



THE EBA AID REVIEW 2025



**THE EXPERT GROUP
FOR AID STUDIES**

THE EBA AID REVIEW 2025

The annual report from the Expert Group for Aid Studies for the year 2024

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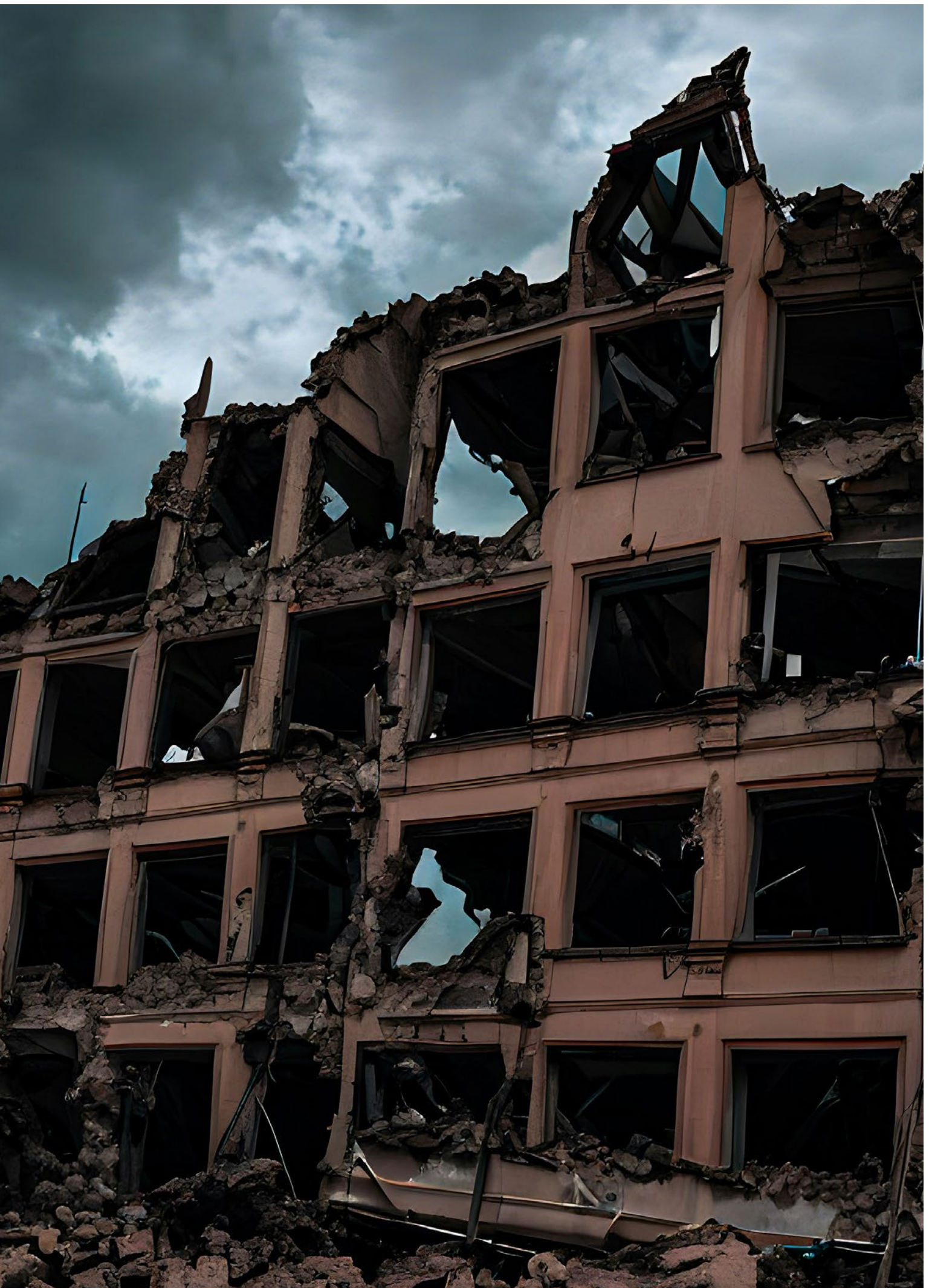
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A cat in the ruins of a house destroyed by the Russian army, Borodyanka, Kiev Oblast, Ukraine. Photo: Alex Fedorenko/Unsplash.

FOREWORD

The world around us has become more dangerous and more polarised this year, and we have seen refugee numbers increase. Crises and wars, such as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, have deteriorated further. Meanwhile, there is a risk that crises that are invisible in the media and that are a lower priority politically will become even more sidelined. Democracy is increasingly being challenged.

GREATER VULNERABILITY is not being met with increased funding; indeed, forecasts for 2025 suggest that global aid will decrease. The nominal value of Swedish aid has remained constant for two years. With the stated ambition that aid must deliver concrete results, the Government has decided to phase out development assistance to a number of fragile states and instead “water where the grass grows”.

The Government's aid reform has gathered pace during the year. In December 2023, the Government set out a new strategic direction with the adoption of its reform agenda for development assistance. EBA has published a review of the agenda as a point of departure for following up and evaluating its implementation.

Aid is perhaps more politicised today than for many years, hence the need for reliable data from independent actors. Demand for EBA's knowledge base has been greater than ever this year, something that is both expected and gratifying at a time of reformation.

EBA has published a number of studies over the course of the year with direct relevance to aid policy reform, including on the transparency of international aid, the long-term impact of development assistance, the opportunities and challenges of health aid in a new era, the ‘localisation’ of humanitarian aid and much else. The EBA Aid Review 2025 summarises this knowledge base. We hope that this year's review and each of the reports prove to be of interest and relevance to a wide audience.

Stockholm, *March 2025*

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THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

Torbjörn Becker looks back on a year marked by a global geopolitical power struggle that may lead to more politicised and polarised aid. In Sweden, EBA's attention is focused on the implementation and impact of the reform agenda.

Looking back on the year, what do you find most interesting from EBA's point of view?

Naturally, from a Swedish perspective it is both interesting and important to look at how the Government's ambitions for the reform agenda are implemented and how this affects what is and is not done, both now and in the future. We are all focused on how development assistance can have the greatest possible impact given the resources at our disposal. It may mean making tough decisions about the priority given to different countries and thematic areas and how development assistance is implemented. EBA's role is to systematically map the implications of the reform agenda, but also to eventually evaluate how it actually worked in practice.

What major international trends do you see of significance to aid?

The world finds itself in a geopolitical power struggle, with authoritarian states challenging a more liberal world order based on the rule of law. As the two sides strive to attract other nations to their respective blocks or systems, there is a risk that aid will become more politicised and polarised. At the same time, humanitarian crises make greater demands on aid. This combination makes it difficult for development assistance to have the desired effects on democratic transition, the environment and climate, and sustainable development for people living in poverty.

How has Swedish policy changed and what does that mean for aid and for EBA?

In itself, the reform agenda's emphasis on transparency and results is nothing new. The interesting thing is what will tangibly change with this new direction and what the consequences will be in practice. Being able to clearly demonstrate how the money is spent to policymakers and taxpayers is crucial to ensuring future support for develop-

ment assistance. It is also a prerequisite for directing development assistance to the areas in which it can do most good. There is obviously a need to further develop EBA's analysis in this area.

