

LOCALISATION PROCESS OF SDGs AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SWEDEN

Framework Agreements and
Idea-Driven Partnerships

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that need to be achieved by all countries across the globe, aiming - among others - to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.¹ National governments play an essential role in the realisation of SDGs by way means of providing the adequate legal framework, financial support and policy regulations able to tackle each of these goals.² They also play a decisive role in the process of localising the realisation of SDGs. That is to say, national governments must take into consideration the local realities - closer to where people's lives take place - in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, “from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress.”³

Moreover, the implementation of SDGs at local levels does not take place in a legal vacuum. National and international human rights frameworks cannot be disregarded when realising SDGs. States should be guided by human rights norms, principles and values when designing policies and taking actions towards the implementation of SDGs. In other words, as mentioned elsewhere, “human rights based approaches (HRBAs) need to be present at every level of SDGs implementation, particularly where human rights are most often compromised, for instance, when affecting marginalised and vulnerable sectors of society.”⁴

Broad and meaningful participation of civil society in local governance is a key aspect of a democratic society. In this sense, the introduction of HRBAs in the implementation of SDGs at local levels clearly indicates the need to take into consideration the views of local communities and relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process. In fact, human rights-based policies and actions aiming for the realisation of SDGs, would be better achieved if national governments, local authorities, and civil society actors cooperate and build common platforms that could facilitate the realisation of these goals.

¹ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a voluntary plan of action agreed upon by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016, with 17 SDGs, and 169 targets (accompanied by 230 indicators). The agenda sought to emphasise the role of local governments, as well as shift international actors' focus on “governance”--which incorporates the private sector and civil society actors as significant members of governing--rather than focusing exclusively on “government” itself. For more information on the Agenda and the SDGs, see <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

² See Fuentes A. *et al.*, “Localising Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights. Building Collaborative Initiatives and Synergies between Local Authorities (LAs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Sweden, Norway, Åland Islands and North-West Russia”, *Research & Policy Brief, Raoul Wallenberg Institute*, June 2021, p. 3. Available: <https://rwi.lu.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Common-project-brief-2021-06-28-final.pdf>

³ UNGA, “Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 Agenda, The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet”.

⁴ See, Fuentes *et al.*, *supra* note 2, p. 3.

Therefore, in order to illustrate the role that local and municipal governments and civil society actors play in the realisation of SDGs at local levels in Sweden, an assessment of the existing initiatives and frameworks that encourage or enable collaborations and synergies between local authorities (LAs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) was conducted in 2020. This research was part of the *Turning the Sustainable Development Goals into Reality: A Human Rights Based Approach to Localising Agenda 2030* research project. The analysis focused on identifying promising initiatives and frameworks that are able to build synergies between these key stakeholders in the implementation of SDGs at local levels, in particular, SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), from a HRBA.

After analysing a variety of relevant initiatives throughout the country, two initiatives are highlighted due to their promising contribution in facilitating interactions and synergies between LAs and CSOs in the implementation of the SDGs at local levels: Framework Agreements (Överenskommelser med Idéburen Sektor) and Idea-driven partnerships (Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap, or IOP).

2. AGENDA 2030 AND LOCALISING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN SWEDEN

Since the adoption of the Agenda 2030, there has been growing awareness that local governments are essential members in the process of implementing the SDGs.⁵ Many issues identified in the SDGs fall under the scope of action and jurisdiction provided to cities and regions, and therefore, the necessary investments used to tackle inequalities must be channeled through the regional and local levels.⁶ In addition, participatory policymaking and a bottom-up process that includes non-state actors are seen as one of the central elements of the Agenda 2030, especially of its localisation process.⁷

Effective local governance can contribute to the inclusion of local stakeholders, thereby prompting broad-based ownership, commitment, and accountability among local actors.⁸ Civil society has therefore emphasised the importance of enabling different local actors to influence policy action, such as non-governmental organisations, businesses and citizens.⁹ Moreover, despite the essential role of local governments in this process, localisation does not depend solely on them; rather, localisation also relies on the political leadership of national governments.¹⁰ National governments are responsible for creating the adequate policy environments and providing financial support that will encourage and enable effective local action and partnerships.¹¹ In sum, the effective

⁵ According to the OECD, at least 105 of the 169 SDGs targets will not be reached without proper engagement and coordination with local and regional governments.

