EVALUATION

Does the message get through? Development communications amidst global challenges and polarized discussion

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

EDUCATION

DEMOCRACY

DECENT WORK

CLIMATE CHANGE

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

NON-DISCRIMINATION

NATURAL RESOURCES

GENDER EQUALITY

Evaluation of Finland's Development Policy and Co-operation

2023/4

EVALUATION

DOES THE MESSAGE GET THROUGH?
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS AMIDST GLOBAL
CHALLENGES AND POLARIZED DISCUSSION

EVALUATION ON DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS
IN THE CONTEXT OF MFA

Merja Mäkelä (Team leader)
Maria Grafström
Sonja Huhta
Veera Pensala

particip

NIRÁS

Lead Company

2023/4

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF BOXES

Acronyms and abbreviations

ALI	Department for Africa and Middle East
ASA	Department for the Americas and Asia
COM	Department for Public Diplomacy, Press and Communication in MFA Denmark
CSO	Civil society organisation
EQ	Evaluation question
EUR	Euro
EVA-11	Unit for development evaluation
Fingo	Finnish NGO coalition (Umbrella organisation of Finnish CSOs)
HAL-13	Unit for Human Resources Development and Occupational Wellbeing
HALKU	Course for newly recruited administrative career civil servants
HQ	Headquarters
ITÄ	Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
KAVAKU	Course for newly recruited general career civil servants
KEO	Department for development policy
Kepa	Finnish NGO coalition, now Fingo
KEO-10	Unit for development policy
KEO-30	Unit for civil society
KII	Key informant interview
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MTV	MTV Oy, commercial media channel
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SDP	Suomen Sosiaalidemokraattinen Puolue (Social Democrats of Finland)
SEK	Swedish Krona
Sida	Swedish international co-operation agency
STT	Suomen Tietotoimisto (Finnish News Agency)
TAKE	Tavoite- ja Kehityskeskustelu (Goals and development Discussion)
ToC	Theory of change
TTS	Toiminta- ja taloussuunnitelma, MFA activity and financial plan
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VIE	Department for Communications
VIE-10	Unit for Communications on Current Affairs
VIE-30	Unit for Communications on Sustainable Development and Trade
VIE-40	Unit for Global Communications
YLE	Suomen Yleisradio (Finnish Broadcasting Company)

Summary

Purpose, objectives and approach of the evaluation

The evaluation assesses development communications in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland. It analyses the effectiveness, efficiency and external coherence of work within the ministry, paying special attention to the role of the Unit for Communications on Sustainable Development and Trade (VIE-30) in direct and indirect communication and supporting the rest of the ministry in communicating about development issues. Communications are a central function of the MFA, and the Department for Communications (VIE) has the responsibility for all external and internal communications. VIE-30 works on communications related to the ministry's development policy, development co-operation, external economic relations, and Team Finland. The evaluation examines the effectiveness by looking at the contribution of MFA to the visibility of development co-operation and development policy both in digital and social media as well as in other channels such as the MFA website, public events, and meetings.

The context of the evaluation involves several issues that affect the modalities and the achievement of VIE-30's work: the policies guiding government and MFA development communication, public opinion on development co-operation, changes in the media landscape, including the ever-increasing use of social media and the demands for 'click-friendly' communication, the polarised public discussion and the particularities of government communication, especially those related to communicating about development policy issues.

The evaluation methodology is embedded in an evaluation matrix including three evaluation questions (EQ) and their sub-questions. Each question includes criteria for judgement. In addition, the evaluation facilitated the MFA team working on development communications to draw a schematic representation of how the development communications attempt to achieve the media visibility and increase citizens' understanding of development co-operation and policy.

The evaluation methods included a media analysis, two case studies, a desk review of reports and documents, two online surveys, interviews with stakeholders and MFA directors, as well as focus group discussions in workshops. The evaluation data was analysed by the evaluation team using analysis matrices and data triangulation.

Below, the answers to the EQs are summarised.

Effectiveness

The MFA has contributed to the public awareness and understanding about development policy and co-operation by making information available in different channels, but the deficiencies in strategic communications planning in the ministry have reduced effectiveness. As the work of development communication is undertaken in a political environment – that influences resources, timing, personnel, and goals – there is a need for clear and strong mandate for VIE-30 to be

able to navigate and create long-term strategies in the context of the MFA, in collaboration with the departments and units working with development issues. The space for the development communications in media is rather limited and there are expectations on public officials to be transparent, neutral, and objective in their statements. Despite the lack of newsworthiness in its own right, the MFA has contributed to making development cooperation and policy visible to some extent, especially in the national media. The efforts to engage and inform representatives

Focused efforts to engage and inform media representatives have worked relatively well.

of media by focused targeting have been relatively successful and this has further helped the ministry to develop a network of journalists and relationships with the media. There has been analysis of target groups and VIE-30 staff fully understand the need for increased targeting. However, most information only reaches those who already support and follow global issues and development co-operation.

