022, as well as field studies of specific interventions.</i></p> | <p>Tracy Morse Carmen Anthonj Ylva Schwinn Alejandro Jiménez Robert Augner <i>Chair: Torgny Holmgren</i></p> | <p>Nelson Ekane Ruth Carlitz Yohannes Kachenje</p> |
| <p>Catalytic Climate Financing</p> <p><i>Significant reductions in emissions are required, and extensive resources must be mobilised, if the world is to achieve the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. One point of departure is that private capital must pay for a significant part of financing, especially in developing countries. Swedish climate finance is provided through Sida, Swedfund and the Nordic Development Fund (NDF). Can this contribute to sufficient emission reductions – in time to make a difference to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement?</i></p> | <p>Rob D. van den Berg Eva Mineur Marie Stjernquist Desatnik <i>Chair: Kim Forss</i></p> | <p>Flintull Annica Eriksson Per Strömberg Max Schmidt Luisa Weber Fiona Lambe Annika Hilgert</p> |
| <p>Transparency of Swedish Aid</p> <p><i>The study is intended to illuminate work to ensure transparency in Swedish aid, through Openaid and more generally. In addition to following up Swedish transparency efforts, the study will discuss why Sweden has thus far ranked relatively low in international comparisons. Based on this, the value of international comparison will be examined, as well as the impact of the Swedish principle of public access to official documents on transparency.</i></p> | <p>Carl Fredrik Bergström Martin Schibbye Björn Hammarfelt Jeanette Kruse <i>Chair: Kim Forss</i></p> | <p>Pontus Hedlin Cristoffer Lokatt</p> |
| <p>Sida's Efforts to Reduce Corruption in Partner Countries</p> <p><i>Corruption is a major obstacle to sustainable development. In Swedish development cooperation, anticorruption work takes place in two main areas: corruption as an obstacle to development in partner countries, and corruption in development cooperation. This evaluation analyses Sida's work to remove corruption as an obstacle to development and draws conclusions about the degree to which this work is relevant, harmonised, based on up-to-date knowledge about how to effectively fight corruption, and can be expected to contribute to long-term results.</i></p> | <p>Simon Gill Christian von Haldenwang Anki Fritzsche Karolina Jozic Simone Dietrich <i>Chair: Anders Pedersen</i></p> | <p>Marina Nistotskaya Anna Persson Marcia Grimes Michelle D'Arcy Adea Gafuri Bo Rothstein</p> |
| <p>Sweden's Long-term Development Cooperation with Liberia</p> <p><i>The EBA has commissioned an evaluation of Sweden's long-term development cooperation with Liberia, focusing on the period 2003–2021 after the end of the Second Liberian Civil War. The aim is to obtain a deeper understanding of the relevance, coherence and long-term results of development cooperation for peace, conflict, democracy and human rights, as well as inclusive economic development. The intention is also to compile relevant lessons for future Swedish development cooperation with Liberia and other partner countries.</i></p> | <p>Mary Moran Johanna Söderström Ole Winckler Andersen Ida Lindkvist Mikael Söderbäck Johan Romare <i>Chair: Helena Lindholm</i></p> | <p>Christoph Emminghaus Tillman Hönig John Pokoo Kou Meapeh Gbaintor-Johnson Johanna Schaefer-Kehnert Anouchka Baldin Simon Wallisch</p> |

* EBA's Reference Groups are strictly confined to an advisory role. Members of the Reference Groups bear no responsibility for the content and do not necessarily agree with the conclusions and recommendations of EBA reports.

WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

REFERENCE GROUP*

AUTHORS

Lessons Learned from Support for Constitution-building

Constitutions are the fundamental laws concerning how a country is governed. They are also an implicit social contract. They are at the heart of most peace processes and the rebuilding of conflict-affected states. In recent times, the world has seen an exceptional increase in the number of unconstitutional changes of government. The study maps the lessons learned by experts and advisors in their practical efforts to support constitution-building.

Julian Hottinger
Rohan Edrisinha
Sumit Bisarya
Katia Papagianni
Per Nordlund
Chair:
Joakim Molander

Cheryl Saunders
Andy Carl
Anna Dziedzic
Samantha Smith
Johanna Lindström

Land Rights and Strategies for Adapting to Climate Change

There are well-established links between land rights and climate resilience. The UN's Climate Change Panel (IPCC) has demonstrated that land rights are important to the ability of individuals and communities to deal with climate change. However, there is significant variation in land rights in the majority of low- and middle-income countries and interpretations of how they affect climate adaptation strategies have often been overgeneralised. By studying variations in land rights in Kenya, the study hopes to provide guidance on how best to support communities in adapting to climate change.