Another vital area is how the positive effects of development assistance can be reinforced by businesses and by trade with the countries that receive it. If development assistance can act as a catalyst for the development of the private sector, then there is a great deal to gain in countries that need economic growth in order to lift people out of poverty. Aid for trade is hardly a new idea either. What will be interesting is to follow how this is translated into results in practice.

Tell us about this year's EBA studies.

The role of EBA is to contribute knowledge about what works in development assistance and how this can guide future strategies and prioritisations. We have added a further 10 EBA reports to the knowledge base during the year.

One study that attracted considerable interest was *Evidence-Based Anti-Corruption? Evaluation of Sida's Efforts to Reduce Corruption in Partner Countries*, which helped to increase understanding of corruption as an obstacle to development.

“Being able to clearly demonstrate how the money is spent to policymakers and taxpayers is crucial to ensuring future support for development assistance.”



Photo: Juliana Wolf Garcindo.

“We view EBA as a knowledge producer that helps to ensure the greatest possible impact from the money we collectively invest in development assistance.”

Another is our evaluation of development cooperation with Liberia, *The Long and Winding Road: Evaluation of Swedish Long-Term Development Cooperation with Liberia*, which may well influence the design of future strategies in the country. Published in December, *An Anthology of Trends and Perspectives on Global Health* brings together 34 authors who jointly contribute to increasing consensus on future global health challenges. These, and the other reports published during the year, are presented in more detail in the EBA Aid Review 2025.

However, our attention is not limited to this year's studies. The 2023 study *It's Results That Count: Towards Improved Reporting of Swedish*

Aid is also discussed in this year's review and, together with the report *Transparency in Swedish International Aid*, has contributed to efforts to reform the reporting of the results of aid. EBA's reports have a long life and often garner attention many years after publication.

Based on its reports, EBA continuously disseminates knowledge in dialogue with aid actors and via various channels, including seminars, podcasts, newsletters, our website and social media, in order to inform policymakers, implementers and interested members of the public. We view EBA as a knowledge producer that helps to ensure the greatest possible impact from the money we collectively invest in development assistance.

HOW CAN AID SUPPORT DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW?

With democracy in decline globally, efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law are facing major challenges. Democracy support has long been a priority of Swedish development cooperation, but with what results?

THE LAST 15 YEARS have been characterised by democratic backsliding in many countries. Today, over 70 per cent of the world's population live under authoritarian rule. The question of how democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law can be supported under challenging circumstances is thus more relevant than it has been for many years. Promoting freedom and fighting oppression is a thematic priority of the Swedish Government's development assistance policy and Sweden has long been one of the donors that invests most in democracy support as a percentage of total aid. So, what do we know about the results?

“Promoting freedom and fighting oppression is a thematic priority of the Swedish Government's development assistance policy.”

EBA has studied various aspects of democracy aid over the years and has further increased the knowledge base during 2024. An earlier

EBA report (*Niño-Zarazúa et al. 2020*) found that Swedish and international democracy aid has a positive if small impact on the measure of democracy in recipient countries, especially those already on the path of democratisation. Interventions to strengthen key democratic institutions such as elections, civil society, free media and human rights are shown to be most effective. As part of its democracy aid, Sweden has supported electoral processes. An earlier EBA study (*Pearce Laanela et al. 2021*) compiling knowledge of electoral assistance underlines that, while such support has clearly contributed to democratisation in countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Bosnia Hercegovina, in other cases its results have proved fleeting.

Sweden and other democratic states are however not alone in contributing to the financial flow to low- and middle-income countries. Authoritarian actors with competing motives increase the need for strategic action to halt democratic backsliding. *Gafuri (2024)* demonstrates that autocratic donors can have a negative impact on support for democracy in recipient countries, not least when they offer quick and visibly effective support. *Kopacheva (2024)* underlines the importance of individual financial resources and social networks to mobilising citizen engagement, especially in repressive states.



Women from Rawalpindi queue to cast their votes in the Pakistani election. Photo: Rachel Clayton/DFID.

A COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION is an important foundation for its application of democracy and the rule of law. In 2024, EBA published a report (*Saunders et al.*) summarising the lessons learned from 30 years of support for constitution-building processes. The authors find that external support – which may range from funding to mediation and advocacy – has gradually become professionalised and institutionalised. One undesirable side-effect of this is that the actors providing the assistance are often held accountable by other external actors, rather than the constitution-building state or local non-state partners. Effective external support demands broad local ownership of the process and, eventually, of the constitution itself. Effective support also demands flexible timeframes and cooperation and coordination between the various external and domestic state and non-state actors, not least those that support peacebuilding and sustainable development. Another lesson is that the donor must have realistic expectations about what external support can achieve during a limited period of time.

Fighting corruption is another important building block of Swedish democracy aid. Last year, EBA published an extensive evaluation of

the efforts of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to reduce corruption as an obstacle to development in partner countries (*Nistotskaya et al. 2024*). The authors find that Sida has come a long way in developing a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to countering corruption and that the incorporation of anti-corruption into government strategies has also increased significantly. However, they note that there is still a disconnect between Sida's approach and implementation at country level. While Sida's programme officers generally have a deep understanding of corruption in the countries in which they work and display active engagement in anti-corruption, the authors note that there are flaws in the application of Sida's anti-corruption strategy and in the use of theories of change, as well as of available support functions. The authors underline the need to systematically integrate and prioritise anti-corruption, recommending that Sida improves implementation and further develops its work in many partner countries.

During 2024, EBA also published an evaluation of Swedish development cooperation with Liberia during the period 2003–2020 (*Emminghaus et al.*

2024). The evaluation focuses on the long-term impact of development cooperation on democracy, human rights and peace and security. During this period, Liberia has gone from civil war to a relatively peaceful democracy. Sweden has been, and remains, a significant aid donor to the country. According to the evaluators, development assistance has contributed to the democratic transition. Among other things, Swedish democracy aid has gone to the justice and security sectors. However, the state's ability to apply the principles of rule of law at a local level remains low. Swedish development assistance has also supported free elections, democratic governance and decentralisation. Legislative reforms are, however, yet to be fully implemented in practice. The population is highly exposed to corruption and trust in public institutions is low. According to the evaluators, investment in education could improve the conditions for capacity-building within the state and civil society, as well as political participation.

“Aid has a positive impact on the measure of democracy in recipient countries, especially those already on the path of democratisation.”

CONCLUSIONS

- Interventions to strengthen key democratic institutions such as elections, civil society, free media and human rights are examples of effective democracy aid.
- Effective support for constitution-building requires a deep understanding of context and the importance of local ownership and leadership, as well as receptiveness to including different groups and stakeholders.
- While Sida has a well-developed approach to combatting corruption as an obstacle to development, the agency could develop this further by integrating and implementing it in interventions in partner countries.
- Fighting corruption where it is endemic and systematic presents considerable challenges and requires the insight that the efforts of a single organisation, Sida included, should not be expected to result in immediate and revolutionary changes to the overall level of corruption.
- While Sweden's development assistance has contributed to the transition to democracy in Liberia, in many areas there remains much to do before results can be translated into tangible improvements for citizens.