OECD, “A Territorial Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals: Synthesis report”, OECD Urban Policy Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020, https://www-oecd-ilibrary-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/urban-rural-and-regional-development/a-territorial-approach-to-the-sustainable-development-goals_e86fa715-en, [Last Accessed 2021-03-10].

⁶ As highlighted by the UN Secretary General in the road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet.

UNGA, “Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 Agenda, The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet”, A/69/700, 4 December 2014.

⁷ OECD, “A Territorial Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals: Synthesis report”.

⁸ Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments & UNDP & UN-Habitat, “Roadmap for Localising the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level”, 2016, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/commitments/818_11195_commitment_ROADMAP%20LOCALISING%20SDGS.pdf, [Last Accessed 2021-03-10].

⁹ Oxfam & ARCO, “Where Change Happens: Local Governance to Tackle Multidimensional Poverty and Inequality”.

¹⁰ Sustainable Development Solutions Network & Bertelsmann Stiftung, “Sustainable Development Report 2020: The Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-19”, Cambridge University Press, 2020, https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report.pdf, [Last Accessed 2021-03-10].

¹¹ Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments & UNDP & UN-Habitat, “The Roadmap for Localising the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level”.

implementation of rights requires collaboration between all relevant actors, that is, national, local, and municipal governments, as well as civil society members.

Moreover, because a human rights based-approach (HRBA) requires greater accountability from States, the implementation of the SDGs through a HRBA may increase the effectiveness of the Agenda 2030. Human rights are legally binding and count with a robust monitoring system at global, regional and national levels.¹² The current Agenda 2030, however, fails to hold States accountable because it is not legally binding.¹³

In the context of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 regionally, Sweden has taken steps in order to mainstream the SDGs in national and sub-national development policies. For instance, Sweden has made high level statements and participated in the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.¹⁴ Further, Sweden has created a specific delegation to analyse Sweden's implementation progress,¹⁵ and also adopted a National Action Plan recognising local and municipal governments role in implementing Agenda 2030.¹⁶ Furthermore, regional governments have also created frameworks for the realisation of the SDGs.

In short, even though half of Sweden's regions and municipalities have declared they adopt the SDGs as a tool in their sustainability work, SDG implementation in Sweden is a recent phenomenon and key state-actors are still in the process of developing the necessary tools, frameworks and policies. Among the promising initiatives undertaken by local and regional governments, this paper will analyse below the contribution made by the creation of collaborative frameworks and platforms between LAs and CSOs in the localisation process of the SDGs' implementation.

¹² Dianova International, "A Human Rights-Based Approach to the SDGs: Transforming Goals and Aspirations into Rights: the Role of Human Rights Systems in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development", 2019, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SDGS/2030/Dianova_International_Human_Rights.pdf. [Last Accessed 2021-07-25].

¹³ Because the Agenda is not a formal treaty, it is not legally binding on member states. However, the UN advances that "countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework achieving the 17 goals." Further, countries will be responsible to follow-up and review the SDGs implementation over the next 15 years, according to the UN. See <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda-retired/> [Last Accessed 2021-07-25].

¹⁴ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

¹⁵ Ministry of Finance, Dir 2016:18, "Genomförande av Agenda 2030 för hållbar utveckling", 2016, <https://www.regeringen.se/494c40/contentassets/ce2d7e16d5264f869ac09ffeb280f8b4/genomforande-av-agenda-2030- for-hallbar-utveckling-dir.-201618>, [accessed 2021-04-06].

¹⁶ Prop 2019/20:188, "Sveriges Genomförande av Agenda 2030", Stockholm, Miljödepartementet.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LAs AND CSOs IN SWEDEN

In line with EU policies that have encouraged the idea of a three-tiered social economy including the public, private and social spheres,¹⁷ the Swedish government has supported increased interactions and collaborations between LAs and CSOs in the last decade. Accordingly, there are different tools and policies at the national level that contribute to SDG localisation processes. Among them, the National Action Plan, and the National Framework Agreement are some of the most visible ones.

Following similar examples of close collaboration between civil society and the government, such as the “compact” established in the UK,¹⁸ in 2008 the Swedish national government entered into an agreement with “Idea-driven organisations”¹⁹ and the federation of Swedish Local Authorities (SKR), adopting the National Framework Agreement.²⁰ The agreement’s main purpose was to clarify the role of non-profit actors working in the social sector and to enable idea-driven organisations to compete on equal terms with other players in the field, especially encouraging collaborations with LAs.²¹

During the same period, Forum, a network organisation for civil society organisations in Sweden, started developing the Idea-Driven Public Partnership model (IOP), which strives to

¹⁷ Överenskommelsen Skåne Website, Film: “Överenskommelser för ett starkare civilsamhälle”, <http://overenskommelsenskane.se/om-oss/filmer-om-overenskommelsen-skane/> [Last Accessed 2021-03-12].

