

Gender equality for development

Results and lessons



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

Following up aid initiatives

The purpose of following up and analysing the results of development cooperation is to review work in the past one or several years to be able to judge the results of this work and include valuable experiences and lessons learned in the future planning of assistance activities. The information on results is important ahead of future political priorities and decisions on Swedish development assistance and how it should be implemented.

Possibilities to follow up effects in the short, medium and long term vary between different assistance initiatives. It is relatively straightforward, for example, to follow up the short-term effects of vaccination programmes. It is much more difficult to analyse the long-term effects of support to a women's rights organisation within civil society with regard to changes in women's actual political influence in a certain country, as this is a matter of gradual changes in attitudes. Despite these challenges, it is important that Sweden fulfil the ambition to follow up and report on the short-term positive effects and long-term impact, as the endeavour to achieve such results is the driving force behind Sweden's international development cooperation.

Realistic goals

Development assistance initiatives must have clear goals reflecting what they aim to achieve. An initiative's overarching objectives in the long term must be broken down into interim sub-goals and targets, often a combination of quantitative and qualitative results. This approach is especially important when it comes to following up work in countries affected by conflict or countries with weak governance regimes, for example. This also applies to difficult issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It can take a very long time to achieve results in such issues, but at the same time, Sweden represents a set of basic values that we regard to be key to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development. One prerequisite for being able to follow up such initiatives and activities is that the Government set realistic goals and ambitions for Sweden's development work.

The Government considers that strong institutions and systems for following up policies and regulatory frameworks in partner countries are a prerequisite for obtaining better and credible information about the results of assistance. Sweden works continuously with cooperation partners (partner countries and other actors in the partner countries that implement assistance measures) and other donors to develop better methods for following up and analysing both short-term and long-term effects.

Gender equality for development

Poverty is one of the biggest obstacles to development, both for individuals and societies. According to estimates by the UN, approximately 70 per cent of poor people around the world are women. Studies by the World Bank and others show that there are strong links between increased gender equality and reduced poverty. Poverty also tends to reinforce gender discrimination and unequal power relations between the sexes. Gender equality is therefore both a goal in itself and a prerequisite for poverty reduction. Gender equality is also a prerequisite for democracy and for equitable and sustainable global development.

This brochure shows the results of, and lessons learned from, Sweden's efforts to promote gender equality in international development cooperation. The introduction gives a general description of the gender equality situation in Sweden's partner countries. A presentation follows of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, dialogue as an advocacy tool, and challenges and conclusions.

Gender equality is achieved when women and men, and girls and boys, have equal rights, conditions, opportunities and resources, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Efforts to promote gender equality are

about improving the situation of women and girls and expanding their room for manoeuvre and freedom of choice. It is also important to get men and boys to take their share of the responsibility for gender equality, for example, by taking a greater responsibility for their sexuality and reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence.

At global level, a follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals shows that major challenges remain when it comes to achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to increased gender equality, improving women's and girls' access to education, strengthening their position in society, and reducing maternal and infant mortality by 2015. Increased support must be given to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as to women's role in food production and food security and in the management of natural resources. Women's opportunities to own and have control of land and other property must also be improved.

Swedish development assistance is both bilateral (to another state) and multilateral (via the EU, UN and development banks, for example). The majority of bilateral assistance is administered by Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and disbursed through various cooperation partners. These



Photo: Sean Sprague, Phoenix Photo Agency

Education is a decisive factor in being able to advance the position of women in a society. Pictured here is a teacher at an Ethiopian school.

partners are from Sweden as well as from our partner countries, including governments, authorities, civil society organisations, researchers and actors in the private sector. In addition to Sida, other Swedish agencies also engage in work that promotes or addresses gender equality in development cooperation in various ways – such as the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Nordic Africa Institute, the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation and the state-owned company Swedfund.

