



MAY 2008 • ANNA RONEBORG

Sexuality: A Missing Dimension in Development

SIDA CONCEPT PAPER – BRIEF VERSION



Published by Sida 2008

Department of Democracy and Social Development

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Printed by Edita Communication AB, 2008

Art. no.: SIDA43506en

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from www.sida.se/publications

Introduction

Sweden is well placed to play a leading role in championing gender equality, sexuality and sexual rights. However, much of Sweden's previous work in this area has been related to the problematic and negative aspects of sexuality related to reproduction, disease, violence and oppression, and, as such, confined to work within health or gender equality. Rarely has development work taken on the more comprehensive and positive dimensions of sexuality, and rarely has it been addressed in other sectors. Sexuality matters because it is about power, lust and politics.

Because sexuality is so multifaceted, there is often confusion about how best to address it. Even within sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) the emphasis has often been on reproductive health and less on sexual health and rights. When it is addressed, development agencies and staff sometimes address sexuality only in relation to physical health and disease prevention. One reason for this may be that sexuality has a tendency to make people, including agency staff, feel uncomfortable. Hence, even the word sexuality in itself, seldom figures in development language.

Sometimes women are portrayed only as victims of sexual and gender based violence and trafficking, and not as actors and survivors with their own agency and sexuality. The net result is that interventions can end up being limited to service related technical/medical approaches, sidelining social, political, cultural, power and rights issues. Yet it is in relation to these political and rights issues that much is at stake as far as sexuality is concerned. Furthermore, few are aware of the extent to which issues concerning sexuality arise in almost every area of development work, whether in relation to education, employment, credit, agriculture, culture, transport, migration, conflict or political participation.

Sweden's policy for global development is built on the two perspectives of people living in poverty and the rights based approach. These and the principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability, form the foundation of Swedish aid policy and provide a basis for thinking about the connections between sexuality, human rights and development in a more comprehensive way. Therefore, Sida/DESO's Head of Department provided a mandate to DESO/TEMA to develop this concept paper on the relationship between sexuality, rights and development. The purpose is to enlighten agency staff and partners and to enhance Sida's capacity to better implement Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD). The ultimate aim being to improve the quality of life for people living in poverty.

Putting Sexuality on the Development Agenda

The Swedish government has made prominent commitments to addressing issues of sexuality in Swedish development co-operation, notably in the 2006 SRHR policy¹, which some consider to be the most progressive of any government on some issues. As a result, SRHR was classed a priority area in Sweden's 2006 MDG follow up report: *Together towards 2015*. In the subsequent Sida declaration: *Where We Are, Where We Are Going*, Sida states, albeit without mentioning the word sexuality: *“In dialogue with other donors and partner countries, we will raise issues such as equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, democracy, civil society and the environment – even though these are difficult issues.”*

More recently, the revised Swedish Policy for Global Development (2007/08:89) includes the goal: ‘Better health and quality of life for women and men, boys and girls in developing countries’, which it aims to achieve by:

[Raising] the level of ambition in terms of efficiency and resources for activities intended to improve knowledge and services around sexuality, as well as capacity in regards to women’s and girls’ bodily integrity and sexual rights, and to support the role and responsibility of men and boys in promoting gender equality and the sexual and reproductive health of all.’²

Finally, the Swedish 2008 Budget Bill with its three thematic priorities, clearly emphasises gender equality, sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights and its links to poverty and development.³ However, while the political guidance is clear, implementation has been inconsistent. Sexuality, as a word in itself, is seldom used in development language.

What is Sexuality?

Sexuality is an intrinsic part of everyone’s lives whether or not they have sexual relationships. But it is not just a private matter, concerned with our most intimate relationships: it is an intensely public and political concern. Across cultures, societies and historical periods, the state, religious authorities and other social institutions have sought to regulate sexuality and sexual expression, prescribing some forms of relationship

¹ Sweden’s international policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006, p.10. <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/61489;jsessionid=a8SY71EuqUn4>

² Unofficial translation. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/10/10/82/d03a124b.pdf>

³ <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/08/81/69/5a579763.pdf>

– such as heterosexual marriage – and proscribing others. Sexuality may be represented in popular culture, laws or religious injunctions as a natural urge or unnatural desire.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of the term “sexuality” is that developed by the World Health Organization:

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.⁴

The WHO definition goes beyond ideas of what is “natural” or “normal;” it invites deeper questions about how working with sexuality can further a rights-based approach to development, rather than reinforce social norms that undermine human rights.