¹⁸ The British government and its executive agencies established an agreement with CSOs that aimed “to ensure that the Government and CSOs work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in England.” For more details see the version of the compact adopted in 2010 here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61169/The_20Compact.pdf

¹⁹ In the agreement the government recognises that there are many ways of collectively referring to these kinds of organisations, but that there is no consensus on a general term, with them being called non-profit sector, the social economy and idea-driven sector. To maintain consistency with the National Agreement, we will use “idea-driven” sectors or organisations whenever related to the agreement.

²⁰ Regeringens Skrivelse, 2008/09:207, “Överenskommelsen mellan regeringen, idéburna organisationer inom det sociala området och Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting”, <https://www.regeringen.se/49b70e/contentassets/95cfc05ea5ef4b479b1ee00bd75266d3/overenskommelsen-mellan-regeringen-ideburna-organisationer-inom-det-sociala-området-och-sveriges-kommuner-och-landsting> [Last Accessed 2021-03-12].

²¹ Regeringens Skrivelse, 2008/09:207, “Överenskommelsen mellan regeringen, idéburna organisationer inom det sociala området och Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting”.

create a model of partnership for civil society actors to collaborate with public actors to solve societal problems in areas where no market exists.²² By 2018, the National Government's Action Plan for the implementation of the SDG, put forth the IOP as a model that has proved relevant in creating possibilities for cooperation between LAs and CSOs.²³ In fact, the Government underlined the importance of using the IOP model when implementing SDGs on a local level.²⁴

3.1. Framework Agreements between Local or Regional Authorities and the Idea-driven Sector

Framework Agreements are – in general – subscribed by local authorities (municipalities) or regional authorities (regions) and CSOs. Their main purpose is to encourage collaboration between these two sectors, but also to provide the possibility for other stakeholders to join it, based on the type of collaboration. This may include universities, government agencies, and the business community, as long as they follow the principles set forth in the agreement.²⁵

The methods of collaboration with regards to Framework Agreements are varied. However, the key element is the focus on creating a platform for long term cooperation and involvement of non-profit organisations with LAs.²⁶ This can involve the provision of financial support, the creation of a structure for future cooperation and action plans regarding specific societal matters.²⁷ Areas of cooperation and priority vary according to local needs.

A representative example of collaboration between LAs and CSOs through framework agreements could be found in Malmö, south of Sweden, where the Middle School Football Against Racism (MSFAR) project was developed. Although this project was launched many years before the creation of the Malmö Framework Agreement, it is nevertheless promoted as

²² The IOP-model emerged in 2016 primarily to establish more efficient modes of collaboration between CSOs and LAs. The IOP-model provided a space for reciprocity, allowed dialogue to take place between the parties through the entirety of the project timeframe, and made it possible for parties to adjust cooperation when necessary. Forum Website, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap", <https://www.socialforum.se/om-forum-2/ideburetoffentligt-partnerskap/>, [accessed 2021-04-05].

²³ Regeringskansliet, "Handlingsplan Agenda 2030: 2018-2020", p. 64–65.

²⁴ Regeringskansliet, "Handlingsplan Agenda 2030: 2018-2020".

²⁵ Lunds Kommun, "Förslag till handlingsplan för Lunds Överenskommelse - remissversion 2021 - 2024", 2020, https://www.lund.se/globalassets/lund.se/bygg_bo/klimat-miljo-och-hallbarhet/social-hallbarhet/forslag-till-handlingsplan-lunds-overenskommelse-ideburen-sektor-2020-11-01-.docx.pdf [accessed 2021-03-12]; Malmö Stad, "Överenskommelse Malmöandan Samarbetsplan - idéburen sektor och Malmö stad 2018–2022", https://49dcc695-3aac-4d8d-9ce0-ebabe09af6d7.filesusr.com/ugd/0b15cd_5e2d28bf6cb241ae9aef576c4784075f.pdf [accessed 2021-03-12].

²⁶ Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (SKR), "Samverkan med Civilsamhället: En kartläggning av hur Sveriges kommuner, landsting och regioner samverkar med civilsamhällets organisationer", 2018.