Sweden works actively with gender mainstreaming throughout its international development cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral. Gender mainstreaming as a strategic approach involves targeted measures that have gender equality as a main objective, as well as measures that include gender equality as a sub-goal.

Inequality despite international conventions

The situation as regards gender equality and women's rights varies among Sweden's partner countries, and development processes in these countries have been uneven. In partner countries, there is often a very inequitable distribution of power and opportunities between the sexes, and women and girls are often seen as subordinate to men and boys. Old traditions and customs can be a major obstacle to gender equality and to women's and girls' possibilities of running their own lives and being able to fully enjoy their human rights.

The majority of Sweden's partner countries have ratified the UN human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the commitments contained therein. These conventions represent a globally agreed set of basic values and principles that establish the state's responsibility and obligation to protect and promote each individual's rights to a life free from oppression and discrimination.

These countries have also undertaken to implement important global policy documents, such as the Programme of Action from the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, and the Platform for Action from UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

Progress in the area of gender equality has been made in certain countries with regard to education, improving women's political participation and reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS. Concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights in general, developments are more uneven. Only minor improvements can be observed concerning maternal mortality and legislation on women's access to safe and legal abortions, for example. A lack of sexuality education and access to contraceptives, as well as the fact that many women of child-bearing age are living with HIV and AIDS, contribute to continuing high levels of maternal mortality.

When it comes to women's economic empowerment and opportunities in the labour market, women often lack access to financial services on reasonable terms. In many countries, they are not permitted to act independently in economic contexts for cultural reasons. This makes it difficult for women to take on employment or start their own businesses. But there are examples of positive results in countries such as Bangladesh, Guatemala and Ethiopia, where women's participation in the labour market has increased significantly since 2000.

The UN Security Council has strengthened the follow-up of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Issues related to women's security and combating various forms of gender-based violence are the focus of a number of successful measures in both bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.

Bilateral development cooperation

Four main areas for gender equality

Gender equality has long been an important cross-cutting issue in Sweden's international development cooperation. The Government has therefore made gender equality and the role of women in development one of its highest priorities. The Government's work on gender equality in development assistance is primarily targeted at four areas.

Women's political participation and influence

Women and men must have the same opportunities to participate in, and influence, political processes and the content of policies at all levels. This also applies to conflict resolution and post-conflict situations.

From 0 to 25 per cent women in Kyrgyzstan's parliament

To create better conditions for women in Kyrgyzstan to reach decision-making positions, the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU International) – a training organisation – and Språngbrådan Utvecklingskonsulter AB have drawn up guidelines and policies for increased gender equality in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These are currently used in public administration, state media and political parties. The project lasted from 2007 to 2010 and was financed through Swedish development assistance. Some of the short-term results that Sweden contributed to include the following:

Statutory quotas for the number of women have been introduced in the parliament, which contributed to the fact that 25 per cent of parliamentarians were women following the election in 2007 (compared with no women previously). Twenty-one political parties have been trained in developing gender equality programmes and so far nine parties have drawn up such programmes. Furthermore, 215 people (women parliamentarians, district and regional leaders, party members) have been trained in gender equality issues. Seventy-three people in public administration, universities and NGOs have been trained in gender equality issues.

Photo: William Daniels, Panos Pictures



Kyrgyz women protest against irregularities in the 2007 election. Since then, the number of women in the parliament has increased and political parties have received gender equality training.

Women's economic role and working conditions

Poverty is reduced when women participate in the economy and have access to resources and functioning markets. In many developing countries, it is through entrepreneurship – in both the informal and formal sectors – that women have access to an income.

Women allowed to open their own bank account

Sweden provides support to the agricultural programme 'National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme' (NALEP) in Kenya, 2006–2011. The programme is run in cooperation with the Government of Kenya and is implemented in selected communities in rural areas. Farmers form stakeholder organisations around a specific crop or type of livestock and together they run collective commercial agriculture companies. The programme provides the farmers with expertise and advice on various cultivation methods and fertilisers to increase production in a sustainable way.