Sexuality and Gender

Gender and sexuality are both social constructs. They are closely intertwined; both are about values and meanings, and both are concerned with norms that permit and constrain certain forms of social and sexual expression. Both, ultimately, are about power and politics.

At one time, it was widely believed that social “gender” was simply mapped onto biological “sex”. Now we know that matters are more complex than this. Those who do not comply with what is expected from them may find themselves the object of ostracism or mockery in the workplace, on the street and in their families.

The relationship between gender and sexuality also emerges in the kinds of sexual relationships that are permitted and proscribed in different contexts. In many societies, there are strongly maintained social norms that make it very hard for women to enjoy an independent sexual existence if not married. At the same time, there are norms that make it more acceptable for men than women to have extramarital affairs, visit sex workers, masturbate, ask for sex, and even enjoy certain forms of bodily pleasure.

⁴ World Health Organisation, 2006, Defining Sexual Health http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/sexual_health.html

As the co-ordinator of the Turkish organization Women for Women's Human Rights and the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, Pinar Ilkaracan, comments:

Oppression of women's and girls' sexuality lies at the core of several women's human rights violations related to development. Aside from the blatant violations such as honour crimes or female genital mutilation there are less obvious practices that are directly related to development targets. For example, look at girl children in Turkey. There are still hundreds and thousands of girls who are not sent to school because there is a fear that they will choose their own husbands, and not accept marriages arranged by their parents – thus costing the family both honour and the bride price. Sexuality is a crosscutting issue that lies at the heart of disempowerment of women. So if women are to be empowered, work on sexuality is essential.⁵

Thus, it is not enough to assume that work on gender will take care of sexuality – or that working on sexuality will automatically address issues of gender. Sida's development co-operation work needs to address both.

What are Sexual Rights?

As there has been greater recognition of the importance of sexual rights, growing attention has been paid to developing clear definitions to guide advocacy and practice. Sweden's international policy on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which is based on the Beijing Platform for Action, affirms sexual rights as human rights, and that "...all people, irrespective of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, have a right to their own body and sexuality."⁶ The World Association for Sexual Health's Declaration of Sexual Rights further affirms that sexual rights are human rights, and that everyone has the right to a choice over their sexuality.⁷ It is enormously empowering to be able to recognise that we have these choices – including a choice not to be sexually active and not to marry, as well as to a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sex life and a choice of partner. Promoting, protecting and ensuring that sexual rights are respected is an enormous challenge. Realizing sexual rights requires a holistic, multi-

⁵ Jolly, S, 2006, 'Not So Strange Bedfellows: Sexuality and International Development', *Development* 49.1 <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/development/journal/v49/n1/full/1100208a.html>

⁶ Sweden's international policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006, p.8.

⁷ http://www.worldsexology.org/about_sexualrights.asp.

sectoral approach. This is why it is so important to make the connections between sexuality, human rights and development.

Why does Sexuality Matter?

From a rights perspective, sexuality matters because it is about power and without basic rights over our own bodies and over fundamental life choices, many other rights become simply unattainable. These life choices can be e.g. if, when and who to marry or enter into partnership with, and if, when and with whom to have children. Sexuality is important because sexual rights are everyone's rights. In some contexts, women may face genital mutilation, be denied a choice of partner, be subjected to coercive marital sex and restricted in their mobility in the name of protecting their reputation. Men may be forced to marry someone of prescribed age, class and ethnicity to maintain respectability for the family. Men and boys are also sexually abused, particularly in conflict or in prisons, and this abuse often goes unrecognised. Disabled people are often discriminated against also when it comes to their sexual rights. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and intersex people, or those perceived as such, face widespread discrimination and persecution.⁸