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WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REFORM AGENDA?

In December 2023, the Government presented its overarching aid policy in the document Development Assistance for a New Era: Freedom, Empowerment and Sustainable Growth, widely referred to as the 'reform agenda'. In addition to setting out the new direction for the coming years, the Government also sees the reform agenda as a point of departure for improving the results of development assistance. The ambitions behind the reform are analysed by EBA in a baseline study.

EBA'S ANALYSIS reveals that, even if the Government does not explicitly describe a goal hierarchy, it is possible to discern a number of overarching goals, geographic priorities and thematic goals. Along with a significant number of announced activities and changes to the aid budget, the reform agenda makes it possible to distinguish a relatively clear goal hierarchy in terms of what the Government wishes to achieve with Sweden's development assistance.

One crucial difference between the previous policy document and the reform agenda is that the latter describes a reform of Swedish development assistance over a limited period of time, 2023–2026. This is one of the reasons that EBA has decided to publish a baseline report that facilitates a systematic review and evaluation of its significance to the implementation and results of development assistance. The Government emphasises that development cooperation must continue to pursue the overarching goal adopted by the Riksdag, to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. It then goes on to present two themes that resonate throughout the agenda. One is that development cooperation is one of the most important foreign policy tools for pursuing and protecting Swedish interests. The second is that development assistance must be more effective and contribute tangible results through a long-term perspective and transparency, highlighting

the Government's ambition to reform the governance and priorities of development assistance within a limited period of time.

The Government also presents geographical and thematic priorities for Swedish development assistance. The priorities geographically are Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood, and reducing the number of countries with which Sweden has bilateral development cooperation to a maximum of 30.

Some of the thematic priorities are new, and thorough and detailed analysis is required to establish exactly what differences these changes will make. What is clear, however, is that migration, climate and humanitarian assistance will be more significant in the future. One area repeatedly highlighted in the reform agenda is the promotion of trade and Swedish businesses and the mobilisation of private capital, something that gives us some idea of the Government's view of how development can be encouraged. This applies both in general and specifically to opportunities for Swedish businesses to contribute to, and benefit from, Swedish international development cooperation.

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RESULTS AND TRANSPARENCY IN SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Government's strategic direction for development assistance underlines the importance of Swedish aid being effective and transparent. Policy is to be governed by clear objectives and the results of development assistance are to be reported, from individual interventions to the policy's overall contribution to the overarching goal adopted by the Riksdag.

THE AMBITION THAT development assistance shall be effective and demonstrate results is neither new nor unique to aid policy. Fundamentally, it is the same principle that applies to the public sector as a whole: public funds must be managed prudently. The same is true of the ambition for transparency in development assistance. In Sweden, the principle of public access to information has been a cornerstone of citizens' insight into public administration since 1766.

EBA has published a number of reports on the governance, results reporting and transparency of Swedish development assistance. With the support of a significant quantity of other research and evaluation, these reports impart important lessons that can be applied to the work the Government has now initiated.

One significant conclusion that can be drawn from the various EBA studies is that fair and transparent reporting of the results of Swedish international development cooperation is built on clear governance. This is fundamental to results-based management; if everyone knows what is to be achieved, it is easier to learn, govern and demand accountability (*Schutt 2016; Östlund and Hede Skagerlind 2023*).

The governance of aid has long been viewed as an impenetrable jungle of goals and prioritisations with

little clarity concerning what the objectives are, and how and by whom they are to be achieved (*Towns et al. 2023; Östlund and Hede Skagerlind 2023*).

The development of clear and measurable objectives is one of the priorities of the Government's reform agenda. EBA's initial analysis of the reform agenda (EBA 2024) proposes a possible goal hierarchy from what aid is supposed to achieve to how the Government hopes to change the governance, organisation and implementation of development cooperation. This is presented in the form of overarching goals, thematic goals, subgoals and prioritised results.

A number of EBA reports highlight opportunities to improve management for results, something that in the long term can also lead to reliable and useful reporting of the results of development assistance (*Burman 2024; Östlund and Hede Skagerlind 2023*). The reports recommend that both the Government

“If everyone knows what is to be achieved, it is easier to learn, govern and demand accountability.”

“Knowledge about the effects of development assistance in relation to the overarching goals is built up over time through impact evaluations and research”

and the administration switch from reporting activities and outputs to reporting results in terms of outcomes or impact. Reporting, and the public discourse on Swedish development assistance, can then focus on the question of how Swedish aid contributes to the intended changes. Knowledge about the effects of development assistance in relation to the overarching goals is not, however, something that can be aggregated from annual reports or monitoring. This knowledge is built up over time through impact evaluations and research.

EBA's reports also emphasise the importance of differentiating overall societal change – i.e., overall progress in relation to the stated objectives of development cooperation – from the effects that aid has in terms of outcomes and impact (Östlund and Hede Skagerlind 2023). For example, changes to how democracy or the climate develop globally and in Sweden's partner countries are not entirely a causal effect of Swedish development assistance. Still, these developments are a central motif of Swedish development assistance, its allocation and priorities. Reporting in relation to visionary goals is hardly unique to aid, it happens in many policy areas. A considerable amount of methodological work has been done on results and impact, especially by the Swedish National Financial Management Authority.

THE AMBITION OF TRANSPARENT development cooperation is closely linked to results. In their report on the transparency of Swedish international aid, Hedlin and Lokatt (2024) demonstrate that transparency is created in response to user needs. When various users – such as politicians, journalists, evaluators and aid actors – have access to the information they need for their different purposes and circumstances, then international aid is transparent. Thinking about transparency in this way in relation to aid contributes to learning, governance and accountability. While open data

also have important areas of use, clear and pedagogical analyses and summaries make the greatest contribution to the transparency of aid.

CONCLUSIONS

- Clear governance based on clear objectives is one prerequisite for fair and transparent results reporting.
- Greater knowledge is needed about the effects of development assistance in relation to its overarching goals as a basis for both governance and reporting.
- Aid is transparent when it meets the different needs of various users for information. Transparency is primarily created through needs-adapted, clear and pedagogical analysis and summaries.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Efforts to increase gender equality and ensure sexual and reproductive health rights meet strong resistance, especially in low- and middle-income countries. When powerful forces are mobilised in ideologically inspired campaigns, it becomes more important than ever to promote these rights.

EQUALITY between women and men demands constant effort and struggle. This is clear in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), for example. While considerable progress has been made globally with regard to sexual and reproductive health – including declining maternal mortality rates, fewer new HIV infections and increased access to contraception – since 2020, this positive trend has taken a downward turn, especially for certain groups in certain countries. Harsh penalties for homosexual relationships and abortion bans are just two examples. In an age of polycrisis, gender equality and SRHR appear highly vulnerable. This is particularly apparent in low- and middle-income countries (Österlund, 2024).

Women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights and SRHR are at the epicentre of ideological and political conflicts. This is exemplified by Project 2025, an initiative of the right-wing US think-tank the Heritage Foundation, which includes specific proposals to eradicate LGBTQ+ and reproductive rights both within the US and abroad. Powerful forces and considerable funding are being mobilised against gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights and SRHR in low- and middle-income countries. The forces aligned against SRHR are not homogeneous but they often share a traditional or ultra-conservative view of gender and the family.