²⁷ Ibi

a successful example of collaboration between CSOs and LAs at the Malmö's Framework Agreement's website.

Middle School Football Against Racism (MSFAR)

- The Middle School Football Against Racism is an educational initiative adopted at the city of Malmö, strongly influenced by Malmö's Framework Agreement. This initiative aims at building capacities in both children and adults about children's rights and anti-discrimination, using football as a pedagogical tool.
- The project started in 2010 and was an initiative by the most notorious professional football team in the city of Malmö, Malmö FF.
- The project has contributed to the creation of a structure in Malmö to combat racism and discrimination, while strengthening knowledge about the rights of the Child. Schools in Malmö can sign up to be part of the project and have their students participate.

The MFSAR project has contributed to the creation of human rights awareness and increases students' and teachers' knowledge on the rights of the child. In addition, the project strongly focuses on reducing discrimination in the city of Malmö, by using promising football practises as educational tools for the promotion and protection of human rights. The MSFAR project emphasises the importance of collaboration between various sectors of society, enabling partners to contribute with different skills and competencies in the realisation of the project's goals. In fact, MSFAR's partners agreed that the adoption of Agenda 2030 and greater awareness of SDGs in the idea driven sector have contributed to clarifying and strengthening the mission of MSFAR, as well as helping to implement the SDGs at the individual and community based levels.²⁸

However, because the Framework Agreement fails to explicitly mention the SDGs, there remains a difficulty in identifying the link between the Agreement and Agenda 2030.²⁹ This lack of clarity is reinforced by the existing misconceptions regarding sustainable development, where the emphasis is allocated to the protection of the environment or related environmental issues, generating a potential exclusion of the individual social dimension of development.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The priority areas defined in the Agreement's Action Plan, valid from 2018 to 2022 are: (1) Young people's health and lifestyle, (2) equal conditions for leisure and culture, (3) city life, public places and premises, (4) participation, security, democracy, and (5) new paths to work and activity.

³⁰ Source: interview carried out with KH, from the football team MFF, MMR from Tillsammans i Förening and GN from Malmö Municipality on 2021-01-27

3.2. Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap - IOP (Idea-Driven Public Partnerships)

The concept of IOPs was developed in 2010 by the National Forum for Voluntary Organisations (FORUM), an umbrella organisation for CSOs working in the social sphere.³¹ According to FORUM, until the development of IOPs there were two main ways in which CSOs could cooperate with the LAs. The first one was through direct funding from the LA to the CSO, and the second way was through public procurement. The goal with the IOP model was to create a third possible model for cooperation; a middle ground between the two existing models.³²

There is no legal definition for IOP.³³ FORUM understands IOP as a mode of cooperation that does not require the following of the rules and regulations regarding public procurement or funding rules. Moreover, FORUM underlines that it is a cooperation mode that does not rely on market mechanisms or commercial contracts. On the contrary, it is based on the idea of a mutual agreement.³⁴ An IOP agreement is drafted on the initiative of the CSO and can include multiple CSOs and LAs. The conceptual idea is that the IOP will contribute to the development of innovative solutions to complex problems, based on the special knowledge that CSOs have.³⁵ IOPs are to be formed between idea-driven organisations and LAs, but there is nothing preventing partnerships to also include other actors such as academia or businesses, as long as they follow the recommended structure for IOPs.

IOPs are often made concerning specific activities organised by civil society actors, in which the LAs may elect to collaborate with the CSO based on their interest in the specific CSO activity. The agreement then stipulates which activity will be covered by the partnership, which resources each party will provide, and any other relevant preconditions.³⁶ IOPs often work as a form of financial support from LAs, provided to CSOs, in order to operate the activities stipulated in the agreement. This financial support differs from more regular financial support through public procurement or grant, as it is specially directed towards the implementation of a certain activity or provision of a specific service.³⁷ IOPs often aim to

³¹ Forum Website, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap", <https://www.socialforum.se/om-forum-2/ideburetoffentligt-partnerskap/>, [accessed 2021-04-05].

³² FORUM, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap-IOP, Samhället är större än staten och marknaden", 2010, <https://www.socialforum.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ideburet-offentligtpartnerskap4.pdf>, [accessed 2020-11-26].