From *the perspective of the poor*, sexuality matters because for those who lack money and connections, the effects of societal and legal discrimination – such as sexual harassment and abuse or homophobic violence – may be much more difficult to mitigate than for those who are wealthier and well connected. A lack of sexual rights is in itself a dimension of poverty, producing a whole host of poverty-related outcomes, from social exclusion and physical insecurity to greater vulnerability to disease, hunger and death. In fact, The Maputo Plan of Action, unanimously adopted by Ministers of Health from 48 African countries in September 2006, and later endorsed by their Presidents, states that the Millennium Development Goals MDGs cannot be achieved without more work on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and 'Addressing poverty and addressing SRHR are mutually reinforcing'.⁹

Denial of sexual rights is a cause of poverty and poverty obstructs sexual rights. More needs to be done to make these linkages explicit in Sida's policies and guidelines.

⁸ http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=25657&language=en_US&searchWords=action%20plan%20gender%20based%20violence

⁹ http://www.unfpa.org/publications/docs/maputo.pdf_p3.

Sexuality and Sida Priority Areas

This section outlines some connections between sexuality and the Swedish government's three thematic priority areas, as well as the sexuality connections within other key sectors of Sida's work on health, education, infrastructure, agriculture and migration.

Human Rights, Democracy, and Political Participation

In addition to being essential to the realisation of rights, such as the right to livelihood, security, education, information, and gender equality, sexuality also has implications for democratic participation. Sexuality may be used as grounds for exclusion from community and government organisations and political bodies at different levels – for example because the person is seen as an unchaste woman, or stigmatised for being divorced or single, or an LGBT or Intersex person. This can pose obstacles for those with non-conforming sexualities to take part in government or civil society.

Sexual rights are part of already recognised human rights, and as such are part of Sida's mandate to support human rights. Although the term 'sexual rights' has not made it into UN conventions, some key principles have been endorsed¹⁰. Debates are currently active in UN bodies such as WHO, UNHRC and UNDP on inclusion of sexual rights issues. While recognizing that Sida's role is primarily development cooperation, it is also vital that Sida systematically interacts with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contribute to relevant sexuality, development and human rights debates underway in these institutions. Sida should also infuse Swedish external policy guidelines with the concepts and principles addressed in this concept paper. Sida also has a key role to play in supporting civil society organisations domestically and internationally in engaging in these debates.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and role in Development

Within Sweden's 2008 Budget Bill's thematic priority area of gender equality and women's empowerment and role in development, four

¹⁰ For example, the 1993 Vienna Declaration calls for elimination of sexual violence; the Platform of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994 declares that people should 'be able to have a satisfying and safe sex life'; and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action states that women's human rights include the right to 'have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality.'

specific focus areas have been identified: political participation, the economy, SRHR including HIV/AIDS, and security including gender based violence. Some sexuality implications for political participation have been outlined in the previous section on Human Rights and Democracy. The connections between sexuality and each of the three remaining focus areas are considered below.

The Economy

Women who conform to norms around sexuality, for example by agreeing to marry a man approved by their family, may be entering into a both economically and sexually unequal relationship. Women who do not conform, for example if they are considered unchaste, stay single, do not marry a man approved by their family/community, or have a same sex relationship or for just being a woman, may be excluded from economic opportunities. This becomes evident through labour market discrimination, exclusion from agricultural community support or land rights, and more general social or legal undermining of their confidence and support systems which will in turn affect their economic opportunities. Men who do not conform may also face such obstacles. Transgender individuals in many regions may have high levels of involvement in sex work, in part due to exclusion from other economic opportunities.

Sometimes the role of sex in economic exchange is clear-cut. In other instances, love and money are so entwined that to talk in terms of “transactional sex” is to deny the other dimensions of those relationships (Cornwall 2002). Care must be taken about transposing judgements from one cultural context onto another – such as labelling as “prostitutes” women whose lovers may give them gifts of money or who may take lovers in order to get some help with household expenses. For example, relationships in which young people are involved with their peers or with older people that include economic or another type of exchange should not be understood too simplistically. They may be experienced as abuse, but they may also include affection as well as exchange.

Economic exchange for sex is a reality, and one which must be addressed by programming on the informal sector, income generation, economic growth and poverty reduction.