To meet this challenge, among other things, it is recommended that work continues to combat harmful social norms, to provide sex education to children and young people, and to support high-quality health systems (Österlund, 2024). Interviews conducted with some of the civil society organisations that partner with Sida reveal that

opposition to SRHR is a significant obstacle to their work, both locally and globally (Kahma, 2024). The working paper describes the negative impact of threats, violence, budget cuts and misinformation on the organisations and their staff.

Greater political representation of marginalised groups can help to increase gender equality and strengthen democracy. Hence female political representation can play a vital role in gender equality work, as long as the women who gain power and influence are focused on gender equality issues. Mechkova (2024) demonstrates that the presence of women in politics does not automatically lead to policy outcomes that favour women. The author argues that, while representation certainly plays a role, achieving real political change requires favourable societal and institutional conditions. Gender norms, corruption and a weak civil society are highlighted as particular barriers to women's representation being translated into real policy change.

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HOW CAN THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND EXCLUSION BE BROKEN?

Ultimately, the goal of Swedish development cooperation is to improve living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. One pledge of the 2030 Agenda is that no one will be left behind. In Bangladesh, despite significant economic progress, extreme poverty is widespread among the most vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities. How do minorities experience exclusion, how is it maintained and what is required to break the cycle?

A NEW EBA REPORT (*Akram et al., 2024*) asks why, despite decades of high economic growth, 70 per cent of those in minority groups in Bangladesh live in extreme poverty, a significantly higher percentage than among other groups. To answer the question of what needs to be done to reduce poverty and marginalisation among ethnic and religious minorities, the authors have studied the processes that perpetuate their exclusion.

The study focuses on two ethnic minorities, the Chakma and Santal peoples, and one religious minority, Dalits. It is based on in-depth interviews designed to capture the perspectives and experiences of members of these minorities. To understand the situations of these groups, the authors employ Sida's Multidimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA), which analyses four interconnected dimensions of poverty: (i) Resources, (ii) Opportunities and Choice, (iii) Power and Voice, and (iv) Human Security. The report reveals that the minority groups experience widespread marginalisation in all four dimensions, and that this is actively legitimised by the majority society through various mechanisms. Discrimination on the labour market and limited opportunities to make a living impede the social mobility of minorities, while lack of political representation

weakens their chances of exerting influence in society. Poverty of resources, especially land, exacerbates this situation, while civil servants often deny them access to social security benefits. Minorities also live under the constant threat of violence and social stigma, which contributes to an existence of uncertainty and fear.

So, poverty is a result of discrimination. An earlier EBA report (*Marcus et al. 2017*) highlights the need for targeted anti-discrimination measures to reduce extreme poverty and vulnerability. In Bangladesh, however, interventions against discrimination are nigh on impossible, both politically and socially. To increase the chances of development assistance improving the situation of minorities, the point of departure should instead be fighting poverty. *Akram et al. (2024)* recommend a shift from short-term development cooperation projects to a broader social policy that prioritises justice for all citizens. The authors also emphasise the need to hold local authorities to greater account, especially with regard to minorities' access to the social security system and the services to which they are entitled. They also propose measures to improve coordination between civil society organisations, to improve the chances of effective advocacy for the inclusion and rights of minorities.



Everyday life for the residents of the Sujat Nagar slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank.

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“Poverty is a result of discrimination. In Bangladesh, however, interventions against discrimination are nigh on impossible, both politically and socially.”

LOCAL ACTORS NEED BETTER SUPPORT

Increasing the percentage of humanitarian assistance channelled through local actors is both the subject of international agreement and a Swedish priority. Allocating resources and giving mandates to those who are closest to a crisis or problem is both effective and natural. That said, the obstacles to supporting local actors are considerable.

LOCAL AID ORGANISATIONS are the first on the scene of a humanitarian crisis. They know the surroundings and they will still be on the ground when the major international organisations withdraw. Despite this, local and national actors are marginalised by the international system. These local actors are organisations that regularly deal with crises of lesser scope but that are often sidelined in international disaster relief efforts.

Agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 in Istanbul, the Grand Bargain is an agreement between major donors and aid organisations that, among other things, commits to an



Photo: Ahmad Syahrir/Pexels.

aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding going as directly as possible to local and national actors. This commitment to localisation is repeated in the Swedish Government's reform agenda for development assistance. An evaluation of Sweden's application of the Grand Bargain's localisation agenda (*Swithern et al. 2024*) estimates that only around 17 per cent of Swedish humanitarian assistance reached local actors in 2022. While this is short of the target, it is considerably higher than the global average of just over 1 per cent.

Still, localisation means much more than simply allocating money. The evaluation reveals that, thus far, Sweden has no localisation policies or

strategies in place. Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs need to be clearer in their communication to partner organisations concerning what partnership means. Local actors must be treated as equals rather than contractors or implementers.

The challenges that need to be addressed are related to mandates, the division of responsibilities and power-sharing. There is an often unwarranted distrust of local actors concerning whether they have the competence and capacity to perform humanitarian work. Above all, the administrative control systems created by donor countries make it difficult to handover responsibility for financial resources. There is greater emphasis on the

“There is an often unwarranted distrust of local actors concerning whether they have the competence and capacity to perform humanitarian work.”

perceived risks posed by local organisations than on the real risks local organisations take when working in environments that others refuse to work in for security reasons.

This dilemma is reinforced by Sida’s policy of choosing the partner it deems best equipped to implement humanitarian assistance in each situation. Localisation should not come at the expense of competence and capacity. If local organisations have never had the opportunity to build adequate capacity, they will rarely be considered as a partner. And without adequate support to reinforce the capacity of local actors, this situation will not change.

It also precludes the efficiency improvements that, in principle, everyone agrees are necessary. Within Sida, this takes more tangible expression in a balancing act between, on the one hand, striving for greater efficiency through increased localisation, and on the other, maintaining financial control. The conclusion drawn by the evaluators is that the latter usually takes priority over the former. The challenge lies in identifying a model that combines the two goals.

LOCALISATION IS ALSO RELEVANT to how long-term development cooperation is conducted. One issue that was high on the agenda in 2024 when discussing international aid via civil society organisations was how the number of middlemen could be reduced, and how the percentage of aid reaching target groups in the field directly can be increased.

In this area too there are several considerations. Do local partner organisations have adequate capacity to control money and guide interventions? How can administrative costs be reined in when a large number of local initiatives must be assessed and followed up remotely? Both having many stages of implementation and increasing central administration may decrease the percentage of

resources reaching local level. Are there certain intermediate stages that create added value?

The key is to identify how best to strengthen the capacity of local partner organisations as development actors. A decade ago, *Youngs (2015)* was already arguing that greater support should be given to new types of actors – civil rights movements, protest movements, more local organisations – and that this would demand greater flexibility and a deeper understanding of local conditions. Since then, the challenges have only grown worse. Democratic space is shrinking rapidly in many countries and it is gradually becoming more difficult to support civil society organisations.

In their evaluation of Sweden’s application of the localisation agenda, *Swithern et al. (2024)* recommend that Sida learn consolidated lessons from various areas of international aid. Collaborations with local civil society organisations, with local researchers and with local humanitarian organisations should all have much to learn from one another. One key challenge that must be addressed is balancing financial control with the delegation of mandates and influence. Capacity at different levels must also be assessed and strengthened.