The MFA channels are mostly considered informative, although stakeholders have differing views on the ease of finding information and some MFA staff would prefer a faster and easier channel for rapid communications. Getting through the more complicated key messages related to the development co-operation narrative has not been successful and there seems to be limited capacity to clearly communicate the links between the policies on security, development, trade and investments, also because of limited strategic communication priorities and objectives of the MFA. There is need to communicate the results of development co-operation but for some stakeholders, this has already reached the saturation point.

The objective of reaching the general public is made harder because of impersonal communication and the use of official, ministry language. In most cases, social media discussion is not initiated by MFA, it is negative toward development co-operation, and it is difficult to influence the nature of

Development co-operation discussion gets a negative tone in social media and it is difficult to turn around the nature of discussion.

the discussion. Through campaigns and outsourcing of services MFA has been able to improve the reach of messages, especially toward youth. However, planning is short-term, lessons are not regularly learnt and strategic opportunities are missed. Best practices from peer countries are related to strategic planning, increased targeting of those who receive information through obvious channels, using partnerships in communication and improving knowledge management.

Efficiency and coherence (internal)

The internal coherence and efficiency of development communication in the MFA is hampered by limited co-operation and uneven attention given to communications by the leadership and in different units. Most units and all departments working with development co-operation issues are interested in but only partly capable of communicating outside the MFA. In VIE-30 there are skilled communicators, but the lack of career prospects affects the interest to work in the unit and generally, the rotation of staff affects the building of expertise. MFA has communication champions among staff and units and there is potential to appear as spoke persons among the politicians, MFA staff and directors, but there is need for assistance in planning and producing communication materials

together with training to communicate better. This has not been strongly supported by MFA leadership.

Most MFA directors and staff are happy about VIE-30 services. Nevertheless, the resources of VIE-30 are stretched because of the demanding service function and daily, unplanned tasks and requests for assistance that must be solved quickly. There are synergies and opportunities that have not been tapped into inside VIE-30, as well as between units and departments, although the hierarchy and working in silos do not allow it to happen naturally.

MFA communication champions have potential to appear as spoke persons among the politicians.

The introductory course to the journalists (Development Academy) has been a successful way to create knowledge and interest about development co-operation among journalists and at editorial offices in Finland. However, there are still opportunities to better use the network of journalists to make MFA content more newsworthy and of interest for the media.

The current mandate of VIE-30, as expressed in the theory of change (ToC), is to communicate to the Finnish public but there is pressure from MFA for communicating more to international audiences, which would put extra pressure on the unit and further stretch the resources.

The best practices from CSOs and peer countries include close collaboration between different parts of the structure, management-backed prioritisation of communication, dividing the team to respond to *ad hoc* and planned duties and outsourcing part of the communication work.

Coherence (external)

External coherence of MFA's development communication has not been fully developed. The MFA and CSOs inform each other on their communication plans semi-annually but with other stakeholders, such as organisations supporting business development, companies related to development co-operation or researchers, there is currently no co-ordination structure. Co-operation mostly takes place through the sharing of each other's communication content such as CSOs helping to spread MFA social media campaigns or the MFA including CSO materials in the development policy results report. MFA does not take the full advantage of using CSOs' and other external stakeholders' materials, or through collaboration, even though CSOs and other external stakeholders carry out significant development communication in Finland with MFA funding.

For the most part, the concept of global education is understood in the MFA in a narrow way, limited to the formal education given in schools. However, its support is strong in the MFA and among external stakeholders. VIE-30 produces global education materials for teachers and participates in the EDUCA fair. With MFA funding, the Finnish CSOs carry out extensive global education but there is little co-ordination or co-operation of actions between MFA and CSOs.

The following table presents the 22 findings, 8 conclusions and 8 recommendations by the evaluation team to the MFA.

Table of Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Finding 1. The elements of result-based management practices are in place as planning, monitoring, reporting and even some evaluation is done although not in a systematic way. Strategic planning has increased during the evaluation period but since the MFA communication strategy does not properly guide the work, also for development communications the clear objectives and priorities, long-term strategic planning and learning from monitoring are inadequate. **Finding 2.** VIE-30 has worked extensively to identify channels, target groups and key messages but the ideas have neither been systematically compiled nor fully implemented. **Finding 3.** In the current situation of limited human resources and available budget, the use of outsourced services is relevant and justified, although not yet strategic. Piloting with a longer-term partner has benefitted the VIE-30.	**Conclusion 1.** Although important steps have been taken by MFA, the development communication work is not strategic enough. The strategic objectives and priorities of communications have not been set by MFA. Furthermore, according to interviews, MFA's overall strategic objectives and priorities have not been set nor clearly articulated, which makes it challenging to set the objectives for the development communications.	**Recommendation 1.** The MFA leadership should support the whole communication department to better define its strategic objectives and priorities. This should be followed by VIE-30, in collaboration with units and departments working with development issues, making more detailed strategic and operational plans with priorities, key messages, target groups, monitoring and systematic learning, means and resources including outsourcing of services with sufficiently long contracts.
Finding 4. Despite the lack of newsworthiness in its own right, the MFA has contributed to making development co-operation and policy visible in a variety of media through the Development Academy and other specific efforts targeting the media. **Finding 5.** Even if the MFA has made information available through a variety of channels, they mostly reach people who are already interested in the topics. **Finding 6.** The MFA's communication is fact-based, but the abstract level of messages and professional jargon limit its reach, as does the lack of the variety and low number of spokes persons.	**Conclusion 2.** The MFA has reached the public to some extent, but the visibility is low to those who don't actively follow and search for information or understand the professional jargon.	**Recommendation 2.** Consolidate development communication materials through an umbrella approach to communication: concepts and a databank that can be calibrated for different audiences. Increase the segment of plain language and concrete cases in the content.

FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Finding 7. The MFA has been present in public discussion especially by addressing fund misuse allegations and commenting current affairs but with limited ability to influence the nature of the discussion. The discussion on digital platforms such as Twitter is polarised, and negative contents gain most reactions. **Finding 8.** In physical face-to-face meetings the possibilities of interactive discussion are better, but the target groups tend to be limited to those who are already interested in global development issues. In the current MFA channels, such as the website and social media accounts, there is rarely any discussion.	**Conclusion 3.** The MFA has occasionally influenced public discussion. Physical meetings with targeted audiences have been effective. As there is rarely discussion or debate in the MFA channels, the interactivity is limited. Also, the lack of spokespersons influences the capacity to engage in the discussion.	**Recommendation 3.** Reinforce the communication capacity in the MFA by selecting, coaching and training a group of spokespersons among willing staff and supporting other staff with different communication skills on an organised basis. MFA's top leadership should lead by example as spokespersons and find ways to incentivise and motivate staff to engage in public communications. To reach out beyond professionals, new discussion arenas need to be used that already have large audiences and more resources have to be dedicated to facilitating high-quality dialogue.
Finding 10. There is a verified operational structure, but the roles and responsibilities are not clear to everybody. The extent of co-operation, internal communications and expectations vary between units and departments. The evaluation found some evidence of MFA leadership guiding the development communication content. **Finding 11.** The previous communication strategy of the MFA emphasised the principle of 'all communicating', recalling for ability in identifying the topics, planning the communication, and having skills to produce content. The VIE-30 staff have the professional skills, but many MFA staff have expressed the need for strengthening their capacity in different areas of communication. **Finding 12.** Some workplans and reports are difficult to find in MFA archives and there are no reports on the work conducted by VIE-30 for the last two years. **Finding 13.** Communication planning varies between units and departments. VIE-30 has not systematically assisted units or departments in the planning, but several MFA managers expressed in the interviews the need for assistance. The annual plan together with the activity calendar has not been fully developed into an operational plan.	**Conclusion 4.** There is limited internal coherence in the MFA for development communications and the synergies have not been fully used.	**Recommendation 4.** In developing the operational plan, clarify the roles and responsibilities both within the unit and in relation to other departments, also defining the priority themes and key messages for each department that the unit will agree to communicate while leaving room for *ad hoc* requests.

FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Finding 14. Most MFA management and other staff are happy with VIE-30 services. Most work by VIE-30 is servicing the rest of the MFA. VIE-30 staff estimate that 50-70% of their time is used for work that has not been planned in detail although the topics may appear in the annual plan. Circulating the communication material for comments of MFA staff or for the approval of MFA management takes unnecessarily much time.	**Conclusion 5.** The work of VIE-30 is not fully efficient nor effective as the unit does not manage to sufficiently prioritise and deprioritise its work. The suggestion to add the mandate to communicate to international audiences to VIE-30 would change its role significantly and require reorganisation of the whole department.	**Recommendation 5.** VIE-30 should reduce its workload by prioritising and focusing more on the strategic communication. No new functions should be added to the unit without increasing resources or reorganising the work at department level.
Finding 15. The unit fully implements their service function although the human resources were halved already in 2014. Service work's share has increased to a higher level during the evaluation period. There is a strong pressure from some parts of the MFA to extend the communication from Finnish to international audiences.		
Finding 16. Through the Development Academy, the MFA has built and maintained contacts with an important network of interested and informed journalists.	**Conclusion 6.** The Development Academy is an important instrument in creating media networks and maintaining contacts with journalists. VIE-30 has not taken full advantage of the network.	**Recommendation 6.** VIE-30 should keep doing the Development Academy with a mix of journalists / media and use the network of journalists more systematically, by tailoring the communication contents, linking contents to the news agenda, and proposing MFA experts for interviews and presentations.
Finding 17. Although the network with journalists gives the MFA a stable foundation for developing media relationships, responsiveness to the agenda and needs of the media is found wanting.		
Finding 19. MFA is not fully taking advantage of using CSOs' and other external stakeholders' materials. The two development co-operation results reports, from 2018 and 2022 present the work and materials from a diverse group of actors, but apart from the reports, use of materials is limited. Majority of the CSOs use and share MFA's development communication materials sometimes or seldom.	**Conclusion 7.** CSOs and other stakeholders are significant actors in development communication and global education in Finland. The MFA has so far not systematically exploited the opportunities of better co-operation and co-ordination of actions with them.	**Recommendation 7.** For wider impact, build on the existing practices to explore ways to collaborate and cooperate for development communication with other actors, such as CSOs, organisations supporting business development, companies, and researchers. This includes the continued support to global education and finding synergies with the CSOs for working more effectively, redefining, and clarifying the concept of global education.
Finding 20. The MFA coordinates the development communication with CSOs through bi-annual informative meetings and by collaborating occasionally with other stakeholders. The more systematic and profound co-operation is sporadic and takes place with a few organisations. Nevertheless, there is interest both in the MFA and among external stakeholders for strengthening co-operation.		
Finding 21. CSOs and other external stakeholders significantly complement MFA's development communication in terms of reaching out to diverse target groups in Finland, using a wide range of communication channels, such as versatile use of social media, and communicating on various themes. The CSOs' expenditure of MFA funding for development communication, global education and advocacy was approximately Euro (EUR) 7.5 million in 2021.		
Finding 22. The support to global education among the MFA management is strong. However, the term is mostly understood at the MFA as formal education given in schools, and a separate activity from development communication. With the MFA funding, CSOs carry out a large part of global education in Finland but the co-operation with the MFA is limited.		