SRHR Including HIV/AIDS

The label SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights), which emerged in Cairo and Beijing in the 1990s, represented a paradigm shift

from a concern about demographics to a concern about individual well-being. It shifted focus from only on health to an inclusion of rights as well, recognizing that sexuality is important in itself, and not only in relation to reproduction. In SRHR work in practice, female sexuality in particular tends to be subsumed under reproduction, with women's rights sidelined for mothers' health concerns. This tendency is reinforced by efforts to counter or mediate oppositional forces, as it may be more "acceptable" to talk about sexuality in relation to HIV prevention, for example, rather than in terms of rights in and of themselves. However, "...the framework of sexual and reproductive rights does not take into account 'both non-procreative heterosexual practices and non-heterosexual persons and their acts – and effectively removes them from the sphere of rights protection' associated with sexual and reproductive rights."¹¹ Similarly, several key HIV/AIDS issues have been sidelined, such as the relation of sexual pleasure to condom use, the importance of positive attitudes to bodies and sexuality, and the ability to negotiate safer sex.

For this reason, the need continues to emphasise sexuality and sexual rights as important in themselves and not only in connection with sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

Security, Including Gender Based Violence

In conflict, sexual violence against women often increases, and can lead to serious physical and psychological problems as well as contribute to the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Men may be generally less vulnerable to sexual violence than women, however they are not immune from sexual abuse. Sexual violence against both women and men has also been used as a weapon of war.

It is widely agreed that rape was a systematic rather than incidental part of the war [in Yugoslavia]. Women and girls were sexually assaulted in the presence of family members, sequestered in rape camps, forced into sexual servitude, intentionally impregnated, and subject to genital mutilation. There are also accounts of sexual abuses suffered by men and boys, including injuries to sex organs, castration, rape, and forced sex among imprisoned male relatives.¹²

¹¹ Ali Miller, cited in International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, 2007, Exploring the Potential of the UN Treaty Body System in Addressing Sexuality Rights, IRAW Asia Pacific Occasional Papers Series, No. 11., p.2.

¹² Ward, Jeanne, 2002, If not now, when? Addressing gender-based violence in refugee, internally displaced and post-conflict settings. The Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, p.81.

Sexual violence against men and boys not only traumatises them, but furthermore is understood as undermining their masculinity, and discrediting themselves, their community or nation. Sexual violence against women, apart from causing severe traumas, also shames them and their male partners and relatives. Women's chastity is valued, and women's bodies are seen as belonging not to themselves, but are instead repositories of honour for men and the community or nation. Transgender people worldwide report facing exceptionally high levels of violence, particularly sexual violence from police.

To effectively combat such violence, the underlying norms around sexuality and gender must be understood and challenged.

The Environment and Climate

Environmental degradation may make girls and women more vulnerable to sexual assault due to the need to travel further to source fuel, wood and water. Women may be more likely to drown than men in the case of floods, because they have not been taught to swim due to societal norms about exposing their bodies.

In areas affected by the tsunami, women and girls were not typically taught to swim. They were also more likely to be wearing clothing that weighed them down, such as long saris, and to look for children before running away. As a result, in many areas more women and girls drowned than men and boys.¹³

In regard to international humanitarian aid responses to the tsunami:

Female survivors were unable to freely discuss their needs with male relief workers. Large quantities of sanitary napkins in camp stores remained undistributed. It is taboo to talk of body-related issues like menstruation in India and Sri Lanka. The very need was therefore not openly expressed and remedial action was not attempted. The lack of sanitary clothing exposes women and girls to serious health hazards.¹⁴

¹³ Gender and Disaster Network, 2005: http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography_research/gdn/

¹⁴ Minutes of the 9th KOFF Gender Roundtable, 3 February 2005, "Post-tsunami: How can emergency aid be made gender-sensitive?" KOFF Center for Peacebuilding, Bern, Switzerland.

Health

Issues of discrimination and access apply throughout the health sector, not only in relation to SRHR. Unmarried women and young people may be assumed not to be having sexual relations and, as such, be denied information and services on sexual health. Transgender groups in India report that they are sometimes refused treatment of any kind simply because of the way they look, even though they have the money to pay.