Fibian Lukalo
Christian Lund
Catherine Boone
Andrew Linke,
Margareta Nilsson
Chair: Johan Schaar

Kathleen Klaus
Emma Elfversson

Sweden's Application of the Localisation Agenda of the Grand Bargain

Launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, the Grand Bargain calls for major reform of the international humanitarian aid system. Many of the changes agreed are currently being implemented but work is lagging behind in crucial areas. One of the most problematic focus areas is localisation, which is intended to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions by giving local actors greater influence and involvement. This project is evaluating Sweden's implementation of the localisation agenda in its humanitarian aid.

Sorcha O'Callaghan
Pamela Combinido
Dorothea Hillhorst
Hibak Kalfan
Erik Lysén
Chair: Johan Schaar

Sophia Swithern
Charlotte Lattimer
Teddy Atim

Evaluation of Swedish Development Cooperation with Civil Society in Africa

The purpose of this evaluation is to investigate the extent to which Swedish development cooperation sustainably has contributed to the ability of civil society to advocate for democracy and human rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Has the capacity of civil society been strengthened? Has this capacity been translated into positive effects for democracy and human rights? How can and should interventions to strengthen civil society's capacity be developed and improved?

Jennifer Brass
Stein- Erik Kruse
Agnes Cornell
Per Nordlund
Annette Zimmer
Maria Gärtner Nord
Chair:
Staffan I Lindberg

Ola Segnestam Larsson
Malin Arvidson
Jan Ström
Pelle Åberg

Evaluation of Swedish Efforts to Strengthen the Capacity of Institutions in Fragile States

EBA has commissioned an evaluation of Swedish efforts to strengthen the capacity of institutions in fragile, conflict-affected states. How and to what extent has Swedish development cooperation contributed to strengthening the capacity and service delivery of state institutions in fragile, conflict-affected states? Which factors or mechanisms explain the success or failure of initiatives?

Chair:
Helena Lindholm

Mohammad Sepahvand
Ann-Sofie Isaksson
Heather Congdon Fors
Annika Lindskog

* EBA's Reference Groups are strictly confined to an advisory role. Members of the Reference Groups bear no responsibility for the content and do not necessarily agree with the conclusions and recommendations of EBA reports.

WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

REFERENCE GROUP*

AUTHORS

Poverty and Marginalisation in Bangladesh

While Bangladesh has made significant strides in terms of economic growth and social development, this progress has not benefitted the entire population. Why have the country's marginalised groups been excluded? The purpose of the study is to improve understanding of the forces driving poverty and exclusion among ethnic and religious minorities in the country and experiences thereof.

David Lawson
Usha Kanagaratnam
Ted Svensson
True Schedvin
Chair: Julia Schalk

Owasim Akram
Mathilde Maitrot
Joe Devine
Anders Uhlin
Ann-Catrin Kristianssen

What Are They Fighting For?

What do the warring parties in civil wars say they are fighting for? To what extent are these issues the subject of negotiation when peace treaties are drawn up? And what does this mean for the success of peace treaties? The study is based on a new database of the causes of conflicts.

Marika Fahlén
Michael Jonsson
Mimmi Söderberg-Kovacs
Stein Tönnesson
Mats Utas
Chair: Malin Oud

Johan Brosché
Sebastian Raattamaa

Acceptance of Green Economy Reforms

Swedish development cooperation shall "support a transition to fossil-free economic development built on a resource-efficient, circular and biobased economy with non-toxic flows". Sweden gives generously to the Green Climate Fund, UN organisations, development banks and a number of global, regional and national initiatives. But what are the attitudes of people living in partner countries? There is very limited knowledge of the green transition in low- and medium-income countries. Climate investments and environmental policy reforms are likely to fail if social acceptance is low. The study uses surveys to determine the level of acceptance of this type of reform in a group of East African countries.

Steffen Kallenbeck
Haileselassie Medhin
Eric Coleman
Katrin Aidnell
Isabelle Stadelmann-
Steffen
Chair:
Johan Schaar

Daniel Slunge
Niklas Harring
Anna Nordén

Evaluation of Sida's Job-creation Initiatives in Africa

EBA has commissioned an evaluation of Sida's job-creation initiatives in Africa. How well has Swedish development assistance contributed to creating new jobs in sub-Saharan Africa? Are the jobs that have been created of good quality? What factors explain the success or failure of initiatives?

Shanta Devarajan
Abebe Shimeles
Sara Johansson de Silva
Gun Eriksson Skoog
Annika Sundén
Chair:
Torgny Holmgren

Dirk Willem te Velde
Louise Fox
Linda Calabrese
Alberto Lemma
Derrick Abudu
Yohannes Ayele
Mobałji Babalola
Angela Kolongo

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EBA REPORTS 2023

EBA decides independently which studies should be conducted. The authors of the reports are responsible for analysis, conclusions and recommendations. The Expert Group is responsible for quality assurance.

