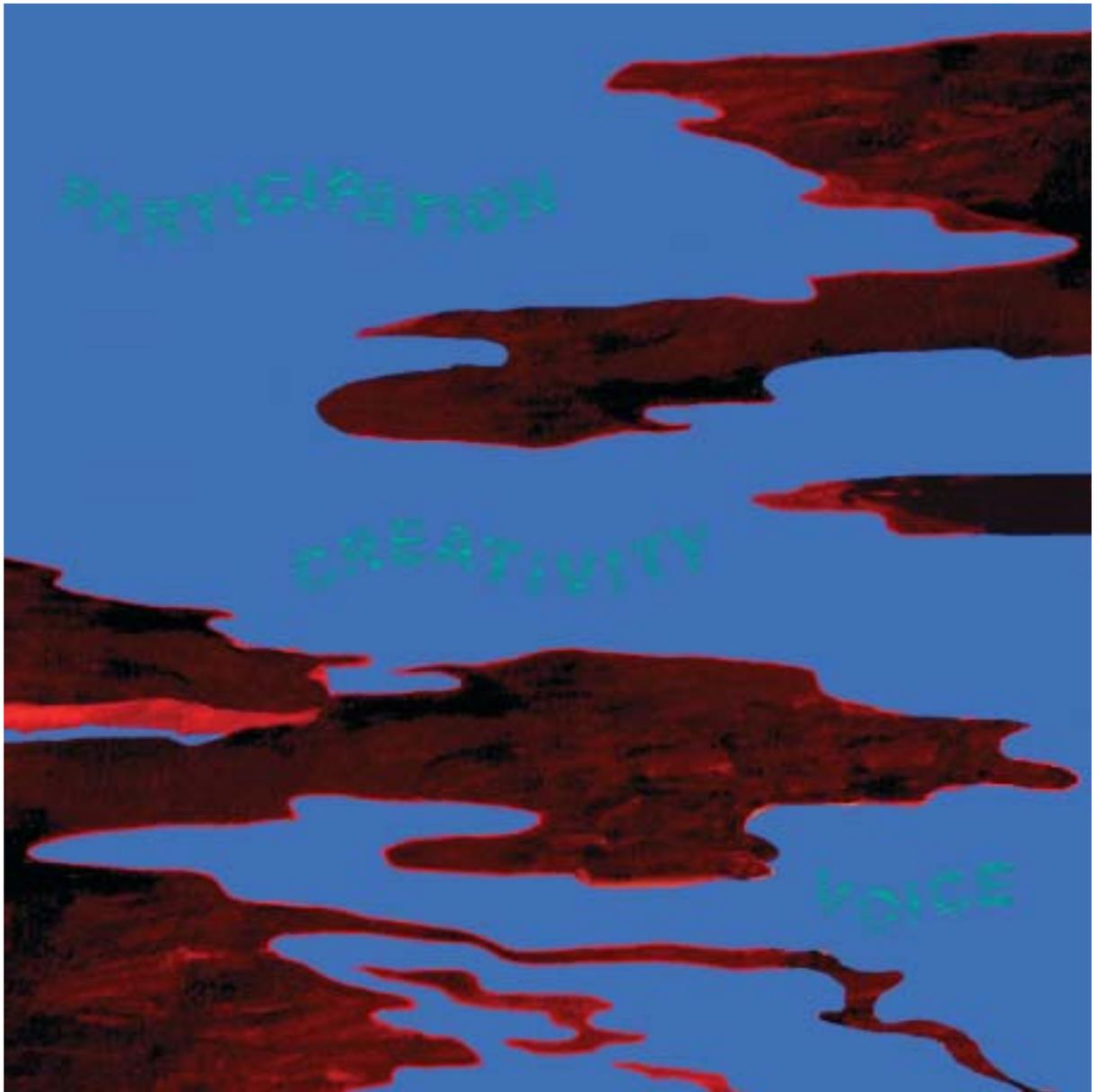




POLICY

Culture and Media

IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



SIDA POLICY INFO

The policy is a result of the Sida evaluation 04/38 entitled "Sida's work with culture and media", published in 2004, together with recommendations from Sida's departments, Swedish embassies and civil society organisations. The most important conclusions were the need for a sharper poverty focus and an elaboration of the role of media.

