



Message from the Ambassador

Fika: coffee and something sweet is a social institution in Sweden. So ingrained in Swedish culture, that most companies add a clause to contracts, stating that employees are entitled to full paid “Fika-breaks”. Sweden ranks as one of the most competitive countries in the world, with top grades for innovation, sustainability, equality, happiness, and well-being. So don't underestimate the importance of a “Fika-break”, a pleasant moment for social interaction and creativity.

Team Sweden in South Africa is growing. Two years ago, we were 23 employees, today we are 31. The relations between the people of South Africa and the people of Sweden are strong. Our main focus today is to broaden and deepen our relationships, building bridges with a strong focus on democracy, sustainability, digitalisation, higher education and research. With this newsletter, we want to share with you some highlights from our many activities, hoping that you will find an interesting bite to So welcome to a quick read during fika.

Hakan Juhelt

A QUICK READ DURING FIKA

EU PRESIDENCY

**sweden
2023.eu**

Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the EU has been during a time when war is raging in Europe. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has put the Common EU Foreign and Security Policy high on the agenda during the Swedish Presidency. Continued support for Ukraine - political, economic, military, humanitarian and legal - is critical, as will measures in response to Russia's aggression and action in a large number of areas affected by the war. The Presidency's most important task in the foreign and security policy area is therefore to contribute to a united, engaged and effective EU. The Swedish Presidency is working to strengthen the EU as a global actor.

At the Embassy we have hosted a number of talks on priority areas for the EU Presidency, including on gender issues in conflict prevention and peace-building, with expertise from the EU training mission in Mozambique visiting Pretoria.

Link: [EU Training Mission - Mozambique](#)
[EUTM Mozambique Gender Advisor Lisa Arlbrandt](#)

PIONEER THE POSSIBLE



How can we jointly build hope, and trust and pave the way for a fresh start? How do we make sure we build on each other's perspectives and ideas in meeting the challenges of today and in the future? These were guiding questions for the Embassy's kick off event for 2023 during the SONA week, under the theme “Pioneer the Possible”. During the event we wanted to inspire participants with new perspectives and understanding of the catalytic role which cross-sectoral cooperation in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Experiences and perspectives from South Africa and Sweden were shared, from private sector, government, academia, cultural actors and civil society. Four panels addressed new ways approaching a more sustainable and circular economy, how to build trust in society and for democratic institution, but also how we as a society can build resilience towards fake news and questioning of science.

Link: [Daily Maverick Article - Making the Impossible Happen](#)
[Kicking off the event - 15 February 2023](#)

SASUF Research & Innovation Week



The South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF) started in 2018 as a strategic internationalisation project to strengthening ties between Sweden and South Africa in research, education and innovation. This unique collaboration between 40 Swedish and South African universities has connected more than 3000 participants to date.

The 2023 Research and Innovation Week was hosted in South Africa with over 80 activities across the country between 27th and 31st March. The week kicked off in Pretoria with a warm welcome reception and cultural performance for all the Vice Chancellors and university representatives. The Embassy also hosted a panel session and exhibition reception at the University of Western Cape.

Link: [SASUF Research and Innovation Week 2023](#)

FREEDOM DAY CELEBRATIONS

The embassy hosted a cultural celebration in honour of South African Freedom Day that included the launch of three books, an art exhibition, musical and poetic performances, and a movie screening. The cultural celebration served as homage to the legacy of several independence fighters who helped to define the liberation movement in so many different ways. We had the opportunity of hosting liberation movement members Peder Gowenius and Lefifi Tladi virtually from Stockholm, making this gathering very memorable for us.



Perseverance, activism, and most importantly, solidarity, were the underlying themes of the day's celebrations. We thank our partners and colleagues at the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, University of Pretoria, Javett Art Centre at UP, and all of the program participants.



So Far So Close compiled by Ambassador Lindiwe Mabuza. The Hungry Red Lion by Peder Gowenius Oasis Motswedi Umthombo Wasehlane: a Collaborative Expression by Lefifi Tladi and Eugene Skeef. Musical performances and water drum ritual by Eugene Skeef with Chester Summerton and PACD Marimba Band. Poetry by Nthabiseng JahRose and Eugene Skeef. A film screening about Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu: A Tree Has Fallen by Marika Griehsel

Link: [Celebration - 24 April 2023](#)

RESIDENCE 20 YEARS



In celebration of 20 years since the completion of the Ambassador's residence, the Embassy hosted guests from Chalmers and Pretoria Universities who partnered to research and create live builds of non-traditional architectural practices. The project focuses on a type of expertise called Public Interest Design, working on the role of the architect in the creation of sustainable communities. It aimed to celebrate the strong values for equality and human rights which Sweden has promoted while sharing their successes and progress in partnering for innovation and work towards achieving the sustainable development goals. The meaningful and inspiring discussions reflected on how the student collaborations and projects have impacted the communities they are working in and what this type of urban development work means for the future and livelihoods of people.