³³ SOU 2019:56, "Idéburen Valfärd", 2019, Stockholm, <https://www.regeringen.se/49b70e/contentassets/95cfc05ea5ef4b479b1ee00bd75266d3/overenskommelsen-mellan-regeringen-ideburna-organisationer-inom-det-sociala-området-och-sveriges-kommuner-och-landsting>, [accessed 2021-04-06].

³⁴ FORUM, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap-IOP, Samhället är större än staten och marknaden", 2010.

³⁵ SOU 2019:56, "Idéburen Valfärd", 2019, Stockholm.

³⁶ FORUM, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap-IOP, Samhället är större än staten och marknaden", 2010.

³⁷ Region Skåne, Utveckling Skåne, Idéburet offentligt partnerskap, <https://utveckling.skane.se/om-regional-utveckling/samverkan-med-ideburna-sektorn/ideburet-offentligt-partnerskap/>. [Last Accessed 2020-01-25]

provide services and support to certain groups in need of special support, such as the case of the IOP between Lund municipality and Swedish Friends supporting the cultural integration of newly arrived migrants in Sweden.³⁸

Swedish Friend at Lund Municipality

This IOP grew out of the need for integration and inclusion of newcomers to Lund municipality. “Swedish Friend” is a civil society organisation that works to blur the lines between newcomers and established swedes, thereby lowering barriers for interaction between these two groups. This is done by matching a newcomer with an established swede. The IOP also includes the provision of free activities by “Swedish Friend”, specially tailored to the target group of the IOP. For the newcomer, the IOP will result in access to activities, a friendship that can provide support in navigating the complexity of Swedish society, and help to facilitates access to the Swedish labor market.

³⁸ Forum website, IOP-listan, <https://www.socialforum.se/om-forum-2/ideburetoffentligt-partnerskap/iop-listan/>. [Last Accessed 2020-25-1]

4. CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF PROMISING COOPERATION INITIATIVES

The assessment of the current frameworks, platforms and legal tools that aim at facilitating and fostering partnerships between LAs and CSOs in Sweden has contributed to a better understanding on how processes of localisation of SDGs implementation could be fostered across the country. In the following sections an analysis of these models will be presented, including an evaluation of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

4.1. Framework Agreements

Generally, the process of drafting and implementing the national, regional and municipal framework agreements allowed greater awareness of the importance of fostering collaborations between CSOs and LAs. Moreover, the framework agreements could strive to give more voice and power to CSOs in tackling societal challenges and influencing public policy.

As for MSFAR, the framework agreement established that both the private actor and CSO were indispensable, and further laid the grounds for better communication between the state and the idea-driven sector on how to approach societal issues. On the other hand, interviews with LA representatives suggest that there could be more interaction happening between LAs and bigger CSOs during the process of drafting agreements and implementing them, especially umbrella organisations that represent many organisations, whilst smaller organisations have less resources to offer and are still not aware of the creation of these collaborative platforms and how they can make use of them.³⁹

The priority areas of framework agreements vary and some focus only on specific sectors and do not necessarily mention the SDGs. However, preliminary research results indicate that SDG mainstreaming within local authorities is growing and that action plans are being updated or reformulated to approach the Agenda 2030. Examples of this trend could be found in the MSFAR, where even though there is no express indication to SDGs, its implementation tends to prioritise societal areas relevant to the realisation of SDGs.

³⁹ Source: Interview carried out with the Specialist on Social Sustainability from Municipality of Lund (UD) in December 2020.

The agreements themselves are an important human rights based tool since they apply human rights principles to the process of creating partnerships and collaborations, focusing on transparency, participation, and diversity, among others. But they do not necessarily impose a HRBA to the implementation of initiatives that are forged under the agreements. In the case of MSFAR, the organising partners had good knowledge of human rights norms and thus were conscious of applying a HRBA to project implementation; but this feature was not institutionalised in the agreement. Further, the framework agreements analysed do not necessarily mention the requirement for LAs and CSOs to implement participatory measures with the vulnerable groups they are working with, which could be seen as a missed opportunity from a HRBA's perspective.

However, the current development of framework agreements in Sweden also offers additional opportunities for the realisation of SDGs. Broadening the scope of national framework agreements could generate additional support to the process of SDGs localisation. In fact, the creation of the national framework agreement is considered to have generated greater awareness of the importance of CSOs for democracy and encouraged the creation of local and regional agreements. Unfortunately, when the national agreement was enacted, its purpose was to foster collaborations solely in the "social sector", i.e., health care, eldercare, child care and so on. However, this specified approach therefore left out other sectors relevant for the realisation of SDGs, such as the environment, access to services, etc. This missed opportunity has been nevertheless rectified by regional and municipal agreements, which have broadened the scope to include different areas, allowing more collaborations to take place⁴⁰.