When questions concerning sexuality are discussed in international contexts, the debate often focuses on problems and negative effects. In many cases, positive, life-affirming and life quality enhancing factors are ignored. The Swedish Government would prefer to emphasize that the goal of good sexual health is that all people shall have equal opportunities, rights and conditions to enable them to accept and have a positive attitude to their sexuality, and to decide over their own bodies (Sweden's SRHR policy 2006:7)

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so...It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases (International Convention on Population and Development, Programme of Action, Article 7.2)

The above statements suggest a broad view of sexual and reproductive health as including freedom and power to make decisions over one's own body, and positive attitudes to sexuality with possibilities for a satisfying sex life and enhanced personal relations. This implies going beyond issues of health systems and access to services, to consider self-esteem and empowerment, and how social values around sexuality might affect these concepts. It has been understood that to promote safer sexual behaviour and improved health of vulnerable groups such as women, transgender, young people, people living with HIV and AIDS, men who have sex with men, drug users and sex workers, much work is needed to build community and self-esteem, challenge stigma, and improve legal rights and justice.

Education, in Particular Sexuality Education

Sexuality related discrimination can affect access to and quality of education. For example, teenage mothers may lack the support to continue schooling. Girls may stay away from school during menstruation due to social stigma, lack of sanitary towels, and adequate school toilets. Feminine boys tend to be bullied more in school, drop out and end up in poverty. There are also reports of girls being ridiculed in mixed-sex sexuality education classes. And girls may face sexual harassment more generally.

Educational policies and schools themselves need to tackle these issues, while including all children and young people with age appropriate information. Sexuality education, in particular, can enable individuals, through information, skills building, and values clarification to make choices about their sexuality and be in charge of their sexual lives and build self-esteem. Sexuality education can be offered as a discrete activity or can be integrated into other activities, programs, and services depending on the context. Content and methodology are hugely important. Frequently, the messages that children and young people receive about sexuality centre around its negative aspects and evoke feelings of tremendous uncertainty, fear, shame or guilt. Most programmes deal only with the physical safety aspects of sexuality without acknowledging the fact that pleasure and intimacy is an equally important aspect of sexuality. Using a positive, affirming and rights based approach to sexuality, rather than one based on fear, can address both the pleasure and safety aspects of sexuality.

Infrastructure

Urban planning can create safer sexual neighbourhoods. Slums may have high levels of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), and as such might be suitable locations for sexual health clinics. Street lighting and policing mechanisms can help tackle sexual violence and encourage reporting. However, police may also be perpetrators of such violence, particularly against groups such as sex workers and LGBTI people. People with different kinds of disabilities are especially vulnerable to abuse and discrimination also due to infrastructural obstacles.

Water, sanitation and hygiene have dire implications for sexual health particularly for girls and women in relation to menstruation cleansing. Use of male or female condoms or other safer sex devices may be problematic where people have to fumble around for matches, hurricane lamps, or candles in order to insert and later dispose of these products.

Housing may be cramped and inadequate, allowing couples little time or space for sex, let alone safer sex. Women may be dependent on husbands for housing, and as such be forced to stay in the marital relationship whether they want to or not. LGBTI family members may be forced to hide their desires in order to be allowed to stay in the family home.

Agriculture

Sexual and domestic violence, relationship status, and power relations within the family, affect access to and control of resources such as land, water, or agricultural extension information, which in turn affects who benefits from agriculture. People excluded from families or communities due to sexuality related discrimination will also lose out on opportunities to benefit.

Individuals may use their sexuality as a means to access or maintain agricultural resources, through marriage, or for example a widow agreeing to widow inheritance so as to maintain access to her farmland. In-laws may use the threat of widow inheritance in order to try to take the land.

HIV/AIDS has in some cases reduced rural male populations, as has rural to urban migration,¹⁵ which can be motivated in part by the desire to seek new possibilities for sexual interactions not available in one's home village. Approximately one-third of all rural households in sub-Saharan Africa are now headed by women. Studies have shown that women heads of household tend to be younger and less educated than their male counterparts. They also generally have less land to work and even less capital and extra farm labour to work it with. However, in other circumstances, the contrary may be the case.