One result of the programme is that more people in the stakeholder groups are taking loans. Over 60 per cent of the borrowers and savers are women. Incomes in the households taking part in the programme have increased. Production and income have increased between twofold and fourfold within the space of two years, partly due to the groups growing more and various products and through

commercial sales. These households have also improved their access to food.

In some communities, the programme has strengthened women's entrepreneurship. One example is an irrigation project in Garissa, where nomads were able to learn everything from improved methods for working the land to how to market their goods. The women in the community are now able to contribute financially to the family's upkeep. One of the women expressed the changes in her own situation as follows: "Thanks to NALEP, we women have been able to work outside the home and earn our own money. We can now help ourselves and our families. We can pay school fees and our husbands are pleased that we are being paid for our agricultural products. We no longer need to ask our husbands' permission to go to meetings or open our own bank account."



Photo: Sean Sprague, Phoenix Photo Agency

Several projects similar to NALEP have been carried out in Kenya. Pictured here are a group of female farmers being instructed by an agricultural adviser.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

The right to decide and exercise control over one's own body, sexuality and child-bearing is fundamental for all people. The point of departure for Swedish and international SRHR work is primarily international commitments, including the declarations and action programmes from the UN International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

HIV and SRHR in the media

The organisation Femina HIP (Femina Health Information Multimedia Project) is receiving Swedish support for the period 2006–2013. Femina HIP was started in 1999 and has since developed into one of the best known media initiatives in Tanzania. The project includes newspapers, a TV programme and a website. The idea is to educate the public on sexual health and rights, HIV and AIDS, and gender equality, while presenting the information in an entertaining way. Through Femina HIP, Sweden has contributed to a number of concrete results within SRHR.

According to a study, Femina HIP's training and entertainment methods reach a large proportion of Tanzania's young people. Forty-two per cent of Tanzania's population know about Femina HIP's products and services. The number of young people between 15 and 19 years of age with HIV/AIDS dropped from 2 per cent in 2003–2004 to 1 per cent in 2007–2008, and Femina HIP is seen to have contributed to this.

Femina HIP's newspaper, Si Mchezo!, focuses on HIV/AIDS issues and is read by 2.6 million Tanzanians each week. Ninety-five per cent of Si Mchezo's! readers said in a survey that the newspaper had had a positive effect on their sexual and health choices. Femina HIP's TV programme regularly has one million viewers and is sometimes watched by up to 3.4 million people. Thirty-seven per cent of viewers are between 15 and 24 years of age.



Photo: Simone Scholtz/Twenty Ten

It is a human right not to be discriminated against on grounds of sexuality.

Women's security, including combating all forms of gender-based violence and human trafficking

Security for women and girls, as well as freedom from sexual and other gender-based violence, is essential if they are to be able to pursue an education and take part in economic and political life. This applies also to women's security in conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations. It is also important to implement the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, and human trafficking.

Training within the Turkish judicial system on violence against women

Bilgi University and Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg Institute have jointly carried out an initiative in Turkey with the aim of improving knowledge among the public and key figures who work with gender equality issues and women's rights. The initiative was also aimed at improving Turkish lawyers' knowledge of how to deal with legal cases involving violence against women.

Judges, prosecutors and Turkish NGOs were trained in international legislation on human rights. The focus was on women and people with disabilities. The initiative has had an impact on lawyers, judges and other key figures on an individual level. Several municipalities have participated in courses on non-discrimination, and a number of municipalities have asked for more training in this area of their own accord. Lawyers have taken part in training on international and domestic methods for defending women's rights.

The Ministry of Justice has used the material and expertise of Bilgi University in connection with a programme on violence against women created for judges at family courts. Twenty-one lawyers have taken part in courses on the UN human rights conventions and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Turkish lawyers now refer more frequently to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and international human rights conventions in their statements, which shows an increase in competence on these issues.