Finally, it is important to note that this model requires both parties (i.e. LAs and CSOs) to establish close communication and work together in planning and implementation. In other words, results will highly depend on the existence of positive and constructive working dynamics between the parties. Lack of communication or ineffective working practises between them could negatively affect their engagement, and eventually some of the parties could lose motivation to continue collaborating.

4.2 IOPs

IOPs seem to present advantages when compared to other ways in which CSOs can collaborate with LAs since it was developed as a method to make collaborations easier and more frequent than prototypical public procurement, grants, or other forms of fundings. Furthermore, IOPs strengthen the role of CSOs by tackling issues and promoting solutions

⁴⁰ See, for instance, the draft Action Plan for the Lund Framework Agreement, which identifies "sustainable development based on the Agenda 2030" as one of its 4 priority areas (Lunds Kommun, Förslag till handlingsplan för Lunds Överenskommelse-Remissversion 2021-2024, 2020, <https://moten.lund.se/welcome-sv/namnder-styrelser/servicenamnden/servicenamnden/agenda/sf-tjansteskrivelse-2021-03-03-samverkansplan-for-overenskommelsen-med-ideburen-sektor-remissvarpdf?downloadMode=download> and within the proposal for the new Malmöandan, it is explicitly stated that the new agreement will be part of the municipality's work towards creating a sustainable municipality according to the SDGs (Malmöandan, Samarbetsplan, Idéburenssektor och Malmö Stad, Utkast Samarbetsplan, Oktober 2020, <https://motenmedborgarportal.malmo.se/welcome-sv/namnder-styrelser/kommunstyrelsen/mote-2021-01-13/agenda/remissversion-overenskommelse-malmoandan-samarbetsplan-ideburen-sektor-och-malmo-stadpdf-20080?downloadMode=open> stadpdf-20080?downloadMode=open, [accessed 2021-12-17])

identified by CSOs, who then engage with LAs to cooperate in its realisation. In fact, IOPs invert the power relations within the cooperation between LAs and CSOs, when traditionally LAs will invite CSOs to cooperate, through a public procurement relation or by offering grants, in order to address concrete societal issues.

IOPs were not developed with a necessary focus on SDG implementation; this will depend upon each project that is being undertaken as an IOP. The IOP model has, nonetheless, been identified by the Swedish government as an important model for SDG implementation. Unfortunately, the analysis of relevant sources, including FORUM's guidelines, Q&As documents and explanations regarding the IOPs, do not mention the need for IOPs to be implemented through a HRBA,⁴¹ so the use of the model does not necessarily guarantee the participation of social groups targeted by the IOPs. In fact, their level of involvement will rather depend on the specific project and the promising practises developed by the parties involved, e.g. representatives of vulnerable groups could be involved in an IOP initiative as co-managers instead of being approached just as beneficiaries of the project.

Moreover, in the 2018 Action Plan for Agenda 2030, the Swedish government highlighted the importance of IOPs for SDG implementation and, thus, expressed the need for expanding its development across the country.⁴² It is important to note that the previous existence of Framework Agreements between LAs and CSOs have facilitated the realisation of IOPs.⁴³ However, because IOPs are not legally defined, there has been controversy about the model's legality, especially in relation to public procurement laws. Even though FORUM envisions opportunities for IOPs under EU law,⁴⁴ the model has been subject to court disputes.⁴⁵ The unclear status of IOPs was recognised by the Swedish government in its 2018 Action Plan for Agenda 2030 as an obstacle for developing collaborations under this model.⁴⁶ One of the main objectives of the government for 2018-2020 in implementing Agenda 2030 was to clarify the legal conditions for IOPs to take place.⁴⁷

⁴¹ FORUM Website, "Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap", <https://socialforum.se/vara-verksamheter/verksamheter-och-projekt/ideburet-offentligt-partnerskap/> [Last Accessed 2021-07-25].

⁴² Prop 2019/20:188, "Sveriges Genomförande av Agenda 2030", Stockholm, Miljödepartementet.