FINDINGS	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Finding 9. The main lessons that MFA Finland can learn from Denmark and Sweden focus on carefully defining the target groups, making a long-term development communication strategy including communicating with other actors and improving knowledge management through monitoring and sharing of data.	**Conclusion 8.** The way that development communication is organised and implemented in peer countries Denmark and Sweden, as well as by Finnish CSOs receiving programme-based support, provides several lessons learned for improved effectiveness and efficiency.	**Recommendation 8.** Strengthen the collaboration with peer countries and CSOs to share the best practices in development communications.
Finding 18. Both CSOs and peer countries provide best practices in how the work can be structured differently to support the efficiency of the organisation. The practices include close collaboration between different parts of the structure, management-backed prioritisation of communication, dividing the team to respond to ad hoc and strategic duties and outsourcing part of the communication work.		

Tiivistelmä

Evaluoinnin tarkoitus, tavoitteet ja lähestymistapa

Evaluointi arvioi ulkoministeriön kehitysviestintää. Se analysoi kehitysviestinnän tuloksellisuutta, tehokkuutta ja johdonmukaisuutta. Evaluoinnin keskiössä oli Kestävän kehityksen ja kaupan viestinnän yksikkö (VIE-30), jonka tehtäviin kuuluu sekä suora ulkoinen kehitysviestintä että ministeriön muiden osastojen ja yksiköiden kehitysviestinnän tuki. Viestintä on keskeinen ulkoministeriön työmuoto ja viestintäosasto (VIE) vastaa kaikesta ulkoasiainhallinnon ulkoisesta ja sisäisestä viestinnästä. VIE-30 keskittyy viestintään, joka liittyy kehityspolitiikkaan, kehitysyhteistyöhön ja Team Finlandiin. Arvioitaessa kehitysviestinnän tuloksellisuutta evaluointitiimi käytti mittarina ulkoministeriön kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön näkyvyyttä digitaalisessa ja sosiaalisessa mediassa. Tarkastelu kattoi myös muita kanavia, ministeriön verkkosivuja, tilaisuuksia ja tapahtumia.

Kestävän kehityksen ja kaupan viestinnän yksikön työhön ja saavutuksiin vaikuttavat monet tekijät. Evaluointi toi esiin seuraavat: valtionhallinnon ja ulkoministeriön viestintäpolitiikka, kansalaismielipide kehitysyhteistyöstä, media-alan muutokset ml. sosiaalisen median ja "klikki-median" jatkuvasti kasvava merkitys, polarisoituva julkinen keskustelu ja valtionhallinnon viestintään liittyvät erityisvaatimukset ja -piirteet, jotka tulevat vahvasti esiin kehitysviestintää tarkastellessa.

Evaluoinnin metodologia pohjaa sille kehitettyyn evaluointimatriisiin, jossa on kolme pääkysymystä sekä joukko alakysymyksiä, joihin evaluoinnin on vastattava. Evaluointimatriisissa on myös esitetty kullekin kysymykselle arvioinnin perustana käytetyt kriteerit. Lisäksi, osana evaluointia arviointitiimi järjesti ulkoministeriön kehitysviestintätiimille työpajan, jossa mallinnettiin käytössä olevat kehitysviestinnän mekanismit ja syy-seuraussuhteet: millä eri keinoilla viestintä pyrkii saamaan medianäkyvyyttä ja lisäämään kansalaisten ymmärrystä kehityspolitiikasta ja kehitysyhteistyöstä.

Evaluointimetodeina käytettiin media-analyysiä, tapaustutkimusta, kirjallisen aineiston läpikäyntiä, digitaalisia kyselyitä, haastatteluja ja työpajoja ryhmäkeskusteluineen. Arviointitiimi analysoi kerätyn tiedon käyttäen analyysimatriiseja ja tarkisti löydösten todenperäisyyden useista lähteistä.