CONCLUSIONS

- Sweden should intensify efforts to both strengthen and collaborate with local organisations, and make this a stated goal of development assistance.
- A better balance is needed between financial control and localisation. Forms of collaboration need to be developed.
- More attention needs to be paid to the risks that partners are exposed to in their work. Better support and more resources are required to manage these risks.

REFERENCES:

Swithern, S., Lattimer, C., Atim, T., Karume, G., Kondratenko, D., Korenkova, K. & Zahau, C. (2024): *Supporting Local Actors: Evaluation of Sweden’s Application of the Grand Bargain Localisation Agenda*, **EBA 2024:01**

Youngs, R. (2015), *Rethinking Civil Society and Support for Democracy*, **EBA 2015:01**

AID FOR TRADE

The Government's strategic direction for development assistance emphasises synergies between development assistance and trade to promote both the development potential of trade and broader relations with Sweden's partner countries. So, what do studies and evaluations have to tell us about the effects of aid for trade?

THE DEVELOPMENTAL ROLE of trade and the role of Swedish trade in development assistance have been debated with fluctuating intensity since the earliest days of Swedish international aid. As early as 1962, Government Bill 100 on Swedish development assistance states that there is "reason to call attention to the importance of trade relations to the economic progress of developing countries [...] The fact that these relationships can also benefit one's own country and its business sector does not diminish their worth from a development perspective".

This view received something of a boost in 2006 with the launch of the WTO's Aid for Trade initiative, which is based on the insight that aid can help poor countries to benefit from the liberalisation of global trade. Aid for trade can also be used to create broader relations beyond development cooperation.

An EBA working paper by *Kokko and Tingvall (2024)* provides an overview of what studies and evaluations have to say about the impact of aid for trade. It also proposes possible Swedish initiatives. According to the authors, the low percentage of aid for trade compared to other countries is probably not simply a reflection of Swedish priorities; many interventions that benefit society as a whole are not classified as aid for trade for statistical purposes in Sweden while they are in other countries.

Many of Sweden's development cooperation partners are relatively small and poor countries that are not natural trading partners for Sweden. If trade policy and development assistance policy are to be actively coordinated, rather than simply harmonised, the policies also need to cover the same geographical areas. The authors argue that this is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, current partner countries are too small and remote to significantly increase Swedish trade and, secondly, it is difficult to come up with any trade policy arguments that justify abandoning these countries in

favour of stronger trading partners.

One alternative is to focus on regional value chains. Regional programmes might have greater impact and could also encompass both middle- and low-income countries. The authors contend that such initiatives – that may involve regional organisations, multinational corporations, wholesale trade and international chambers of commerce – are likely to be more effective than interventions in individual countries. However, a systematic approach will be needed to avoid favouring individual companies.

González-Mon (2024) underlines the importance of trade networks to individual companies and the ability of food systems to adapt to change of various kinds. She argues that development cooperation can help to make supply chains more resilient, and that a lack of contextual understanding may cause damage in the form of undesirable social and climate impact.

To ensure that the increasing demands of the EU's green transition, human rights protection and increased security do not limit developing countries' market access and, in the worst case, neutralise the effects of aid, Kokko and Tingvall suggest possible initiatives to help companies in developing countries meet these requirements. These initiatives should be coordinated with other actors in the EU to the greatest possible extent.

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Kokko, A. & Tingvall, P. (2024), *Aid for Trade: En forskningsöversikt med rekommendationer för svenskt bistånd*, EBA working paper, April 2024

González-Mon, B. (2024) *Trade Networks and Social Relationships in Changing Social-Ecological Systems*, EBA DDB 2024:02

INCREASING DEMANDS ON CLIMATE AID

Despite the urgency of the crisis, at COP 29 the world's countries agreed on a significantly lower level of climate finance to developing countries than many experts believe necessary. Wealthy nations have agreed to a goal of increasing funding for climate initiatives in developing countries to USD 300 billion annually by 2035. Swedish climate aid is part of this effort. The Government has decided that climate aid will be expanded and made more effective, including by shifting focus to countries that are major emitters, which generally means middle-income countries. More private capital will also be mobilised through risk-sharing and cofinancing.





Elizabeth Mukwimba next to her solar energy system, which provides off-grid electricity, Tanzania. Photo: Russell Watkins/DFID.



Meenakshi Dewanm is one of four women studying solar energy engineering in her village in Orissa, India. Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Panos Pictures/DFID.

EARLIER CLIMATE FUNDING for developing countries has been criticised, not only for being limited but also for being ambiguous, ‘double-counted’ and overstated. From now on, financing must be transparent to ensure that the international commitments made at COP 29 are actually fulfilled. As a large part of Sweden’s contribution to global climate funding is in the form of development assistance, it is vital that climate aid is implemented transparently and effectively to ensure the greatest possible contribution to reducing emissions and climate adaption (Eriksson *et al.* 2024; Williams 2023).

Mechanisms for a global emissions trading system are being prepared in line with the Paris Agreement. In an EBA working paper, Fridahl (2023) dismisses the possibility of Sweden setting off development assistance against Swedish emissions. However, development assistance can be used to build capacity in developing countries so they can benefit from the market in emission allowances. This can support the countries both financially and in their climate work.

The lion’s share of Swedish climate aid for emissions reduction is spent on initiatives in

African nations with relatively limited emissions. Few African nations have per capita carbon dioxide emissions over one tonne. In comparison, no European nation has per capita emissions under three tonnes. Many Swedish interventions target long-term sustainable development and poverty reduction and therefore do not contribute to significant emissions reductions in the short term (Williams 2023; Östlund *et al.* 2024). They may, however, yield results later by contributing to sustainable economic development.

Meanwhile, there is clearly a risk that African nations will be seduced by fossil fuel-based growth as their rapidly growing young population reaches productive age at the same time as more and more fossil resources are exploited on the continent. Public support for necessary reforms is a prerequisite for sustainable development. In a study of three African countries (Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya), Harring *et al.* (2024) report that only one third of respondents are positive to higher taxes or lower subsidies on fossil fuels. However, if the revenue were to be earmarked for public transport or social programmes, support for fuel tax and emission charges doubles.

“Many Swedish interventions target long-term sustainable development and poverty reduction and therefore do not contribute to significant emissions reductions in the short term.”

Acceptance also increases when people trust the authorities and the government. The expectations of and demands on climate aid are many. Like all Swedish aid, it must be targeted at reducing poverty. It must also contribute to climate adaption and building up the resilience of communities and individuals to climate change.

A working paper mapping Swedish bilateral climate-change adaption aid (Weitzel, 2024) finds that over half has been allocated to African countries, largely based on how vulnerable the countries are to climate change. Roughly half of interventions are intended to support legislation, regulation and institutions for climate adaption. Sweden differs from other donor countries in that significantly fewer resources are allocated to physical infrastructure.

The survey shows that there is limited knowledge about the effectiveness of climate adaption aid. As there have not been adequate evaluations of and research into the types of climate adaption interventions favoured by Sweden, it is important to demonstrate why and in what way such interventions are important. Here too there is a need for greater transparency concerning climate aid.