Architect Tashriq Abrahams of Swedish startup Bitprop also shared an innovative business model, showcasing how the company is promoting financial independence in townships by partnering with homeowners, turning them into property entrepreneurs.

DECARBONIZING SOUTH AFRICA

Road mapping for transitioning the South African Steel industry. LeadIT secretariat, DTIC and TIPS with support from Embassy of Sweden gathered stakeholders in the steel industry for a road mapping exercise on how to decarbonize the South African steel sector in Johannesburg on April 18. Steel is a strategic input in the South African economy and is a critical input into several downstream value chains. South Africa is one of the largest steel producers in Africa. South Africa's steel value chain is heavily integrated in the country's industrial base and broader economy but the industry is also one of the largest contributors to green house emissions. South Africa is committed to decarbonise the iron and steel industry and cemented this commitment by joining Leadership group for Industry Transition, LeadIT in 2022.

The key message from the Embassy was that we need to move towards a carbon free future and it's urgent, time is not on our side. Only if we partner with others will we be successful, we all have a role to play but only if we break away from silos. That's why initiatives such as LeadIT is so important. Sweden has come a long way with producing fossil free steel, we have a lot share and a lot to learn and we are seeking partnerships.

Link: [LeadIT](#)



CAPE TOWN PRIDE

The Embassy of Sweden and friends of Sweden in Cape Town marched under the rainbow flag at Cape Town Pride in the beginning of March.

We hosted a film screening and reception at the Labia Theatre as part of the Cape Town Pride Month activities, featuring award winning film: My Father Marianne.

Our participation culminated in the team marching together in the 6000 strong March and Mardi Gras to celebrate our differences and acknowledge how far we've come in the work towards equality.

But as important we participated to stand in solidarity with the queer community who face injustices and discrimination daily and to protest against those challenging freedom and equality. The struggle continues.

Link: [Cape Town Pride 2023](#)



DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TEAM

Sweden's regional Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) strategy is now based at our Embassy in Pretoria. The strategy applies from 2022-2026 with a total of 3.5 billion SEK. Through this strategy, Sweden wants to contribute to some important objectives:

- increased respect for and enjoyment of SRHR for all
- social norms that promote SRHR
- strengthened conditions for increased accountability for SRHR
- increased access to rights-based SRHR initiatives

We've been running "full steam" with the strategy and have already announced several contributions to various programmes and initiatives aimed at improving SRHR in the region, you can read more about some of them below. As part of our development cooperation team, we have also established a hub for democracy and human rights, look out for our next issue to hear more about our work in this section.

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Our programme with the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria aims at fostering accountability for SRHR norm implementation in the region, strengthen sexual and reproductive rights knowledge generation and management, and harmonize regional norms on sexual and reproductive rights.

The Centre for Human Rights works to enhance implementation of human rights norms in Africa through capacity building, advocacy, litigation, and research.

There is a special focus in the programme on protection of women's rights norms and the rights of the girl-child at the regional and national levels.

The contribution amount is 31 700 000 SEK.

Link: [Centre for Human Rights Instagram](#)

KZN SITE VISIT



DKT Social marketing of SRH Commodities

DKT and their program is running from 2023 to 2026 and works with social marketing to create availability and demand for SRH commodities, leveraging the power and efficiencies of the private sector to support public health.

The programme operates in both the private and public sectors, supporting governments in making contraceptives more easily accessible to people who need them.

The contribution amount is 275 000 000 SEK.

Link: [Social Marketing - DKT International](#)

#2GETHER4SRHR

2gether4SRHR Phase 2 is a joint UN initiative by UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF and WHO.

The programme aims to contribute to improve the SRHR of all people in the Eastern and Southern African region through a regional intervention, with particular focus on highly vulnerable populations.

The contribution amount is 425 000 000 SEK.

Link: [UNFPA ESARO | 2gether 4 SRHR](#)

REGIONAL PARTNERS VISIT



HIVOS REGIONAL SRHR FUND

This is an Adolescent and Youth SRHR Initiative running from 2023-2026. The Hivos Southern Africa and Ford Foundation have set up a regional fund to strengthen sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) interventions in Southern Africa.

Hivos' aim is to promote a stronger and more coordinated youth-led civil society in East and Southern Africa that can promote, address and advance SRHR and its intersections with HIV and gender inequalities with a key focus on highly vulnerable and underserved populations, including girls, boys, adolescents, and young women and men.

The contribution amount is 78 000 000 SEK.

Link: [Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) Fund - Hivos](#)