TITLE: Sida's policy for culture and media

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OWNER: The department for democracy and social development, the division for culture and media

VALIDITY: The policy replaces Sida's policy for culture ("Policy for Sida's international development cooperation in the area of culture", published 2000) and Sida's strategy document on the right to freedom of expression ("Freedom of Expression", published 1994).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: The policy is supported by web-based guidelines for media and culture support respectively.

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Culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, encompassing in addition to art and literature ("cultural expression"), lifestyles, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO, 2001). This is culture as a way of life, determining how we as individuals and societies perceive and understand our own identities, history and the present day and how we organize our experiences and lives together as human beings. Individuals and groups can be bearers of many different cultural identities. A culture is under constant change and interplays and overlaps with other cultures, independently of national or other artificial borders. Human beings take part in the shaping of cultures and, at the same time, are shaped by them themselves.

Democracy and poverty alleviation can never be guaranteed by politicians alone, be they popularly elected or self-appointed. In the end, it is a question of people's possibility of influencing their situation, claiming their rights and voicing their concerns.

Sida's work with culture and media is ultimately founded on the rights of individuals; the right to freedom of expression, the right to exercise cultural and creative activities, the right to access information, the right to knowledge, the right to transform knowledge into action and the right to free themselves from poverty.

The prominent role that culture and media interventions should play in Swedish development cooperation is not only a question of rights, but also to a large extent of effectiveness. These are interventions that can make a real difference.

It is when people living in poverty are really able to influence, participate and have access to a public arena, that injustices, hunger, conflicts and abuse of power can be averted.

Introduction

Working with culture and media is important in order to attain Sweden's development cooperation goal, namely *to contribute to an environment supportive of poor people's own efforts to improve their quality of life.*

Sida supports interventions in the areas of culture and media, that aim at the empowerment of people living in poverty and have as their starting point the right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation. These rights and freedoms are set out in international conventions and are mirrored in the rights' perspective of Sweden's policy for global development.

The starting point of all Sida's work is the perspective of poor people and the view that poverty not only means the lack of material resources, but also of power, opportunities, choice and security. Both culture and media play important roles in the development of democratic governance, the promotion of a democratic culture and the strengthening of civil society.

Culture and media can play crosscutting roles in Sida's work, in addition to direct contributions in the areas of culture and media. A culturally sensitive approach founded on an integrated poverty analysis is desirable in all development cooperation interventions. Culture and media interventions can also contribute to the promotion of participation, dialogue and communication in interventions in other development cooperation areas.

The purpose of the policy is threefold: to establish how supporting culture and media can contribute to the attainment of the goal of Swedish international development cooperation; to provide guidance for such

interventions and; *and be the basis for* increased collaboration with other areas of intervention within Swedish development cooperation (for example health, education and infrastructure). The policy is for the use of Sida officers and partners engaged in culture and media interventions.

Objectives and goal areas

The overall objective of Sida's culture and media interventions is to contribute to the empowerment of people living in poverty as regards power, influence and opportunities. This can in turn lead to enhanced social and economic resources and increased security for men and women,¹ girls and boys living in poverty.

Goal areas

This policy singles out five goal areas for culture and media support. Each area has an objective and includes examples of what Sida supports:

1. Cultural freedom and cultural diversity
2. Freedom of expression and access to means of expression
3. Access to information and ideas
4. Conflict prevention and increased tolerance
5. Local production, economic growth and employment

Cultural freedom and cultural diversity

Objective:

To contribute to an environment supportive of people's enjoyment of cultural freedom and cultural diversity.

Sida supports:

- the promotion of oral tradition and a reading culture
- the development of forms for performing arts and storytelling
- the preservation and use of cultural heritage
- the development of library systems and archives
- the promotion of local cultural activities

Media means the press, radio, TV, internet based and wireless communication. Free and independent media means media independent from government control, conveying diverse points of view in society and enabling journalists to spread knowledge and debate in society. Media is for the larger part seen as a tool for communication and for disseminating information, opinions, ideas and cultural expressions. There are also cultural expressions that are media orientated, such as TV documentaries, soap operas and news reports. When referring to media as a business sector, the term media industry is used.