Alla vastataan evaluoinnin pääkysymyksiin kehitysviestinnän tuloksellisuuden, tehokkuuden ja johdonmukaisuuden osalta:

Kehitysviestinnän tuloksellisuus

Ulkoministeriö on useassa kanavassa tapahtuvan viestintänsä avulla lisännyt kansalaisten ymmärrystä kehityspolitiikasta ja kehitysyhteistyöstä. Tuloksellisuutta ovat kuitenkin heikentäneet puutteet, joita evaluointi havaitsi ministeriön kehitysviestinnän strategisessa suunnittelussa. VIE-30 tarvitsisikin vankan mandaatin kehittää pitkäntähtäimen viestintästrategiaansa ja noudattaa sitä, sillä kehitysviestinnän poliittisella toimintaympäristöllä on vaikutuksensa resursseihin, ajoituksiin, henkilöstöön ja päämääriin, ja tämä vaatii tuloksellisuuden kannalta strategisuutta. Ulkoministeriön saama mediatila on rajallinen ja valtion virkahenkilöihin kohdistuu viestijöinä erityinen vaade

läpinäkyvyydestä, neutraaliudesta ja objektiivisuudesta. Vaikka ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnän viestit harvoin ylittävät uutiskynnyksen, ministeriö on onnistunut jossakin määrin erityisesti kansallisen tason mediassa lisäämään kehityspolitiikan ja kehitysviestinnän näkyvyyttä. Kohdennettu keskittyminen rajattuun joukkoon median edustajia on ollut tuloksekasta ja auttanut ulkoministeriötä kehittämään mediasuhteitaan ja -verkostojaan. Kehitysviestinnän kohdeyleisöjä on analysoitu ja VIE-30 ymmärtää tarpeen kohdennetun viestinnän lisäämiselle. Evaluointi kuitenkin havaitsi, että toistaiseksi suurin osa kehitysviestinnästä tavoittaa sen osan yleisöä, joka on jo kiinnostunut globaaleista kysymyksistä ja tukee kehitysyhteistyön tekemistä.

Ulkoministeriön viestintäkanavat koetaan informatiivisina, mutta tiedon löytämisen helppouden osalta käyttäjien mielipiteet ovat jakautuneet. Osa ulkoministeriön henkilöstöstä eli viestijöistä puolestaan toivoisi ministeriön käyttöön nopeampia ja helpompia viestintätapoja ja -kanavia. Monisyisten kehitysyhteistyöhön liittyvien viestien medianäkyvyyden osalta ulkoministeriön kehitysviestintä on ollut tehotonta ja evaluointi kiinnitti huomiota ministeriön heikohkoon kykyyn viestiä eri ulkopolitiikan lohkojen eli turvallisuus-, kehitys- sekä kauppa- ja investointipolitiikan välisistä kytköksistä. Yllämainitut tavoitteenasettelun strategiset puttet vaikuttavat myös tähän. Kehitysyhteistyön tulosten viestintää on syytä jatkaa, vaikka osa viestinnän yleisöstä kokee, että tulosviestintä on heidät jo riittävästi tavoittanut.

Suuren yleisön tavoittamista kehitysviestinnällä hankaloittaa ministeriön osalta virkakielen käyttäminen viestinnässä ja se, ettei viestintä ole personoitua. Valtaosa sosiaalisessa mediassa käytävästä keskustelusta ei ole ulkoministeriön aloittamaa ja sen kehitysnegatiivisuuteen on hankala vaikuttaa. Ulkoministeriö on onnistunut lisäämään erityisesti nuoriin kohdistetun viestintänsä tavoittavuutta kampanjoiden ja ulkoistettujen palvelujen kautta. Ministeriön kehitysviestinnän suunnittelu on kuitenkin tähtäimeltään lyhytkestoista, siitä saatavia oppeja ei hyödynnetä ja monet strategiset mahdollisuudet menevät sivu suun. Evaluointi keräsi Suomen verrokkimaista kehitysviestinnän parhaita käytänteitä ulkoministeriössä harkittavaksi. Käytänteet liittyvät strategiseen suunnitteluun, kohdennetun ja harkittujen kanavien kautta toteutetun viestinnän lisäämiseen, viestintäkumppanuuksien hyödyntämiseen ja tiedolla johtamiseen.

Kehitysviestinnän tehokkuus ja ulkoministeriön sisäinen johdonmukaisuus

Riittämätön yhteistyö osastojen, yksiköiden ja edustustojen välillä sekä monessa yksikössä vajavainen johdon kehitysviestinnälle suoma huomio rajoittavat ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnän tehokkuutta ja sisäistä johdonmukaisuutta. Kaikki osastot ja suurin osa yksiköistä, jotka työskentelevät kehitysyhteistyön parissa, ovat kiinnostuneet siitä viestimään, mutta niillä on vain osittainen kapasiteetti hoitaa viestintää. VIE-30:ssä on osaavia viestinnän ammattilaisia, mutta heikot uramahdollisuudet vähentävät kiinnostusta työskennellä yksikössä ja ulkoministeriölle tyypillinen henkilöstön kierto vaikuttaa yksikön asiantuntemuksen kertymiseen. Ulkoministeriöstä löytyy viestinnän mestareita ja heidän on mahdollista toimia ministeriön äänitorvina. Jotta nämä kyvyt saataisiin tehokkaaseen käyttöön, tarvitaan panostusta yhteiseen viestinnän suunnitteluun ja materiaalien laatimiseen sekä lisää viestintäkoulutusta. Ministeriön johdosta ei ole löytynyt asialle voimakasta tukea.