⁴³ According to Malmö Municipality's Development Strategist (TR), "there is an important connection between the Framework agreements and the IOPs, because [...] we have this kind of framework agreement that indicates that we are to cooperate. It becomes easier to enter into cooperation through IOPs." (Author's translation; 2020-12-10 interview).

⁴⁴ Front Advokater, Forum: Idéburna Organisationer med Social Inriktning, "Idéburet offentligt partnerskap – vilka möjligheter erbjuder EU-rätten?", 2016, <http://overenskommelsenskane.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IOP-Rapport-Forum-Digital-Single-pages.pdf>, [Last Accessed 2021-03-13].

⁴⁵ In a case filed in 2017-06-29, against the Municipality of Alingsås, the Supreme Administrative Court concluded that the municipality had evaded public procurement by using an IOP. Alingsås Municipality had publicly procured the operation of the retirement home Gingstgården to the foundation Bräcke Diaconia. When the procurement agreement ended the parties decided to start cooperating in the form of an IOP instead of starting a new process of procurement. The IOP agreement included the provision that the Foundation Bräcke Diaconia would contribute with the operation of the retirement home and the Municipality would contribute 14 million SEK per year. The court found that if a party, through an agreement, promises to provide a service for a municipality in exchange for a financial contribution, and that the service granted is of economic interest for the municipality, it does not matter if the party to the agreement is a non-profit organisation, it is still considered constituting public procurement and not an IOP. For more details, see Judgement from Högsta Förvaltningsdomstolen, case no. 3165-19, 11 March 2020.

⁴⁶ Regeringskansliet, "Handlingsplan Agenda 2030: 2018-2020".

⁴⁷ Ibid.

5. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research and mapping exercise provided a better understanding of the current frameworks, platforms and legal tools that aim at facilitating and fostering partnerships between LAs and CSOs in Sweden and, by doing so, contributing to the process of localising the SDGs in the country.

In particular, two different initiatives, National Framework Agreement and IOPs, emerged as the most promising frameworks in which dialogue and collaboration between LAs and CSOs could be nurtured and further developed. In the case of Framework Agreements, through institutionalised dialogues headed by the national government and, in the case of IOPs, through the advocacy and supportive work done by umbrella organisations from civil society. As it became clear throughout the research, it is not possible to say that these are two opposing or distinct models, rather, they focus on facilitating different aspects of partnerships and can complement each other.

This research shows, based on stakeholders' perceptions, that both models, through their own avenues and methods, were able to generate awareness among local stakeholders regarding the importance of establishing collaborations between LAs and CSOs. Moreover, involvement and participation of local stakeholders is key for a meaningful and contextualised implementation of SDGs. The contextual knowledge and networks that local partners have facilitated the work of LAs in realising SDGs. Therefore, Framework Agreements and IOPs contribute with the creation of common spaces, of shared platforms in which interaction between CSOs and LAs is not only facilitated but also nurtured. However, stakeholders' perceptions also indicate that there is a common misconception among CSOs and LAs that sustainability is linked with environmental issues rather than social sustainability.

For these reasons, further research aiming at clarifying the role of local stakeholders and public authorities in the SDGs localisation processes is needed. In addition, research could focus on evaluating effectiveness of projects and initiatives on the ground, highlighting not only the positive achievements but also potential obstacles faced by them. In particular, more research is needed in terms of matching projects' purpose with the Agenda 2030's goals and targets since SDG mainstreaming is a relatively recent phenomenon and not all projects and policies are framed following the SDG vocabulary.

It is important to note that the identified models can contribute for SDG localisation even when they do not explicitly mention this objective, by supporting the mainstreaming of Agenda 2030 (explaining the goals, their targets and indicators, general vocabulary, monitoring schemes, etc.) in policies and collaboration models. The reasons for this contribution could be found in (i) creating greater awareness among stakeholders of their roles in SDG localisation and (ii) avoiding misconceptions on the scope of sustainable development.

Localisation of SDGs: Concrete Recommendations to Local Authorities

- Facilitate the developments of models of collaboration with CSOs, either through Framework Agreements or IOPs, in order to encourage further initiatives between LAs, CSOs, and other stakeholders, focusing on the realisation of SDGs at local levels
- Emphasise the social aspects of sustainability so that local partners working with social issues are encouraged to collaborate in projects aiming at localising the implementation of SDGs;
- Promote capacity building for LAs, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders, such as businesses and academia, on HRBA to sustainable development and how to adapt their initiatives and projects to the Agenda 2030 and monitor SDG implementation.



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