Cultural expressions are material or non-material manifestations of cultures, for example in the form of art, literature, music, dance, theatre, film, storytelling etc. Such manifestations have a cultural value and can have an economic value. Cultural expressions are also tools for communication, information and public debate. Cultural goods and services are bearers of cultural expressions.

Cultural activities are actions devoted to cultural expressions.

Culture is also understood as a sector area for policy intervention and administration, which in this policy is termed cultural sector.

When referring to culture as a business sector, the term cultural industry is used.

Freedom of expression and access to means of expression

Objective:

To contribute to an environment supportive of people's freedom of expression of opinions and ideas.

Sida supports:

- the development and use of local independent media in the interest of the public
- the production and use of cultural expressions
- the development of open arenas and channels for cultural activities, public debate and exchange of ideas and information, at all levels and across social and geographic boundaries
- the development of legal and societal structures facilitating media pluralism and a diversity of cultural expressions

Access to information and ideas

Objective:

To contribute to an environment supportive of people's increased access to information and ideas from a diversity of sources.

Sida supports:

- increased access to cultural expressions that disseminate information in different ways
- increased access to public information
- the development of public service media
- the development of media regarding independence, integrity, professional norms, ethics, scrutiny and accountability

Conflict prevention and increased tolerance

Objective:

To contribute to an environment where people live in peace and security.

Sida supports:

- the development of conflict sensitivity of local media and the dissemination of accurate and relevant information (including humanitarian information)

- the use of cultural expressions in the contact and dialogue between parties to promote peace and/or reconciliation
- the active participation of both men and women in public discourse before, during and after conflicts
- the protection and restoration of cultural heritage
- cultural activities focused on diminishing mental and physical suffering

Local production, economic growth and increased employment

Objective:

To contribute to an environment supportive of strengthening people's economic resources.

Sida supports:

- the development of local culture and media production, distribution and sales
- the promotion of creativity and entrepreneurship
- the promotion of conditions for the development of companies/management skills
- the protection of intellectual property rights

Framework

The international legal framework

The right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation are universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the international human rights conventions.² Cultural liberty, cultural diversity and media pluralism are principles based on these rights. People's enjoyment of these freedoms and rights are both means and ends for Sida's culture and media interventions

There is a positive correlation between enhanced freedom of expression and diminished poverty.³ *The right to freedom of expression* includes the right to seek, receive, express and disseminate opinions, ideas and information without interference, either orally or in writing in the form of art or through any other media of choice.⁴ The right

Sida recognises:

- culture has a value in itself worth promoting and protecting
- the positive impact of culture and media support in poverty alleviation
- the importance of taking into account socio-cultural aspects in all development cooperation interventions
- the strong potential of culture and media as components in other areas of development cooperation

Public information is information released by the authorities to the citizens in order for them to know their rights and obligations, to know about publicly financed services and to participate in democratic governance.

to freedom of expression is a precondition for *media pluralism*, which reciprocally are the foundation for a strong and functioning media. This facilitates a broad spectrum of information, ideas and opinions in society.

The right to freedom of expression is strongly linked to *the right of women and men to participate* in decisions that concern them, in order to function as proper members of society.⁵

Culture flows through all aspects of the lives of human beings and is decisive for how societies function and develop. *Cultural rights* are based on the recognition of culture as having a value in itself worth protecting. Complemented by the right to freedom of expression, cultural rights imply that all individuals and groups of individuals have the right to express and enjoy their own and other cultures.⁶ At the same time, individuals and different groups, in their enjoyment of cultural rights, must respect the human rights of others. *Cultural liberty* means the right to choose political, ethnic, religious or sexual orientation and gender identity without being exposed to oppression and discrimination.⁷ *Cultural diversity* is conditioned by cultural liberty and signifies a society where different cultures co-exist on equal terms, which is a precondition for peace and security and functioning democratic governance. Cultural diversity increases the range of choices available to people and inspires innovation and creativity.⁸

The Sida framework – rights and poor people’s perspectives on development

Sweden’s Policy for Global Development⁹ establishes the primary goal for all Swedish development cooperation: *to contribute to an environment supportive of poor people’s own efforts to improve their quality of life*. This goal identifies women, men, girls and boys living in poverty as active subjects and agents of change. Poor people’s perspectives and a rights perspective are starting points in all Sida’s work. Poverty means not only the lack of material resources but also of power, opportunities, choice and security. Thus, poverty also means the lack of human rights, among them the right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation. Furthermore, these rights are fundamental to the development of *democratic and gender equal governance*, which is a central condition for poverty alleviation.