Ulkoministeriön johto ja henkilöstö ovat pitkälti tyytyväisiä VIE-30:ltä saamaansa palveluun. Yksikön palvelutehtävä ja nopeaa reagointia vaativat pyynnöt ja suunnitelmaan kuulumattomat tehtävät

kuitenkin venyttävät VIE-30:n resursseja äärimmilleen. Yksikön sisältä sekä ulkoministeriön osastojen ja yksiköiden väliltä löytyy hyödyntämättömiä synergioita ja mahdollisuuksia, mutta ministeriön hierarkkisuus ja kunkin ministeriöläisen tiukka keskittyminen omaan, rajattuun tehtävälohkoonsa estävät niiden näkemistä ja käyttöönottoa.

Toimittajille suunnattu kehityspolitiikan ja kehitysyhteistyön johdantokurssi, kehitysakatemia, on osoittautunut menestyksekkääksi tavaksi lisätä tietoa ja kiinnostusta niihin. Parannettavaa ja mahdollisuuksia kehitysakatemian myötä luodun toimittajaverkoston kanssa toimimisesta kuitenkin löytyy, erityisesti siinä kuinka tehdä ulkoministeriön tarjoamasta tiedosta uutiskynnyksen helpommin ylittävää ja mediaa kiinnostavaa.

VIE-30:n mandaatti kattaa kehitysviestinnän kotimaiselle yleisölle, mutta yksikköön kohdistuu paineita aloittaa laajempi viestintä myös kansainväliselle yleisölle. Tämä paineistasi yksikköä ja venyttäisi sen resursseja entistä tiukemmalle.

Verrokkimaiden ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan toimijoiden kehitysviestinnän parhaisiin käytänteisiin kuuluvat organisaation eri osien välinen läheinen yhteistyö ja johdon tukema kehitysviestinnän prioritisointi. Muita hyviä toimintatapoja ovat viestintätiimin jako yhtäältä ad hoc- ja toisaalta suunnitelman mukaista viestintää tekeviin, ja harkittujen viestinnän osa-alueiden ulkoistaminen.

Kehitysviestinnän ulkoinen johdonmukaisuus

Ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnän ulkoinen johdonmukaisuus ei ole kovin pitkälle jalostunutta. Ulkoministeriö ja suomalaiset kansalaisjärjestöt päivittävät toisensa viestintäsuunnitelmiensa osalta kerran puolessa vuodessa, mutta muiden toimijoiden, kuten yksityisen sektorin toimijat ja tutkijat, kanssa ministeriöllä ei ole viestinnän osalta koordinaatiojärjestelyjä. Yhteistyö ulkoministeriön ja kansalaisjärjestöjen välillä kattaa esimerkiksi sen, että järjestöt saattavat jakaa omissa kanavissaan ministeriön kampanjaviestejä, ja ministeriö puolestaan sisällyttää järjestöjen viestintämateriaaleja tulosraportointiinsa. Ulkoministeriö ei kuitenkaan täysimittaisesti hyödynnä järjestöjen saati muiden toimijoiden kehitysviestintämateriaaleja tai yhteistyömahdollisuuksia, vaikka nämä harjoittavat kehitysviestintää huomattavissa määrin ja ministeriön rahallisen tuen turvin.

Globaalikasvatus, jota evaluoinnissa tarkasteltiin osana kehitysviestintää, ymmärretään osassa ulkoministeriötä kapeasti ja ainoastaan kouluissa tehtäväksi toiminnaksi. Globaalikasvatusta kuitenkin arvostetaan sekä ministeriössä että muiden toimijoiden parissa. VIE-30 tuottaa globaalikasvatusmateriaalia opettajien käyttöön ja osallistuu vuosittain EDUCA-messuille. Kansalaisjärjestöt toteuttavat globaalikasvatushankkeita ulkoministeriön rahoituksella, mutta järjestöjen ja ministeriön välinen koordinaatio ja yhteistyö on tällä saralla vähäistä.

Evaluoinnin 22 keskeistä löydöstä ja näistä muodostetut kahdeksan johtopäätöstä sekä kahdeksan suositusta on esitetty "keskeiset löydökset, johtopäätökset ja suositukset"-taulukossa seuraavalla sivulla.