- 2023:04** **Det är resultatet som räknas: För en bättre resultatredovisning av biståndet**
Númi Östlund och Helena Hede Skagerlind
- 2023:03** **Sweden's Development Cooperation Response to the HIV Epidemic Over Time: An Overview**
Pam Baatsen, Thyra de Jongh, Hannah Kabelka, Liana Petrosova, Josefine Olsson, Renée Robbers, Noor Tromp
- 2023:02** **More Than a Label, Less Than a Revolution: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy**
Elin Bjarnegård, Katarzyna Jezierska, Ann Towns
- 2023:01** **The Role of Aid in the Provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services**
Jesper Sundewall, Björn Ekman, Jessy Schmit

DEVELOPMENT DISSERTATION BRIEFS (DDB) 2023

EBA's DDB series offers recently graduated PhDs the opportunity to briefly present their doctoral thesis as it relates to Swedish development cooperation. The aim is to provide the Government, government agencies and other stakeholders with knowledge about both new research and new researchers.

2023:02 Violent Natural Resource Conflicts: Definitions, Frameworks, and Modelling Towards Prevention
Marie Schellens

2023:01 Food Insecurity and Social Conflict
Ida Rudolfson

WORKING PAPERS 2023

EBA's working papers summarise knowledge, reviews and analyses. This series also includes interim reports on major projects and examined Master's dissertations for which EBA has acted as assistant supervisor. Working papers are not quality assured by the Expert Group.

Klimatbistånd som finansieringskälla för utsläppshandel: Förutsättningar och fallgropar, October 2023
Mathias Fridahl

The Evolution of Aid Conditionality: A Review of the Literature of the Last Twenty Years, September 2023
Patrick Guillaumont, Matthieu Boussichas, Andrea Dsouza

Influence in Multilateral Aid Organizations: A Literature Review, July 2023
Magnus Lundgren, Isabella Strindevall

Swedish Climate Aid: What Does the Data Tell Us?, June 2023
Otto Williams

Payment by Results in Aid: A Review of the Evidence, May 2023
Geske Dijkstra

Åter ur askan: det svenska och globala bidraget till Ukrainas återuppbyggnad, March 2023
Anders Olofsgård, Maria Perrotta Berlin

PODCASTS 2023 (IN SWEDISH)

Episode 66 – The reform agenda of aid policies – a first impression

Episode 65 – Swedish development research – past, present and future

Episode 64 – The aid budget 2024

Episode 63 – The Feminist Foreign Policy – revolution or label?

Episode 62 – Swedish influence in the EU

Episode 61 – Paying for results in aid – does it work?

Episode 60 – Rise from the ashes – how can Sweden contribute in Ukraine?

Episode 59 – From pandemic to war – what's the role of aid?

Episode 58 – Governing aid – experiences from a reform agenda

Episode 57 – What's the link between menstruation and development aid?

SEMINARS DURING 2023

EBA's seminars are a natural forum for debate on important issues related to development cooperation and humanitarian aid. At seminars, EBA's reports are placed in a wider context and discussed from both a policy and practical perspective.

- 24 Nov **Swedish development research – past, present, future**
Seminar on the book 'Swedish Research Aid' by Veronica Brodén Gyberg.
- 15 Nov **Implementing a Feminist Foreign Policy: Lessons from Sweden**
EBA 2023:02
- 24 Oct **Three points on migration in the Tidö agreement – perspectives from research**
Coorganised with Delmi and ESO
- 11 Oct **EBA-seminar: Natural resources and conflict**
DDB 2023:01, 2023:02
- 31 Aug **Sweden's feminist foreign policy – a label or real transformation?**
EBA 2023:02
- 20 Jun **Does aid to SRHR work? Evidence and knowledge gaps**
EBA 2023:01
- 29 May **Sweden launch of the World Development Report 2023 on Migrants, Refugees and Societies**
Coorganised with Delmi and Sida.
- 23 May **Will Results Based Financing Make Aid More Effective?**
Working Paper, May 2023
- 28 Apr **Social protection for the World's Poor: Does Aid make a Difference?**
EBA 2022:08
- 14 Feb **To Govern Swedish Aid: Experiences from a Reform Agenda**
Seminar on the book 'Brutet förvaltningskontrakt' by Göran Sundström.

THE EXPERT GROUP



TORBJÖRN BECKER

Chair

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



STAFFAN I. LINDBERG

Member

Principal Investigator and Director of the Varieties of Democracy Institute at the University of Gothenburg.



MALIN OUD

Member

Director of the Stockholm office of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.



ANDERS PEDERSEN

Member

International Director of the Swedish Red Cross.



ANDREAS WLADIS

Member

Professor in Disaster Medicine and Traumatology at Linköping University and Associate Professor in Surgery at Karolinska Institutet.

During 2023, the Expert Group for Aid Studies also included Julia Schalk (deputy chair), Kim Forss and Torgny Holmgren. The Expert Group's decisions are executed by a secretariat with nine members of staff: Jan Pettersson (managing director), Malin Ahrne, Markus Burman, Anna Florell, Helena Hede Skagerlind, Mats Hårsmar, Lennart Weitzel, Matilda Widell and Númi Östlund.

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
ud.eba@gov.se



**THE EXPERT GROUP
FOR AID STUDIES**