Culture and media can reduce poverty

The inherent value and central importance of culture in human and societal development are alone reason enough to support cultural freedom and cultural diversity in Sida's partner countries. However, it is important to take account of the explosive force of culture and that cultural differences can give rise to conflicts and discrimination.

Culture and media – from a rights and democracy perspective

Sida recognises that culture and media are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Media and cultural expressions are of central importance in relation to freedom of expression and the possibility of communication processes to change societies and people's living conditions. Cultural expressions can contribute to mitigating corruption and increase the knowledge and freedom of choice of people, in similar ways as media. In addition to its powerful impact, media in a more traditional sense (the press, radio and television) has a special position as a cornerstone of democracy and is often regulated by law. At the same time, it is important to note how power and ownership structures can counteract the investigative task of media.

Culture and media support – the dimensions of poverty

Sida's culture and media support shall focus on contributing to the empowerment of women, men, girls and boys living in poverty as regards power, influence and opportunities, through their right to freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation. The interventions shall target the social, political, peace and conflict and economic dimensions of poverty.¹⁰



*This figure shows that if culture and media support is provided, based on human rights, cultural liberty, cultural diversity and media pluralism, and focuses on **strengthening resources** that can **empower** people and communities as regards **power, influence and opportunities**, then **societal changes** may take place that lead to **poverty reduction**.*

Democratic governance seeks to promote the power and influence of people living in poverty in society through a democratic political process characterised by participation, equality in dignity and rights, transparency and accountability.

The social dimensions of poverty – access to culture has positive effects on both the mental and physical wellbeing of human beings. Participation in cultural activities strengthens human resources such as creativity, knowledge and cultural identity. It creates a positive sense of being, dignity and an understanding of other cultures and ways of thinking. Cultural activities can also create social relations and networks between human beings and contribute to participation in civil society.

The political dimensions of poverty – independent and professional media enhance access to information, which contributes to critical thinking and social and political awareness. Open and independent culture and media channels and arenas create platforms for expression and exchange of ideas, thoughts and interpretations of reality, which is a precondition for a pluralistic and thriving civil society and a democratic culture. Public debate and the forming of opinion are hereby facilitated, where people living in poverty can make their voices heard and increase their participation and influence in society. Culture and media channels facilitate scrutiny of those in power, exposure of corruption and demand for accountability.

The peace and conflict dimensions of poverty – media can play a crucial role in conflict prevention, by counteracting the spread of rumours and providing trustworthy information depicting different interpretations of the conflict. Access to a multitude of cultural expressions, both in peacetime and in connection with conflicts, counteracts stereotypes based on for example ethnicity and gender. Cultural expressions can also be a means of communication when media is controlled and official channels are closed (cultural diplomacy). Cultural activities in conflict areas contribute to the psychosocial processing of trauma and creates “spaces of normality” and humanity in extreme situations.

The economic dimensions of poverty - the production, sales and distribution of cultural products and services (including cultural tourism) create possibilities of generating income, opportunities for employment and economic growth. Creativity, nurtured by cultural diversity, is in itself a driving force for entrepreneurship and economic development. A vibrant media industry can also offer employment and business opportunities and boost economic growth in other sectors, for example, through advertisements and market information. Media can also play an important role in mitigating corruption and creating a sound investment climate.

Culture and media – crosscutting roles

A culturally sensitive approach in all interventions

Broad knowledge of specific, culturally related and social conditions in Sida's partner countries, such as attitudes, behaviour, hierarchic systems and power structures, strengthens the potential for effective development cooperation. In order to attain local ownership and participation in interventions, in-depth knowledge about the local social and cultural conditions is imperative. Cultural planning and cultural mapping are ways of applying a culturally sensitive approach.¹¹ A culturally sensitive approach can only be attained in dialogue with the relevant partners.

Culture and media in other areas

Freedom of expression and a diversity of independent, free media and cultural expressions are goals in themselves. But they are also a means of contributing to informing and spreading knowledge about and realising other human rights.