Keskeiset löydökset, johtopäätökset ja suositukset

LÖYDÖKSET	JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET	SUOSITUKSET
Löydös 1: Tulosjohtamisen periaatteita noudattaen, käytössä on suunnittelua, seurantaa, raportointia. Myös joitakin evaluointeja on tehty, vaikkakaan ei järjestelmällisesti. Strateginen suunnittelu on evaluoinnin tarkasteleman ajanjakson aikana lisääntynyt, mutta ulkoministeriön viestintästrategia ohjaa kehitysviestintää varsin rajallisesti, kehitysviestinnälle ei ole asetettu selkeitä tavoitteita ja prioriteetteja, ja pitkäntähtäimen suunnittelu sekä seurannan tuloksista oppiminen ovat riittämättömiä.	1. Vaikka ulkoministeriö on ottanut askeleita sitä kohden, ministeriön kehitysviestintätyö ei ole riittävän strategista. Ulkoministeriö ei ole asettanut viestinnälleen selkeitä tavoitteita saatikka määritellyt tärkeysjärjestystä. Haastateltujen mukaan myöskään ministeriön yleisiä strategisia tavoitteita ja prioriteetteja ei ole asetettu eikä selkeästi ilmaistu, mikä puolestaan vaikeuttaa tavoitteenasettelua kehitysviestinnän osalta.	1. Ulkoministeriön johdon tulee tukea viestintäosastoa selkeiden tavoitteiden ja prioriteettien asettamisessa, ja VIE-30:n tämän prosessin osana kehittää aiempaa yksityiskohtaisemmat strategiset ja operatiiviset suunnitelmat. Näissä suunnitelmissa tulee työlle asettaa prioriteetit, muotoilla avainviestit, määritellä kohderyhmät, järjestellä seuranta ja oppiminen sekä resursoida ulkoistettavat palvelut niin, että niiden toteuttajien kanssa voidaan solmia riittävän pitkäkestoisia sopimuksia.
Löydös 2: Vaikka VIE-30 on tehnyt paljon työtä oikeiden viestintäkanavien, kohderyhmien ja avainviestien identifioimiseksi, näitä ei ole järjestelmällisesti vedetty yhteen ja otettu käyttöön.		
Löydös 3: Nykyisessä henkilöstö- ja budjettitilanteessa, palvelujen ulkoistaminen on mielekästä mutta sitä ei tällä hetkellä tehdä strategisesti. Pilotointi, jossa on sitouduttu samaan viestintäkumppaniin pitkäkestoisesti, on ollut VIE-30:lle hyödyksi.		
Löydös 4: Vaikka ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnän viestit ylittävät harvoin uutiskynnyksen, ulkoministeriö on onnistunut jossakin määrin erityisesti kehitysakatemian ja muun kohdennetun mediatyön kautta lisäämään kehityspolitiikan ja kehitysviestinnän medianäkyvyyttä.	2. Ulkoministeriö on jossakin määrin kehitysviestinnällään tavoittanut suurta yleisöä, mutta viestinnän näkyvyys on heikkoa sen osan yleisöä kohdalla, joka ei sitä aktiivisesti seuraa ja etsi, tai ymmärrä siinä käytettävää ammattisanastoa.	2. Ulkoministeriön tulee koota kehitysviestinnässä käytettävät materiaalit yhteen ja ottaa järjestelmällinen ote viestintään. Osana tätä on syytä kehittää konsepti- ja tietopankki, josta on helppo ottaa käyttöön ja soveltaa eri yleisöille kohdennettavaa kehitysviestintää. Materiaalin osalta tulee keskittyä yleiskielisen, konkreettisen ja havainnollistavan aineiston saatavuuteen.
Löydös 5: Vaikka ulkoministeriö käyttää viestinnässä useita kanavia, suurin osa ministeriön kehitysviestinnästä tavoittaa sen osan yleisöä, joka on jo valmiiksi kiinnostunut aiheesta.		
Löydös 6: Ulkoministeriön viestintä on fakta-pohjaista, mutta abstraktius ja ammattisanaston käyttö heikentävät sen tavoittavuutta. Ministeriössä on myös varsin rajallinen määrä kunkin eri asiakokonaisuuden äänitorvia.		

