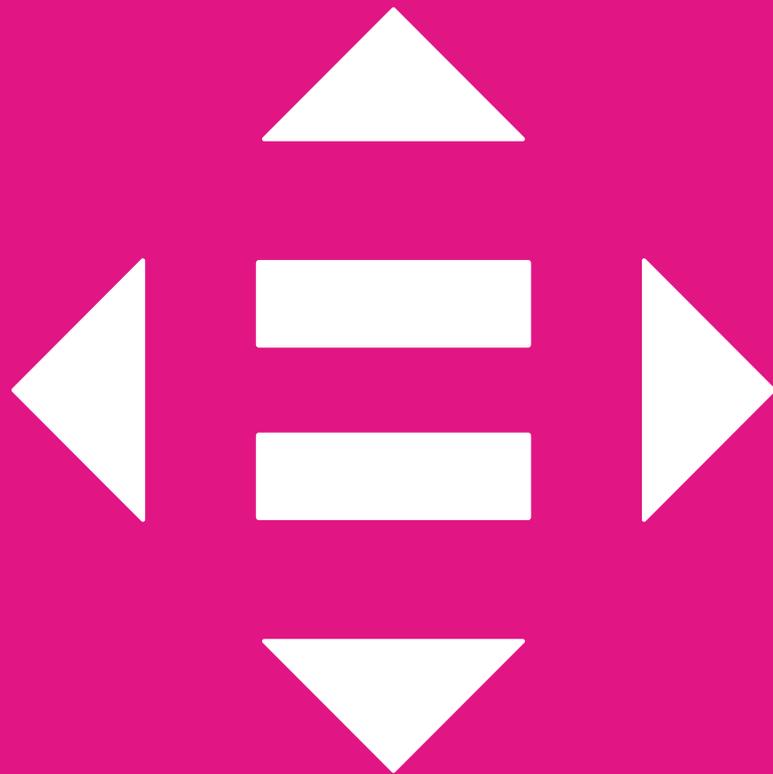


10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



SWEDEN AND REDUCED INEQUALITIES

MAIN MESSAGES

- **Progressively realizing universal social protection.** Social protection is a human right and an indispensable tool to alleviate poverty, tackle inequalities and social exclusion, as well as to promote equal opportunities for all regardless of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. Universal social protection, including floors, is key to achieve the vision of leaving no one behind and ensuring sustainable and inclusive social and economic development.
- **Strengthening inclusive and sustainable economic growth that benefits all sections of society.** Investments in human capital through high quality and equal education and healthcare, strong social protection systems, economic empowerment of women and persons with disabilities, an adaptive labour market and an effective social dialogue are key elements in fostering inclusive growth and ensuring that no one is left behind. On a national level, gender equality, transparency, anti-corruption, democratic accountability and the rule of law are key enablers of inclusive growth. Strong institutional capacities at national, regional and global level are important, as well as free and fair trade.
- **Enhancing cooperation to enable safe, orderly and regular migration based on sustainability and human rights.** Voluntary migration is part of human development with potential for economic and social development for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination. Forced migration or displacement, on the other hand, entails vast humanitarian needs and puts people at risk of falling into and remaining in poverty. Addressing the root causes of forced migration and displacement is important in achieving sustainable migration solutions. In addition, international and multilateral cooperation, as well as enhanced sharing of responsibility, are required to enable safe, orderly and regular migration and also to address both sexual and other forms of exploitation.

SWEDEN ON TARGET FOR SDG 10: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND – A COMMITMENT TO REDUCING INEQUALITIES

Leaving no one behind is central to the work on reducing inequalities in society, both at home and globally. Although Sweden is one of the most equal countries in the world, reducing inequality still remains a challenge due, for example, to demographic trends, developments in the capital markets, technological advances and socio-economic factors.

Sweden at work nationally

Sweden has a long history of a strong welfare system that has been developed over decades and continues to evolve. It includes publicly funded education systems, subsidised preschools, social services such as health care, affordable child care and elderly care, as well as social security for people in need and a social insurance system providing e.g. sickness insurance, unemployment benefits, child allowance, pensions and paid parental leave for both parents. Since 2015, action has been taken to further develop some of these areas. Child allowance and maintenance support, for example, have been increased. Also,

a review of the Swedish pension system, with a specific focus on decreasing the pension gap between men and women, has been carried out and resulted in an action plan to tackle this challenge. The Government has also launched a programme of measures for better health and reduced sickness absence from work, which has resulted in a halt of the rising number of people on sick leave. Also, the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) has adopted a public health bill for good and equitable public health for the entire population and to close avoidable health gaps within a generation. Sweden works broadly to promote inclusive economic growth. The Government has instructed a special committee to present

measures to increase economic equality and social mobility.