Photo: Mikkel Oestergaard, Panos Pictures

Many women are victims of human trafficking and are often subjected to violence. It is important that the judicial system learns to handle cases of violence against women in the right way.

Trained midwives reduce maternal mortality

In the period 2004–2010, Sweden and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health jointly trained midwives and placed them at local health centres in Nicaragua's 17 health administration units. The aim of the initiative was to improve the quality of sexual and reproductive health care. The initiative focused on the municipalities in which maternal mortality was high and access to midwives was limited.

Theoretical and practical training was given to 530 midwives to meet the health care needs of women of child-bearing age – before, during and after childbirth. In the period 2005–2009, maternal mortality decreased by 30 per cent in

Nicaragua. It is considered that this reduction is partly due to the project. Between 2005 and 2009, the proportion of professionally assisted births increased from 58 to 79 per cent. According to the Ministry of Health in Managua, this result was also partly due to the project.

Establishing the professional skills of midwives to the public health and medical care system has provided more women of child-bearing age with access to antenatal care in the form of professional obstetric nurses. One negative trend for women's health and gender equality is that medical abortions were banned in Nicaragua in October 2006. This has resulted in a rise in deaths among young women again.

Photo: Jenny Matthews, Panos Pictures



Jomara Palacios Saavedra receives an ultrasound scan at a clinic in Nicaragua, where maternity care has become safer thanks to more trained midwives.

Sweden's comparative advantage in gender equality work

Promoting gender equality in Swedish international development cooperation is carried out in the context of and in interaction with existing political, socio-economic and cultural systems and circumstances in partner countries. Sweden is one of several funders of initiatives run by partner country governments, agencies, universities and civil society organisations, etc. It is Sweden's cooperation partners in various countries that plan, implement and follow up on initiatives that have received Swedish support.

Achieving gender equality in Sweden's partner countries takes time and is a long-term process. Swedish development cooperation has helped to improve the conditions for gender equality and women's rights and terms in Sweden's partner countries. This has been achieved primarily through strategic initiatives in areas where Sweden has a comparative advantage and where Swedish development assistance has provided added value and been able to make a difference. One important factor has been Sweden's own experiences and competence in the area of gender equality, for example with regard to initiatives to improve maternal health and strengthen women's rights.



Photo: Samuel Ahlin, Nordic Photos

Normal Swedish gender equality.

Multilateral development cooperation

Gender equality as a fundamental principle within the EU

Gender equality and more power for women is a fundamental principle and a core value for the EU, both in its foreign policy and in the European Commission's development cooperation. This is a central area of the EU's recently adopted development policy.

Sweden consistently raises the gender perspective in negotiations on various Council conclusions within the EU concerning development cooperation and in the EU's common positions ahead of international summits. One of the greatest challenges concerning the promotion of gender equality in EU development policy is sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Certain Member States have opposed some of the elements covered by SRHR, such as women's right to legal and safe abortions.

Multilateral organisations with major influence

Sweden has helped to make gender equality a priority issue for several multilateral organisations. Multilateral aid is becoming an increasingly important part of international development cooperation. Just over half of Sweden's total aid is currently channelled via multilateral organisations, including development cooperation via the EU.

For the majority of these multilateral organisations, gender equality is an issue that is to be mainstreamed throughout their activities. Many organisations have gender equality policies and action plans as guidance for how gender equality work is to be conducted. For some of Sweden's most important partner organisations within the UN, gender equality is a key part of the organisation's mandate. This applies above all to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which has now been replaced by UN Women. In this type of organisation, Sweden focuses primarily on making the activities that the organisation supports effective and results-oriented.