Migration

Norms around sexuality can influence migration: it may be less acceptable for women to move about and travel on their own due to ideas around chastity and reputation, so women may find it more difficult to migrate, or migrate shorter distances than men, internally, or within the region (as is the case in Africa). It may be the norm for women to move to husbands' families upon marriage. Single women, widows and divorcees may migrate to escape social stigma. Young women migrate to escape restrictions on their freedom, pressure to marry, or to remain

¹⁵ <http://www.fao.org/GENDER/en/agrib2-e.htm>

chaste until marriage. LGBT may migrate to escape family pressures, and/or state persecution, and to find LGBT communities in urban centres or abroad, and thereby reduce their isolation and personal vulnerability.

The broad category of trafficking is often used to cover a wide spectrum between forced and voluntary migrants. For example, some people are trafficked for sex work. However, many sex workers are not trafficked, and many people are trafficked for other kinds of labour such as domestic work. People trafficked for whatever purpose may suffer horribly. However much of the concern in current policy debates is that both sex workers and migrants are victims. Policies follow which continue to treat these groups as victims, rather than as people who may have the capacity to make their own decisions, and whose opinions should be respected. Accusations of trafficking are used to justify deportation of migrants, and denial of visas or entry into the country for young women. More constructive approaches to tackle the problem of trafficking include mobilising around 'migrant rights' and 'sex workers rights,' thus challenging forced labour where this is occurring, but not assume all are passive victims.¹⁶

¹⁶ See discussions by the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women www.gaatw.net

Recommendations

Based on the evidence and arguments presented in this concept paper, the following is recommended:

Influence International Policy

- *Increase efforts to take a leading role internationally, within the UN System, and in the European Union in the area of sexuality encompassing all relevant areas therein.*
- *Systematically interact with Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contribute to relevant sexuality, development and human rights debates underway in these institutions, as well as to infuse Swedish external policy guidelines with the concepts and principles addressed in this concept paper.*

Better Implement Sida Commitments

- *Recognize sexuality and its role in development by initiating a process of information dissemination and discussion within Sida around Sida's many policy commitments on sexuality and sexual rights, and how these fit together across sector borders. Aim to increase understanding, coherence and coordination, and improve quality of implementation, since sexuality concerns many dimensions that are cross-sectoral.*
- *Develop strategies and a follow up system to implement the Swedish policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2006).*
- *Explore the connections between sexuality and poverty reduction and programme outcomes in each sector. Commission research in this area.*
- *Establish a tracking mechanism within Sida for budget follow ups on sexuality and sexuality related issues.*

Support Civil Society and Foster Democratic Decision Making Processes

- *Create mechanisms to enable a range of sexuality and sexual rights organisations to access funding, including creating regionally administrated basket funds and building southern institutional capacity.*
- *Take the lead from Southern partners rather than imposing a Swedish model.* Recognise that Swedish experiences/models may sometimes be inspiring and worth learning from, and at other times be irrelevant or inappropriate.
- *Learn about the variety of local/national cultures, including those that promote more openness or equality in sexuality.* Support social anthropological research initiatives in order to fully appreciate the cultural diversities that influence sexual behaviour, identities and relationships. Support Sida staff to learn from the findings of this work, and use it to seek greater understanding of the complexities of working effectively to promote sexual rights in different cultural contexts.
- *Develop democratic decision making mechanisms which involve primary stakeholders and are genuinely inclusive, and locate decision making within the community/country/region.*

Support Positive Empowering Approaches to Sexuality

- *Support empowering, positive and pleasure inclusive approaches to sexuality with the purpose of promoting safer sex, encouraging men to seek pleasures of consensual sex, women to have more possibilities to communicate their own desires, and transgender people to find satisfaction and well-being.*
- *Support development and introduction of empowering and comprehensive sexuality education within country programmes whenever and wherever possible.*
- *Sponsor a high profile conference on 'Re-conceptualizing Sexuality' which would bring together some of the most reputed thinkers on this issue providing an opportunity for more in-depth thinking on how to address this issue in intelligent and effective ways.*

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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