In addition, Sweden closely monitors the development of income distribution. For example, every year the Spring Budget Bill contains an analysis of the impact of government reforms on income distribution. In recent years, Sweden has experienced increasing income inequalities. The Swedish model aims to combat these trends and to ensure that national well-being is distributed equally across the population and throughout the country.

Discrimination must be counteracted and prevented. Swedish law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age. The Swedish Government has adopted a national plan to combat and prevent discrimination, racism and similar forms of hostility and hate crime. In recent years, several reforms have been introduced to secure equal rights for LGBT persons. However, LGBT persons, in particular transgender persons, still face challenges in Sweden.

Men's violence against women is one of the ultimate expressions of inequality between women and men. To tackle this issue, the Government has launched a ten-year strategy to end men's violence against women – including honour-related violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.

In 2016, the Government adopted a national strategy for human rights aimed at establishing a platform for continued work to promote full respect for Sweden's international human rights commitments. Also, as a step towards protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, the Government has presented a new goal for national disability policy with a clearer rights perspective. Sweden has also decided to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights

of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law. In 2019, Sweden celebrates an important landmark for children's rights; forty years ago, in 1979, Sweden became the first country in the world to prohibit all corporal punishment of children. The ban has had a huge impact on the Swedish people's attitudes and behaviour towards violence against children.

Sweden at work globally

More equitable global development has long been the goal of Sweden's development policy. The policy is based on a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development, and applies to all policy areas. Sweden's international development cooperation has a strategic role to play in this context and contributes to the reduction of inequalities across several areas – including health, education, social protection, trade, democracy, gender equality and human rights – through many channels, and in partnerships with a broad range of actors.

The aim of Sweden's development cooperation is to improve living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression, including migrants. It involves, among other things, tackling economic, social and political inequalities. Poverty is viewed not only as a shortage of material assets but also as a lack of influence over one's own situation, choices and safety, and as a lack of respect for the full range of human rights.

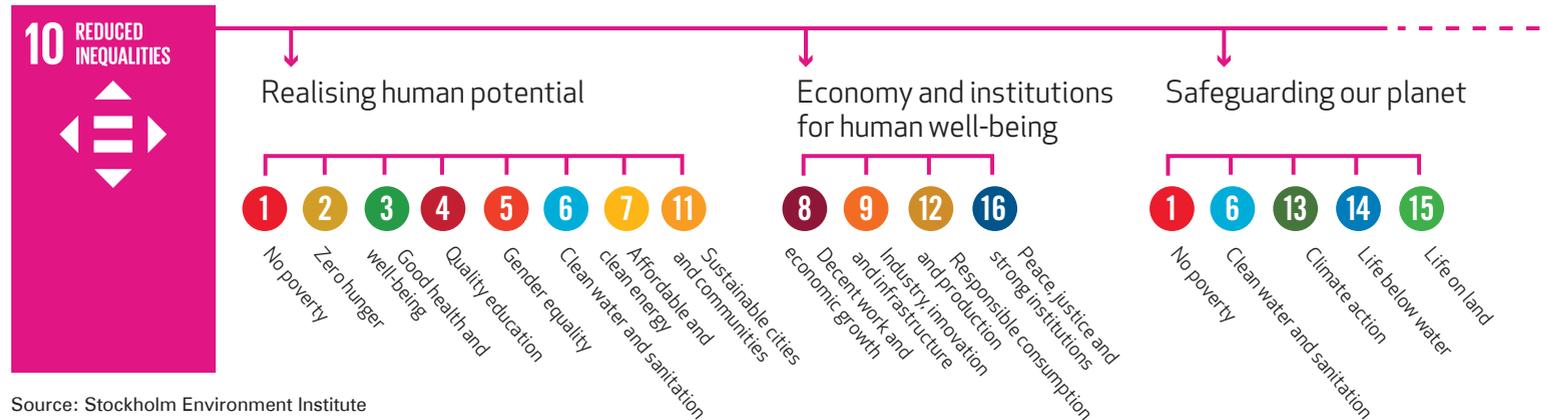
Sweden actively supports a stronger voice in international economic and financial institutions for underrepresented low- and middle-income countries, while protecting the voice and influence of the least developed countries.

Sweden is also working with partners to improve global financial markets and institutions by promoting fair competition and regulatory convergence. To reduce remittance costs, the

Swedish Consumer Agency has launched 'Money from Sweden', a free online service providing simple comparisons of fees and transfer times.