Nilsson (2024) underlines that climate change is the single greatest threat to health globally. There is a risk that 50 years of success in improving health will be negated by heatwaves, drought, flooding and storms. Reduced access to food and water and increases in infections, air pollution and mental illness also threaten in the long term. People in developing countries will suffer most, with rapid urbanisation and increasing pressure on the health system from climate change-related diseases exacerbating the situation.

Climate transition and adaption interventions therefore have a positive impact on public health. At present, there are no health-related goals for Swedish climate aid. Nilsson (2024) recommends that the health impact of climate change should be considered in all planning and policymaking.

CONCLUSIONS

- A rapid decrease in emissions needs to be combined with short-term poverty reduction and long-term sustainable development in both low- and middle-income countries.
- Swedish climate aid must be more transparent.
- The health impact of climate change should be considered in all climate-related interventions.

REFERENCES:

Östlund, N., Weber, L., Schmidt, M., Shishlov, I., Hilgert, A., Lambe, F., Eriksson, F.A. & Strömberg, P. (2024), *Swedish Climate Change Mitigation*, **EBA 2024:07**

Harring, N., Nordén, A. & Slunge, D. (2024), *Public Opinion on Carbon Pricing and Revenue Uses in East Africa*, **EBA 2024:03**

Nilsson, M. (2024), *Århundradets hälsohot: klimatförändringarnas effekter på vår hälsa*, i Ahrne, M. & Sundewall, J. (2024) *En antologi om trender och olika perspektiv på global hälsa*, **EBA 2024:09**

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

Weitzel, L. (2024), *Swedish Bilateral Climate Change Adaptation Aid: Comparing Practice with Evidence*, **EBA working paper, October 2024**

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

HOW EFFECTIVE IS AID CHANNELLED THROUGH MULTINATIONAL ORGANISATIONS?

Global challenges such as the climate crisis, pandemics and armed conflicts increase the demand for effective aid. During the year, EBA commissioned a review of the effectiveness of Swedish bilateral aid channelled through multilateral organisations, as well as conducting a literature review mapping the effectiveness of core and earmarked support respectively.

THIS YEAR marks the 20th anniversary of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which was intended to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid. The aid effectiveness agenda is based on four principles: country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability. Sweden is an enthusiastic proponent of the Paris Declaration and, in 2022, the Deputy Director General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) was elected as Co-Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), the primary vehicle for driving development effectiveness.

Tibblin and Wohlgemuth (2004) look at how Sweden incorporates the principles of effective development cooperation into bilateral support channelled through multilateral organisations. This support currently accounts for around 40 per cent of Sida's total aid budget. The study analyses obstacles and opportunities to implement the principles in order to identify potential improvements.

The authors conclude that, while the principles remain central to Sida's collaborations with multilateral organisations, international priorities have shifted over time, with greater emphasis on results and transparency at the expense of ownership and coordination. The authors contend that this shift is not reflected in Swedish policies and directives, something that may have a negative impact on development effectiveness. The authors recommend that rules on collaboration between Sida and its multilateral partners be updated and that they should jointly review the principles of effective development cooperation. Furthermore, Sweden

should strengthen its capacity to evaluate and follow up development cooperation.

In an ongoing study, EBA and the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) are mapping the combined knowledge of the effectiveness of core support (funds that go directly into the budgets of multilateral organisation) and earmarked funds channelled through multilateral organisations for specific thematic areas or projects (*Ihl et al., 2025*).

The literature review suggests that core support gives the organisations flexibility to work within their mandates, something that is harder to achieve when funds are earmarked, restricting how they can be used. The predictability of core support also makes the organisations' long-term planning that much easier. Earmarking also appears to increase administrative costs, as the organisations need to deal with more donors and meet their specific requirements. On the other hand, multilateral organisations can implement more projects thanks to earmarked funding. The effectiveness of core and earmarked support is an underexplored area and more empirical data are needed to establish causality.

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- Sjöberg Tibblin., A. & Wohlgemuth., L. (2024), *Swedish Multi-Bi Aid and Development Effectiveness*, EBA working paper, October 2024
- Ihl., J., Singh, R., Malandu Mukali, I., Hede Skagerlind, H. & Heucher, A. (2025), *The Effectiveness of Core and Earmarked Funding in Multilateral Development Cooperation – A Systematic Literature Review* (working title), DEval and EBA Discussion Paper 1/2025

17 PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL HEALTH

Health is vital to people and nations. The COVID-19 pandemic has undermined progress towards the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and threatens decades of global health progress. At the same time, the pandemic has also increased interest in health issues.

How should Sweden design future health aid if it wishes to remain an important global health actor?

IN 2014, EBA published the report *Sweden's Development Assistance for Health: Policy Options to Support the Global Health 2035 Goals* (Yamey et al. 2014). Since then, there have been radical changes in the area of health and in our immediate neighbourhood. The disease panorama and demographics are changing. Meanwhile, progress is slow in certain areas. As we enter an era of digitalisation, eHealth, AI and vaccines delivered by drone, 700 million people have no access to something as fundamental to health as clean water and 1.5 billion lack basic sanitation facilities.

Climate change affects human health directly and indirectly. War and other armed conflicts devastate people's lives and health, and national health systems. Direct attacks on healthcare facilities and health workers are becoming increasingly common. It was against this background that EBA published a new analysis of challenges and opportunities in global health in 2024, a decade after the previous report was published. The report, *An Anthology of Trends and Perspectives on Global Health* (Ahrne and Sundewall, eds., 2024) contains 17 chapters by 34 experts on global health from both Sweden and abroad.

One overarching conclusion from the anthology is that investment in human health should be a priority of Swedish development assistance, whether bilateral or multilateral. Health

intersects and has many synergistic effects with other policy areas, such as development assistance, trade, migration, climate, and research and innovation. Sweden's global health efforts may also have a direct impact on the health of people in Sweden.

Global health is an area in which Sweden has an acknowledged good track record and has made significant investments in financial resources as well as advocacy, global leadership and research. The anthology shows that global health issues extend beyond the traditional areas on which health aid has focused. Climate change and antimicrobial resistance are two examples of challenges that affect not only development cooperation but also Sweden's international work in general.

REFERENCES:

Yamey, G., Saxenian, H., Hecht, R., Sundewall, J. & Jamison, D. (2014), *Sweden's Development Assistance for Health – Policy Options to Support the Global Health 2035 Goals*, **EBA 2014:02**

Ahrne, M. & Sundewall, J. (2024), *En antologi om trender och olika perspektiv på global hälsa*, **EBA 2024:09**

LOOKING FORWARD

A ID ACTORS are operating in an increasingly complex geopolitical context. We see obvious areas of conflict between the old guard of donor countries and authoritarian states that in various ways are seeking to increase their influence in countries that have traditionally been recipients of aid. To this can be added challenges such as climate change, protracted armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, democratic backsliding, mass displacement and continued widespread poverty, all of which increase the need for aid in the world. Meanwhile, we see signs that the flow of international aid is decreasing, creating the need for greater coordination, something that may well be hindered by the fact that many nations are increasingly focused on how aid can also benefit the donor country.