20 per cent more girls in Afghan schools

Together with the Afghan Ministry of Education, UNICEF is implementing a training and gender equality programme in Afghanistan. The programme is running for the period 2010–2013 and aims to increase the number of girls in primary school and to improve literacy among girls and women. The total budget for the programme is just over USD 120 million, of which Sweden has contributed SEK 170 million. The goal of the programme is to provide 1.8 million girls with better education prospects and for 370 000 illiterate people to learn to read and write.

More Afghan children are going to school, but almost 40 per cent are still excluded. Of the children who do attend school, 37 per cent are girls. The programme has contributed to an increase of almost 20 per cent in the number of girls attending school over the past five years. To achieve the targets set, UNICEF has supported



the Afghan Ministry of Education in laying the foundation for more child-friendly schools by training teachers, building schools and water and sanitation facilities, and providing school materials. Schools have also been established in remote areas and areas that are difficult to access. The fact that as many as half of the children in these schools are girls is mainly due to the proximity of the schools to the children's homes and the special efforts made to increase the number of female teachers.

Gender equality perspectives were integrated when a new curriculum was produced, which has meant, for example, that pictures and texts have been changed in new textbooks. Approximately 50 000 teachers have received further training and 40 per cent of these were women. The education programme has also included courses for girls and women in reading and writing skills. Over a period of two and a half years, approximately 200 000 women and girls took part in a nine-month course held at 7 000 venues. The majority of the courses were led by women.



In other UN organisations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), gender equality work is a strategic component in activities.

The multilateral development banks work in a similar way by integrating gender equality perspectives in the projects and programmes they finance. In this type of organisations, Sweden focuses on ensuring that gender equality informs all of the organisations' areas of activity, as well as making the activity that the organisations supports effective and results-oriented.

Women report abuses in Liberia

The UNDP has implemented this initiative in cooperation with Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission was appointed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to investigate war crimes in Liberia between 1979 and 2003. The aim of the initiative was to produce a report containing witness accounts of both survivors and perpetrators of war crimes committed between 1979 and 2003 in Liberia. To do this, victims were interviewed and psychosocial counselling and safety measures were offered. Research and analysis were important elements. Sweden contributed to the initiative during the period 2007–2010.

In July 2009, a report containing witness statements was presented to the Liberian government. The report recommended that a war crimes tribunal be established and that a number of people, including the incumbent president, be forbidden from holding public office for thirty years. Further, it was recommended that a ban on discrimination and violence against women be introduced and that the government should prioritise women's rights and health. Rehabilitating the survivors of sexual violence was to be made a priority. As Liberian society is rebuilt, special

emphasis is to be placed on giving women the opportunity to improve their economic situation and institutions are to be strengthened so that women are protected in society.

During the writing of the report, several women were interviewed about the sexual abuses to which they had been subjected. Of these, around 10 cases have been taken to a court of law. The interviews have been broadcast on the radio and reported in the media. In an opinion poll in Monrovia, 66 per cent said that they were familiar with the contents of the report and that they had followed the public interviews.

The report is the first survey of crimes against humanity in Liberia between 1979 and 2003 to be made available to the public. Women have been able to make their voices heard and the people have gained a deeper insight into the situation of women during the conflict. One of the report's recommendations was to appoint an independent human rights institution, which has been done. The institution is supported by the government through the state budget. Another recommendation was to establish a war crimes tribunal, but this has not yet been accomplished.



Photo: Giacomo Pirozzi, Panos Pictures

An eleven-year-old rape victim outside the Women and Children Protection Section at the offices of the Liberian National Police in Monrovia.

Dialogue as an advocacy tool

Photo: Giacomo Piazzoli, UN Photo



Health workers in Jordan visit schools to provide sex education and information on HIV/AIDS.