In recent years, asylum and migration policy has been high on the agenda both in Sweden and globally. In the negotiations of the Global Compact for Migration, the Swedish Government prioritised issues such as protecting migrants' human rights, facilitating safe, orderly and regular mobility of migrants, addressing irregular migration, ensuring effective return and reintegration as well as improving international coordination and governance. Sweden has long been a driving force for better international co-operation on migration and has worked actively for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to be incorporated into the United Nations. In Swedish development cooperation, support has been given both to addressing the root causes of irregular and forced migration, promoting human rights for migrants and enhancing the positive impacts of migration on development.

Connecting the dots¹



Source: Stockholm Environment Institute

SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries – is a broad and encompassing goal. It involves progress towards multiple dimensions of poverty eradication: narrowing income gaps, empowering marginalised groups, broadening opportunities and eliminating discrimination. SDG 10 tackles issues at the very core of the 2030 Agenda, and progress has implications for many other SDGs.

Realising human potential

While many developing country economies have grown impressively since the start of this century, inequalities continue to grow.² Reducing these inequalities – both nationally and internationally – is key to ending poverty (SDG 1) and essential to achieving gender equality (SDG 5). Reducing inequality means increasing economic security and the political voice of the poor. It also means promoting policies and solutions that have linkages with other SDGs, such as ending hunger (SDG 2), ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing (SDG 3), ensuring equal access to education and information (SDG 4), to water and sanitation (SDG

6) and to sustainable energy (SDG 7), and making cities and human settlements sustainable (SDG 11).

Economy and institutions for human well-being

Efforts to reduce inequality would be strongly supported by industrialisation and economic growth, if growth were inclusive and sustainable, based on achieving full and decent employment (SDGs 8 and 9) and coupled with adequate social protection systems. Economic growth and industrialisation do not automatically reduce inequality. Shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) can contribute to reducing inequality, if this does not imply increased prices putting goods and services out of reach for the poor. More peaceful societies that are more accountable and inclusive (SDG 16) will reinforce the

advancement of the poor and their political power to define and design institutions that support their welfare.

Safeguarding our planet

Humanity has not yet managed to decouple rising living standards from growing environmental pressures. By directing more of the benefits of expanding global economic activity towards the world's poor, more rapid and steady progress towards socio-economic goals would be possible. This would reduce inequality and lift more people out of poverty (SDG 1), while at the same time potentially reducing global environmental damage from greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 13) and degradation of marine and water resources (SDGs 14 and 6) and terrestrial ecosystems on which all life depends (SDG 15).

¹ This section is based on analysis by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). For more information on SEI's SDG work, visit the following website: <https://www.sei.org/sdgs-agenda-2030/>

² Between 2000 and 2016, incomes per capita in OECD countries grew by USD 6 003, while incomes in non-OECD countries grew by USD 4 991 (incomes measured in constant 2011 dollars, purchasing power parity basis, as provided by the World Bank World Development Indicators, <https://databank.worldbank.org/data>).



Sweden and empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Sweden is well placed to implement the 2030 Agenda. The peaceful and democratic conditions that have long characterised our country, our openness to collaboration and cooperation with others, at home and abroad, strong local self-governance and a dynamic business climate have combined to create a solid foundation for peace, sustainable development and the welfare of our people.

However, Sweden is also working hard to address existing inequalities; it is committed to reducing income disparities, providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities, LGBTI people, minorities and newly arrived immigrants, achieving equity in health services and providing equal opportunities for lifelong learning throughout the country. Segregation and housing affordability are growing challenges in urban areas. Despite explicit feminist policies, women and men in Sweden are still not paid equally for equal work. Sweden still has a great deal of work to do.

To tackle these challenges, new partnerships are being formed and there is a growing awareness of the urgency to act now. Swedish municipalities and regions are committed to sustainable development. Large parts of the Swedish business community see sustainability as a competitive advantage. Sustainability is increasingly being integrated into the core of business models and is driving new innovations. Trade unions are pushing for social dialogue and decent working conditions. Civil

society is paving the way through its own efforts and by pushing decision-makers to act. More than ever before, young people are recognised as key to transformative change, and the large and growing number of older people are actively contributing to society in many different ways. The Swedish research community contributes cutting-edge research on sustainable development. More than 60 Swedish government agencies have signed a joint declaration of intent to implement the 2030 Agenda and are now finding new ways to collaborate to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sweden's ambition is to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation involves a step-by-step approach towards a modern and sustainable welfare state, nationally and as part of the global system. Multilateral cooperation is perhaps more important than ever in the modern era. Sweden's development cooperation focuses specifically on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. Sweden's ODA amounts to 1 per cent of its gross national income (GNI). Sweden is active in many different international organisations and international financial institutions and wholeheartedly supports the ambitions for reform and modernisation of the UN system so that its operations contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Website: www.government.se
Contact details: h1pf@gov.se