In the United States, by far the world's largest donor, 2025 began with a new administration. Swedish international aid may need to adjust to a new situation with the likely reduction of US aid. There is broad discussion on assistance to Ukraine, as well as the United States' attitude to international climate finance. It is also highly likely that there will be changes to the conditions on which US aid is given, for example, the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule, which prohibits foreign NGOs from receiving US aid if they provide, advocate for, or refer to abortion services. Since the policy was implemented by Ronald Reagan in 1984, every Republican president has reinstated the gag, while every Democratic president has rescinded it, meaning that US aid for family planning has fluctuated wildly from one administration to the next.

For Sweden, this will mean that greater efforts are required at political and diplomatic level to coordinate SRHR interventions with likeminded donor countries.

During 2025, EBA will continue to conduct studies and promote discussion of the long-term impact of development assistance and highlight various relevant perspectives on the strategic direction of

development cooperation. Considerable emphasis will be placed on following up, analysing and evaluating the Government's reform agenda, including how funds are allocated.

One question relates to uncertainty regarding the future size of the aid budget. The 2025 Budget Bill contains costs associated with continuing to provide protection to Ukrainian refugees in Sweden under the Temporary Protection Directive, costs that are not classified as official development assistance by OECD-DAC. The Government's new strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation on migration, returns and voluntary repatriation, which was adopted in 2024, also states that limited exceptions from OECD-DAC regulations may be allowed "to the extent that it is necessary to achieving the strategy's objectives". At the same time, the Government emphasises the importance of transparency and compliance with international agreements. As such, EBA sees a task in following the outcomes of the reported uses of development assistance.

"Greater transparency is demanded if Sweden's contribution to the financing promised in climate negotiations is to be credible."

The question of transparency and compliance with international agreements is also relevant to the design of the announced increase in climate aid. Greater transparency is demanded if Sweden's contribution to the financing promised in climate negotiations is to be credible. The catalytic component of climate aid in particular needs to be reported more openly.

“This will mean that greater efforts are required at political and diplomatic level to coordinate SRHR interventions with likeminded donor countries.”

Patience Mapfumo, Zimbabwe, who is HIV-positive, with her five-year-old son Josphat who was born without HIV. Photo: Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

REPORTS AND SEMINARS DURING 2024

ONGOING STUDIES AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2024

WORKING TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GROUP*	AUTHORS
Synergies for Climate Financing <i>What opportunities are there for Swedish public financial institutions to improve collaboration for increased climate benefit? The purpose of the study is to identify potential synergies and lessons that can develop collaboration between Swedfund, Sida, the Swedish Export Credit Corporation and Swedish Export Credit Agency. By comparing the four organisations, and their climate financing, with similar institutions in nine European countries, as well as analysing the organisations' mandates, climate policies and project portfolios, their climate impact is assessed and areas for improvement and collaboration are identified.</i>	Helen Ågren Andreas Klasen Eva Mineur Bjarne Steffen <i>Chair:</i> Katarina Tracz	Luisa Weber Sherri Ombuya Max Schmidt Igor Shishlov.
An Evaluation of Sida's Application of Multidimensional Poverty Analysis <i>The overall goal of Swedish development assistance is to "create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression". Since 2017, Sida has been using multidimensional poverty analysis as a basis for country, regional and global programmes and interventions. The study examines the importance of these analyses to Sida's work, whether the working method has been institutionalised and, if so, what outcomes this has led to.</i>	Sabina Alkire Janet Vähämäki Göran Holmqvist Jesper Roine <i>Chair:</i> Jenny Dechamps-Berger	Ingela Ternström Inge Tvedten Fredrik Ugglä
Protracted Displacement and Economic Inclusion: How to Enable Refugee and Host Population Agency? <i>When displacement becomes protracted, there is a need for longer-term solutions than can be financed from humanitarian assistance. This includes inclusion and meaningful participation in host communities, something that presupposes that both forcibly displaced people and host communities have the capacity to act autonomously. Such needs must be funded, either by the host society or with development assistance. Field studies in Kenya and Uganda have yielded positive examples based on the question: How do interventions support refugees' and host communities' self-sufficiency, opportunities to earn a living and economic integration?</i>	Karen Jacobsen Stefan Leiderer Jörgen Lindström Adam Kahsai-Rudebeck <i>Chair:</i> Malin Oud	Måns Felleesson Mats Hårsmar
What are They Fighting For? <i>What do the warring parties in civil wars say they are fighting about? 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.</i>	Marika Fahlén Michael Jonsson Mimmi Söderberg-Kovacs Stein Tönnesson Mas Utas <i>Chair:</i> Malin Oud	Johan Brosché Sebastian Raattama
Evaluation of Sweden's Efforts to Strengthen State Capacity in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations <i>How and to what extent has Swedish development assistance 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? The EBA has commissioned an evaluation of Swedish state-building interventions in fragile states.</i>	Rachel Gisselquist Alina Rocha Menocal Marina Nistotskaya Derick Brinkerhoff <i>Chair:</i> Helena Lindholm	Mohammad Sepahvand Ann-Sofie Isaksson Heather Congdon Forss Annika Lindskog

* EBA's Reference Group is strictly confined to an advisory role. Members of the Reference Group 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

Evaluation of Sida's Efforts to Increase Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa

Productive employment and decent work is one of the most important paths out of poverty for individuals and groups in low- and middle-income countries. As such, creating jobs and employment can be viewed as key objectives for development assistance. The EBA has commissioned an evaluation of Sida's job-creation initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. The aim is to assess how Swedish development assistance has contributed to job creation, the quality of the jobs created and the explanatory factors behind the success or failure of interventions.

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

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

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Tanzania

A significant percentage of international development assistance goes to interventions to increase access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). However, despite major investments in the sector, the impact in terms of increasing handwashing and toilet use and eventually improving health has been limited. The study is intended to increase knowledge about how stakeholder engagement can help to increase the legitimacy, efficacy and long-term impact of interventions in the WASH sector. The study includes a survey of WASH interventions in Tanzania during the period 2012–2022, as well as field studies of specific interventions.

Tracy Morse
Carmen Anthonj
Ylva Schwinn
Alejandro Jiménez
Robert Aunger
Chair:
Torgny Holmgren

Nelson Ekane
Ruth Carlitz
Yohannes Kachenje

Land Tenure and Strategies of Climate Resilience

There are well-established links between land rights and adapting to climate change. Both the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UN-Habitat have demonstrated that land rights are an important prerequisite for the resilience of individuals and communities to 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 adaption strategies have often been overgeneralised and lacking nuance. By studying the variation in land rights in Kenya, the study hopes to provide guidance on how best to support communities' adaption to climate change.

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

Kathleen Klaus
Emma Elfversson

Swedish Aid to Health Systems Strengthening

Health system strengthening (HSS) is vital to achieving SDG Target 3.8, achieving universal health coverage for all. HSS is one of the Swedish Government's priorities for health aid, and thus also a priority for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The overall purpose of the evaluation is to increase understanding of what makes an effective HSS intervention by examining how Swedish bilateral development assistance has supported HSS in Bangladesh and Uganda, as well as a portfolio analysis of Sweden's contribution to HSS in six partner countries.