Sensitive issues in a long-term dialogue

Dialogue as a tool for promoting gender equality has become increasingly important in recent years, in both bilateral and multilateral contexts, and not least in intergovernmental negotiations. Sweden always holds dialogues with its cooperation partners, but in some cases a more strategic and more in-depth dialogue is required that stretches over a longer period of time. Sweden pursues such a dialogue with various actors and cooperation partners at global, regional and country level. In some cases, gender equality work is conducted in direct dialogue with the partner country. This applies in particular to issues that may be considered sensitive, especially within the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

It is easier to achieve results if the dialogue is linked as far as possible to ongoing processes in the country or within the organisation to be influenced. It is also important that the dialogue

be held at the highest possible political level.

As a dialogue partner to partner countries, the multilateral organisations often have greater influence than Sweden on its own. Yet the multilateral organisations seldom attach as much importance to gender equality aspects as Sweden does. Sweden is a long way ahead in terms of policy issues in the area of gender equality and, as a bilateral partner, can pursue these issues much more forcefully when the situation allows.

With regard to the direct financing of gender equality projects and mainstreaming gender equality aspects, Sweden has many years of experience and good expertise to share with the multilateral organisations. At the same time, Sweden also has a great deal to learn from these organisations, as they have a geographical breadth and can address situations in various countries in a way that Sweden's bilateral support does not allow. In this sense, bilateral and multilateral work complement each other well.



Young mothers in Malawi have also been given the opportunity to go back to school after giving birth.

Young mothers in Tanzania can continue going to school

Sweden conducted a dialogue with Tanzania during the period 2008–2010, and focused on pregnant pupils' right to education and on preventing unwanted pregnancies in young girls. As a supplement to sector support, a girls' school was funded that served as a model school for preventing pregnancies in young girls and supporting young mothers' right to education. The school's head has also taken part in Sida's international training programme 'Child Rights, Classroom and School Management'. The above-mentioned initiatives were strategically accompanied by actions taken by the Ambassador such as writing newspaper articles, and giving public speeches

and interviews about issues such as women's security, combating gender-based violence, and women's and girls' rights.

The dialogue may have affected the change that occurred in Tanzanian society with regard to attitudes towards pregnancies in young girls and pregnant girls' right to education. This is reflected, for example, in a revised education policy that more clearly raises the issue of girls' right to return to school after childbirth. Another result that the dialogue is thought to have contributed to is that in March 2010 the Ministry of Education adopted guidelines on how pregnant girls can continue their studies.

Sweden led the gender equality dialogue at the World Bank

Since 2008, Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs have been engaged in a dialogue with the World Bank focused on women's economic empowerment and terms of employment. The goal of this dialogue has been to make gender equality a special theme for the activities of the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) during the coming three-year period. This goal was reached already during the first negotiation meeting in March 2010.

The aim was to influence the IDA's activities so that they systematically increase investments to promote gender equality in the partner countries. In particular, Sweden wants to see more gender mainstreaming in all of the Bank's activities to promote women's economic empowerment and the development of rural areas. This could involve women farmers gaining access to loans and agricultural advice, for example, so as to improve their production of crops, or so that women gain the right to own and use land.

Sweden's support to the World Bank's Gender Action Plan 2007-2010 laid the foundation for Sida's dialogue with the World Bank's Gender Team on how the work could be systematised within the Bank's activities. In March 2009, the World Bank's Gender Team hosted a meeting with Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to present the process during the current period and plans for the next period. Sida then developed indicators to measure gender equality in the new process. The indicators were integrated into the World Bank's transition plan and results matrix for gender equality in IDA.

The goal of the dialogue – to make gender equality a special theme of the IDA's activities during the coming three-year period – has been achieved. The Swedish dialogue is considered to have contributed to this. Sweden is now continuing efforts in dialogue with the World Bank, to specify in detail the indicators to measure the impact of activities on gender equality outcomes in the World Bank's processes.



Photo: Sean Sprague, Phoenix Photo Agency

Gaining access to land and being able to take out loans are essential if women are to achieve greater self determination.

Challenges, conclusions and lessons

Not all countries have a positive view of gender equality and women's empowerment

There is a lack of international consensus on the importance of gender equality issues in development cooperation. Sweden is often at the forefront of these efforts, with a relatively limited circle of like-minded countries. Other countries do not see any benefit from, or need for, such

efforts. Some even work against progress in the area of gender equality.