Independent media, cultural expressions, meeting places and networks have the potential of contributing to poverty alleviation in the long term, within the area of “communication for development”¹². These interventions should be founded upon the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and accountability. They should emphasize that people living in poverty are the main protagonists both in the communication itself and in the process of changing the society in which they live. Examples of areas for communication for development are health, education and infrastructure.

In the work with national poverty reduction strategies (PRS), the importance of the participation of the citizens is often emphasized. Through their capacity of disseminating information and forming opinion in connection with these strategies, independent media have an important potential of contributing to popular participation and increased ownership.

Governments also have a responsibility towards its citizens to inform about public affairs and activities. Support should be granted to information interventions connected to reform programmes, which could be financed by budget and sector programme support. However, it is important that such support does not run the risk of violating the editorial independence of media (for example through news articles that are “bought”).

Ways of working – practical considerations

Target groups

Sida's culture and media support is focused on individuals living in poverty. The target group for the support is opinion forming culture and media practitioners, which have a central importance in initiating creative processes and bringing about change.

Forms for cooperation

So far, culture and media interventions have been mostly project support based, financed by global, regional or bilateral budget lines. Regional and bilateral interventions are guided by strategies that are developed in cooperation with the partner countries. Contract financed technical cooperation, CTC, is a possible form of support between equal partners.

Sida aims at establishing more comprehensive, long-term programmes that include different levels of society, such as legal regulation, policy-making and institution building, local and regional networks.

Sector programme support is possible in countries that have a clear culture policy, based on a rights perspective. Culture and media interventions that in different ways can provide citizens with information and contribute to accountability, is an important complement to general budget support or sector budget support within other sectors.

Sida also supports independent national and regional culture and media funds, which strengthens local ownership.

Methods

The interventions should be capacity building, which includes education of professional actors in the culture and media areas, focusing on the interests of poor people, the development of professional and interest organisations and of local research capacity.

Cultural exchange and "twinning" activities between actors originating in donor countries and actors in partner countries can be an effective and sustainable way of creating dialogue and opening up arenas for the free flow of ideas and opinions. Sida supports increased cooperation between partners in the South.

Cooperation partners

Sida's partners in culture and media cooperation consist of actors at a local, national, regional and global level; within civil society, the private sector and public organisations. Sida utilises the experience and competence of Swedish actors and maintains a continuing partnership and method development with such actors.

This policy emphasises the importance of strengthening local par-

ticipation and influence. Therefore, it is important that partners and participants in culture and media interventions are genuinely present and active in the partner countries. Special attention should be given to the members of civil society that are counter-forces to regimes that do not comply with the universal human rights regime.

Follow-up and evaluation

Culture and media interventions are often complex, crosscutting and long term. Monitoring and evaluation should start already before a potential intervention, in the form of a baseline study. Each intervention should have an integrated follow-up system. Evaluations of culture and media interventions often involve a mixture of quantitative and qualitative examinations, where changes in people's knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and actions are assessed.

Implementation

Supporting the implementation of this policy are separate web-based guidelines for media and culture support. The Information Department, INFO, deals with dialogue and strategic communication within the development cooperation.

Notes

- ¹ A gender perspective should be applied in order to highlight the different preconditions for women and men's participation in the areas of culture and media.
- ² Inter alia the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the convention on the rights of the child, (WCPRC).
- ³ Article 19 of ICMPR and Amartya Sen "Development as freedom".
- ⁴ Art 19 of ICCPR.
- ⁵ Article 25 of ICCPR and article 12 in the convention on the rights of the child, (WCPRC).
- ⁶ Article 15 of ICESCR, article 27 and article 19 of ICCPR.
- ⁷ The notion of cultural liberty was brought forward by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report 2004.
- ⁸ Cultural diversity is protected in two international instruments; the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).
- ⁹ Adopted by the Parliament of Sweden in December 2003.
- ¹⁰ See Perspectives on Poverty p 29 f. Sida recognises the important link between cultural diversity and biodiversity and the positive effects that culture and media support can have on the environmental dimension of poverty reduction. However, this aspect is not specifically addressed in this Policy.
- ¹¹ The UNFPA has developed practical methods in this area.
- ¹² Communication for development is a general term for various communication strategies aiming at contributing to development.

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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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