

Left International Forum's Theory of Change

Left International Forum is a party-affiliated organisation with the Swedish Left Party as its principal. It is a non-profit solidarity organisation that envisions a democratic and equal world, one that respects human rights and freedoms. The organisation's activities are based on an equal, feminist, solidaric, sustainable and democratic view of society, with an overall goal of strengthening marginalised women and youth to reclaim democratic space.

Our view on the importance of civil society for democracy

Free elections are the cornerstone of democracy, allowing people to elect representatives to decision-making bodies at different levels of society. Left International Forum operates in accordance with Agenda 2030 for "effective, accountable and transparent institutions", and to promote "responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making" at all levels. A strong civil society is crucial for the development and maintenance of a democratic society. One of the most essential tasks for civil society is to examine those in power, protest injustices and report abuses of power. It requires space and the opportunity for people to join forces with others through mobilisation and involvement to make their voices heard.

Our view on the importance of political parties for democracy

Political parties and a functioning party system are prerequisites for representative democracy, and for the creation of channels between people, political institutions and elected representatives. Political participation is a human right, meaning that all members of society must be given the opportunity to make their voices heard. Nevertheless, marginalised groups, especially women and youth, have less political influence compared to groups that are also strong in other contexts. This creates a situation in which those with the greatest need for political action are also the ones who have the hardest time entering political assemblies and influencing decisions that significantly affect their life situation. When certain groups of voters are underrepresented, it impacts the opportunity to meet their needs and interests, and to nominate candidates from such groups. It undermines the legitimacy of democracy. In a weak democracy that is unable to guarantee the human rights of all people, where people are unable to vote or regard it as pointless, society and politics risk becoming something for a small elite. Giving everyone the voice they deserve is a prerequisite for strengthening and preserving democracy.

Our view on development

History shows that the traditional power elite seldom enact change that benefits the broader population. The shift towards a just and sustainable world, therefore, requires a strong civil society and a well-functioning multi-party system. By supporting political parties and other civil society organisations that base their activities on popular participation, with a special focus on marginalised women and youth, conditions are created for people with limited access to resources and power to organise and demand their democratic rights. When more voices from marginalised women and youth are heard in political assemblies, and civil society is strengthened, more perspectives can be highlighted, and there can also be greater demands for change towards a fairer



distribution of power. Wider representation results in greater involvement, the opportunity for more people to identify with their political representatives, a strengthened belief in democracy and an increased willingness to vote in elections.

Actors for cooperation and coordination

The political affiliation of Left International Forum means that the Left Party in Sweden and the EU are essential actors for cooperation and coordination.

Left Party

The Left Party's possibilities to influence the extent and formation of Swedish development assistance, and to influence the Swedish Government in matters such as demanding responsibility for companies and states' actions abroad, make the party a critical collaboration partner.

Left Party in the EU

The Left Party in the EU has opportunities to influence EU guidelines and policies related to development assistance, corporate responsibility, and environmental and climate issues, making it an important actor and partner for cooperation.

Actors for collaboration and to be strengthened

Actors operating in the same sphere as Left International Forum with similar visions and goals all contribute to achieving our own goals in different ways.

Political parties and affiliated organisations

Left International Forum wants to see strong political parties and party-affiliated organisations, with marginalised women and youth holding parliamentary roles at all levels.

The trade union movement and other civil society organisations

Left International Forum aims to contribute to the development of strong trade union movements and a vibrant civil society. Since democratic movements often begin with organisation around a particular issue, trade union movements and other civil society organisations are essential actors for political advocacy work, as well as the organisation of women and youth.

Students

Thanks to their community involvement and interest in our issues, students are essential actors in strengthening opinion-shaping and advocacy work carried out in Sweden. Lectures and informative activities aimed at students are prioritised in Left International Forum's advocacy work to create further commitment to our issues among the students.

Actors targeted that need to be changed and strengthened

For the activities of Left International Forum to create sustainable change for a just society with respect to people, the environment, and the climate, we must identify and analyse those actors who operate in the same arena as us but do so in a way that limits the real political participation and influence of marginalised groups.



Democratic institutions

Left International Forum aims to promote the emergence of democratic institutions that incorporate ideals such as democracy, equality, gender equality, solidarity, and sustainability. Change will be made possible through broad parliamentary representation in combination with a strong civil society.

Companies

Left International Forum aims to promote companies that adhere to relevant legislation, respect human rights, and abide by the limits of nature. No one should get sick as a result of their working conditions, and everyone should have a living wage. Furthermore, people should not lose their livelihoods when companies take over the natural resources they depend on. Left International Forum wants to see regulatory systems that protect nature, safeguard human rights and prevent companies from suing states when they try to protect the environment and a country's population.

EU

Left International Forum advocates for the EU to strive towards greater democracy and enhanced power for elected representatives. We want to see decisions that reduce the power of companies and lobby groups. Human rights and environmental issues must be given priority over the market.

Methods and goals

The activities of Left International Forum are aimed at achieving the overall goal of creating strong political parties that marginalised women and youth can identify with, want to get involved in and vote for. The parties must, in a political majority, be able to participate and contribute to an agenda with respect for democracy, equality, gender-equality, solidarity and sustainability, and when in opposition, be able to pursue advocacy work aimed at achieving the same things.

Left International Forum defines strong political parties as parties in which marginalised women and youth hold leading positions and positions of trust, the internal structure is open, democratic, and transparent, and there is a strong focus on equality, non-discrimination, and anti-corruption. The party's representatives must have the ability to communicate its ideals in an engaging way that target groups can identify with, and the advocacy work the party conducts must specifically be aimed at developing political agendas that are more in line with democracy, equality, gender equality, solidarity, and sustainability.

The change is, by extension, intended to contribute to the creation of democratic institutions with high levels of trust and to democratic multi-party systems, as well as to the conduct of free and fair elections.

Perspectives and thematic focus

The activities of Left International Forum are based on the perspectives and thematic focus applicable to Swedish development assistance.



The rights perspective and poor people's views on development

The activities of Left International Forum are rights-based and focus on long-term societal changes, aiming to empower women and youth from marginalised groups to influence their lives and society. This is achieved by supporting the opportunity to organise themselves and share their perspectives on development.

The gender equality perspective

The activities of Left International Forum are particularly focused on women. Left International Forum works to increase the representation of women in positions of trust and to strengthen the internal democratic structures of parties and organisations, promoting greater structural equality and transparent systems that focus on gender-equal and non-discriminatory structures.

The conflict perspective

Conflict, violence and armed conflict constitute an obstacle to development and the possibility for all people to enjoy their human rights. All the activities of Left International Forum are conducted with an awareness of how our development efforts may affect tensions that exist in the countries in which we operate. Through targeted work towards politicians who can influence decisions, the operation can help to reduce conflict. Our activities are typically aimed at opposition politicians and activists, both of whom belong to groups that are vulnerable to harm in conflict situations, making it crucial to support their development for the sake of democracy.

Environmental and climate perspective

In accordance with Agenda 2030 and the Global Goals, Left International Forum believes that the societal challenges facing the world are closely linked and cannot be dealt with individually. Our work for inclusion and justice is reflected in many of the Global Goals.

Planning, follow-up, evaluation and learning

Left International Forum has a well-developed system for planning, follow-up, evaluation and learning. The complexity of activities aimed at long-term societal changes can create situations where the activities performed have a limited impact. With the degree of complexity, the difficulty increases in predicting what changes will take place and what the causal relationships look like. Given that the path to change is not linear, the Left International Forum views its theory of change and the assumptions, methods, and goals as hypotheses that will and should be questioned and revised as more knowledge is acquired.