The reform of the UN and above all efforts to achieve a more unified UN (an approach known as 'One UN') at country level have made it possible to introduce new ways of coordinating gender equality work between the UN funds and programmes. The launch of UN Women, as well as continued Swedish efforts to induce UN funds and programmes to mainstream gender equality issues into their activities at both country and global level, have improved the prospects for those parts of the UN system that are working on gender equality to ensure that their activities have an impact and achieve positive results.

Difficult to change attitudes

A well thought through development cooperation initiative has little chance of succeeding if there is no political commitment from decision-makers in the partner country responsible for implementing the initiative. Success requires a clear will and active ownership on the part of the cooperation partner. Equally important is long-term commitment and greater collaboration among donors, financiers and other actors. Active and forceful actors for change are needed – individuals or groups that lead the way in new ways of thinking and innovations – as well as functioning institutions that support these actors. Therefore, the Swedish Government is continuing its efforts to improve knowledge of women's and girls' rights by identifying, supporting and influencing human rights defenders and other potential actors for change. Gender equality initiatives with good results that Sweden has helped to bring about are those that have combined support to individual women or women's organisations with support to capacity building and institutional development.

Many gender equality initiatives within Swedish development cooperation involve campaigns or other activities aimed at changing people's attitudes in various issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. These include issues concerning women's right



Photo: Sean Sprague, Phoenix Photo Agency

Brazilian Joao Pessoa with his baby boy. If women are to be able to be more financially independent, men must share responsibility for the home and children.

Reduction in female genital mutilation

To reduce the incidence of female genital mutilation, the UNFPA, together with UNICEF, has lobbied national institutions and civil society in twelve African countries to bring an end to female genital mutilation. This has resulted in communities in Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Sudan and Senegal no longer practising female genital mutilation. In Ethiopia, 4 000 girls in the Afar region have avoided being subjected to genital mutilation and more than 9 000 families have chosen to end the practice of female genital mutilation.

to their own bodies and their physical integrity. Changing attitudes and raising awareness of how women and girls are subjected to discrimination and subordination are both a prerequisite for gender equality work and a result in themselves. These initiatives tend to have problems achieving clear results in the short term. This is partly due to the fact that changing attitudes is difficult in itself, and partly because it is difficult to follow up how attitudes have changed and to demonstrate how these, in turn, have had an impact when it comes to changing people's behaviour. Despite the fact that it is difficult to demonstrate results in controversial issues such

as gender equality, the Government plans to continue prioritising these issues, since progress in these areas is a prerequisite for reducing poverty and for sustainable development.

Political support is a prerequisite for success

Gender equality work yields the best results when there is a clear political mandate in the partner country to prioritise the issues. Another prerequisite for success in integrating gender equality is that development efforts must be based on an analysis of men's and women's differing problems, needs, interests and opportunities based on the gender norms and structures that prevail in society. If the gender equality perspective is to have an impact on the design and content of development initiatives and above all in the form of clear gender equality goals, this requires gender-sensitive and skilled officials and cooperation partners, the use of sex disaggregated statistics, as well as accurate analyses of the effect that gender equality will have on the results of development cooperation.

One challenge in further strengthening gender equality work and results is moving from measures initiated by donors to a situation in which the partner countries themselves expressly request projects and programmes that have gender equality as the key dimension.



Female road workers in Bangladesh.

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Each year, the Government submits a communication to the Riksdag on the results of development assistance, based on prioritized issues and thematic areas. This brochure presents the most important results and recommendations from the communication entitled *The results of aid – the theme of gender equality and the role of women in development* (Govt. communication 2010/11:167) that the Government submitted to the Riksdag in September 2011. The full text of the communication is available (in Swedish) at www.ud.se.



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