Karin Tegmark Wisell
Peter Waiswa
Jahangir Khan
Margaret Kruk
Chair:
Andreas Wladis

Jesper Sundewall
Björn Ekman
Jens Wilkens
Joseph Kazibwe
Adam Lagerstedt
Olga Kaartinen

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

EBA REPORTS 2024

EBA independently decides 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.

- 2024:10** **Extreme Poverty and Marginalisation in Bangladesh: Drivers and Lessons for Development Cooperation**
Owasim Akram, Mathilde Maitrot, Joe Devine
- 2024:09** **An Anthology of Trends and Perspectives on Global Health** [in Swedish with English summary]
Malin Ahrne, Jesper Sundewall, eds.
- 2024:08** **Implementing the Reform Agenda: An Initial Report** [in Swedish]
Expert Group for Aid Studies
- 2024:07** **Swedish Climate-change Mitigation Finance**
Númi Östlund, Luisa Weber, Max Schmidt, Igor Shishlov, Annika Hilgert, Fiona Lambe, Flintull Annica Eriksson, Per Strömberg
- 2024:06** **External Support to Constitution Building Processes**
Cheryl Saunders, Andy Carl, Anna Dziedzic, Samantha Smith
- 2024:05** **Evidence-Based Anti-Corruption? Evaluation of Sida's Efforts to Reduce Corruption in Partner Countries**
Marina Nistotskaya, Hayden Buker, Marcia Grimes, Anna Persson, Michelle D'Arcy, Bo Rothstein, Adea Gafuri
- 2024:04** **The Transparency of Swedish Development Assistance** [in Swedish]
Pontus Hedlin, Christoffer Lokatt
- 2024:03** **Public Opinion on Carbon Pricing and Revenue Uses in East Africa**
Niklas Harring, Anna Nordén, Daniel Slunge
- 2024:02** **The Long and Winding Road: Evaluation of Swedish Long-Term Development Cooperation with Liberia**
Christopher Emminghaus, Simon Wallisch, Kou Meapeh Gbaintor-Johnson, Julian Klauke, Anouchka Baldin, Tillman Hönig, John Pokoo, Johanna Schaefer-Kehnert
- 2024:01** **Supporting Local Actors: Evaluation of Sweden's Application of the Grand Bargain Localisation Agenda**
Sophia Swithern, Charlotte Lattimer, Teddy Atim, Gang Karume, Dmytro Kondratenko, Kateryna Korenkova, Cheery Zahau

PODCASTS 2024

- 76.** Why should democracy aid be channelled through party-affiliated organisations?
- 75.** Do results really count? A critical review of aid reporting.
- 74.** Comments on the 2025 Budget Bill.
- 73.** The Results of Development Assistance: How do we know what works?
- 72.** Synergies between trade and aid: How does it work?
- 71.** Support for local actors in humanitarian crises.
- 70.** Lessons from a dark year: The EBA Aid Review 2024.
- 69.** Ready for the next pandemic: Lessons from HIV and COVID-19.
- 68.** Assignment: Create 600 million new jobs.
- 67.** The beginning of a paradigm shift? Appropriation directions for development assistance 2024.

DEVELOPMENT DISSERTATION BRIEFS (DDB) 2024

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.

- 2024:07** **Impact of Non-Health Sector Determinants on Child Health and the Role of the Sustainable Development Goals**
Daniel Helldén
- 2024:06** **Infertility Risk and Child Marriage**
Evelina Linnros
- 2024:05** **When Does Women's Political Representation Lead to Policy Change?**
Valeriya Mechkova
- 2024:04** **Challenges to Protest Participation in Non-Democratic Contexts: A Privilege of the Privileged**
Elizaveta Kopacheva
- 2024:03** **Aid by Democratic Versus Autocratic Donors: Democratisation Processes and Citizens' Perceptions in Recipient Countries**
Adea Gafuri
- 2024:02** **Trade Networks and Social Relationships in Changing Social-Ecological Systems**
Blanca González-Mon
- 2024:01** **Markets and Marketplaces: Essays on Access and Transformation in Remote Rural Economies**
Tillmann von Carnap

WORKING PAPERS 2024

The 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 the EBA has acted as assistant supervisor. Working papers are not quality assured by the Expert Group.

"Dig Our Heels In": Sida's Civil Society Partners and The Backlash Against Sexual and Gender-Related Rights, December 2024
Sofia Kahma

The Commission on Investing in Health 3.0: A Roadmap to Halving Premature Death by 2050, December 2024
Gavin Yamey, Sarah Bolongaita, Armand Zimmerman, Angela Chang, Ayodamope Fawole, Dean Jamison, Omar Karlsson, Wenhui Mao, Ole Norheim, Osondu Ogbuaji, Marco Schäferhoff, David Watkins, Jesper Sundewall

To connect a system to more of itself, December 2024
Seye Abimbola

Rebuilding a health system – experiences from Somalia, December 2024
Fawziya Abikar Nur

Swedish Multi-Bi Aid and Development Effectiveness, October 2024
Anna Sjöberg Tibblin, Lennart Wohlgemuth

Swedish Bilateral Climate Change Adaptation Aid: Comparing Practice with Evidence, October 2024
Lennart Weitzel

English-Swedish Glossary of Key Terminology When Evaluating Aid, October 2024
Stefan Dahlgren, Lena Johansson de Chateau, Joakim Molander, Sven Olander, Jan Pettersson

What Does Sida's Annual Report Say About the Results of Development Cooperation? The Example of Employment [in Swedish], May 2024
Markus Burman

Sida's Climate Mitigation Finance: a Portfolio Evaluation, April 2024
Igor Shishlov, Luisa Weber, Max Schmidt

Aid for Trade: A Literature Review with Recommendations for Swedish Aid, April 2024
Ari Kokko, Patrik Tingvall

SEMINARS DURING 2024

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.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 17 Dec. | Women and Children's Right to Health: New Research on Global Challenges and Opportunities
DDB 2024:07, DDB 2024:06, Chapter 7 of EBA 2024:09 |
| 3 Dec. | A New Era for Global Health: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities
EBA 2024:09 |
| 7 Nov. | How Can Aid Fight Corruption?
EBA 2024:05 |
| 31 Oct. | How Can Constitution Building Processes Be Supported?
EBA 2024:06 |
| 13 June | International Webinar on Supporting Local Actors for More Effective Humanitarian Assistance
EBA 2024:01 |
| 11 June | From Conflict to Long-term Development: Lessons from Swedish Development Cooperation with Liberia
EBA 2024:02 |
| 27 May | Development Cooperation in Middle-income Countries?
Joint event with the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE), Sida and the World Bank. |
| 16 May | Political Voice in Times of Democratic Backsliding
DDB 2024:05, DDB 2024:04, DDB 2024:03 |
| 29 Apr. | Trade: What Can Swedish Aid Do?
EBA working paper, April 2024 |
| 12 Apr. | Supporting Local Actors for a More Effective Humanitarian Assistance
EBA 2024:01 |
| 7 Feb. | Trade as a Driving Force for Development
DDB 2024:02, DDB 2024:01 |

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

Staffan I Lindberg, Principal Investigator and Director of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute at the University of Gothenburg, was also a member of the Expert Group for Aid Studies during 2024.

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.

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