LÖYDÖKSET	JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET	SUOSITUKSET
Löydös 7: Ulkoministeriö on osallistunut julkiseen keskusteluun erityisesti silloin, kun on ollut syytä vastata väitöksiin kehitysyhteistyövarojen väärinkäytöstä tai kommentoida uutisaiheita, mutta sen kyky vaikuttaa keskustelujen luonteeseen on ollut rajallista. Digitaalisen median alustoilla, esimerkiksi Twitterissä, keskustelu on polarisoitunutta ja negatiiviset sisällöt saavat enemmän reaktioita kuin neutraalit tai positiiviset sisällöt.	3. Ulkoministeriö on toisinaan pystynyt vaikuttamaan julkiseen keskusteluun. Kasvokkain yleisön kanssa tapahtuneet kohtaamiset ovat olleet tehokkaita. Koska ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnän kanavissa harvoin käydään keskustelua, interaktiivisuus niissä jää vähäiseksi. Myös ministeriön äänenä toimivien henkilöiden vähäisyys vaikuttaa sen kykyyn sitoutua julkiseen keskusteluun.	3. Ulkoministeriön tulee vahvistaa viestintäkapasiteettiaan valitsemalla, valmentamalla ja kouluttamalla ryhmä kiinnostuneita virkahenkilöitään toimimaan ministeriön ääninä ja tukemaan muuta henkilöstöä viestinnässä. Ulkoministeriön johdon tulee näyttää esimerkkiä äänitorvena toimimisessa ja myös motivoida ja palkita viestinnästä. Jotta kehitysviestinnällä tavoitetaan suurta yleisöä, ministeriön tulee identifioida keskusteluareenoita, joissa on jo valmiina paljon osallistujia sekä resurssit ylläpitää laadukasta keskustelua, ja sitten osallistua näihin aktiivisesti.
Löydös 8: Kasvokkain yleisön kanssa tapahtuvat kohtaamiset tarjoavat paremmat mahdollisuudet interaktiiviselle keskustelulle, mutta tilaisuuksiin ja tapahtumiin keskustelemaan saapuvat yleensä vain ne, jotka jo ovat kiinnostuneita globaaleista kehityskysymyksistä. Ulkoministeriön tyypillisissä kehitysviestinnän kanavissa, kuten verkkosivuilla ja sosiaalisessa mediassa, keskustelua käydään harvoin.		
Löydös 10: Vaikka ulkoministeriön kehitysviestinnälle on olemassa operatiivinen rakenne, siinä asetetut roolit ja vastuut eivät ole kaikille selkeitä. Yhteistyön tekeminen, sisäinen viestintä ja odotukset vaihtelevat ministeriön osastosta ja yksiköstä toiseen. Evaluointi havaitsi jonkun verran ulkoministeriön johdon taholta tapahtuvaa viestinnän sisältöjen ohjaamista.	4. Ulkoministeriön sisäinen kehitysviestinnän koordinaatio ja johdonmukaisuus on rajallista, eikä ilmeisiä synergioita ole täysin hyödynnetty.	4. VIE-30:n tulee kehitysviestinnän operatiivista suunnitelmaa kehittäessä selventää yksikön sisäinen rooli- ja vastuujako. Sen tulee niin ikään selventää rooli- ja vastuujako VIE-30:n ja muiden yksiköiden ja osastojen välillä, sekä määritellä kehitysviestinnän prioriteetti-teemat ja avainviestit joita yksikkö sitten työstää, jättäen samalla sopivissa määrin tilaa *ad hoc*-pyynnöille.
Löydös 11: Ulkoministeriön edellinen viestintästrategia painotti "kaikki viestivät"-periaatetta. Viestinnän aiheiden identifioimisen, viestintäsuunnittelun ja sisällön tuottamisen osaaminen kuitenkin on kehitysviestinnän osalta VIE-30:ssä, kun taas monet muut ministeriössä tarvitsevat osaamisen kehittämistä tai tukea näillä osa-alueilla.		
Löydös 12: Osa työsuunnitelmista ja raporteista on heikosti löydettävissä ulkoministeriön tiedonhallintajärjestelmistä. VIE-30:n tekemän työn osalta ei vuosiraportteja kahden viime vuoden ajalta ole.		
Löydös 13: Viestinnän suunnittelun taso vaihtelee ulkoministeriön osastosta ja yksiköstä toiseen. VIE-30 ei ole järjestelmällisesti auttanut osastoja ja yksiköitä suunnittelussa, mutta moni niiden edustaja mainitsi evaluointitiimille, että apua kaivattaisiin. Vuosisuunnitelmaa ja tapahtumakalenteria ei ole kehitetty kattavaksi operatiiviseksi viestintäsuunnitelmaksi.		

LÖYDÖKSET	JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET	SUOSITUKSET
Löydös 14: Ulkoministeriön johto ja henkilöstö ovat pitkälti tyytyväisiä VIE-30:ltä saamaansa palveluun. Suurin osa VIE-30:n työpanoksesta käytetään ministeriön sisäisiin palveluihin. Yksikkö arvioi, että 50-70% sen työajasta kuluu palvelutyöhön, jota ei ole ainakaan yksityiskohtaisesti suunniteltu, vaikkakin työtä koskevat aihealueet ehkä vuosisuunnitelmassa mainittu onkin. Viestintäaineiston kierrättäminen kommenteille sekä sen hyväksyttäminen johdolla vievät tarpeettoman paljon aikaa. **Löydös 15:** VIE-30 täyttää palveluroolinsa kokonaisuudessaan, vaikka sen henkilöresurssit puolitettiin jo vuonna 2014. Evaluoinnin kattaman ajanjakson aikana palvelutyön osuus yksikön kokonaistyöstä on kasvanut. VIE-30:n kohdistuu paineita aloittaa laajempi viestintä myös kansainväliselle yleisölle.	5. VIE-30:n tehokkuus ja tuloksellisuus kärsivät priorisoinnin ja pois-priorisoinnin puutteesta. Ulkoministeriön kaavailut yksikön mandaatin laajentamisesta kattamaan kansainvälinen yleisö muuttaisi sen roolia merkittävästi ja vaatisi koko viestintäosaston uudelleen järjestäytymistä.	5. VIE-30:n tulisi karsia työmääräänsä priorisoimalla ja keskittymällä strategiseen viestintään. Ulkoministeriön ei tulisi lisätä yksikön tehtäviä ilman huomattavaa lisäystä sen resursseihin ja koko viestintäosaston työn uudelleen järjestämistä.
Löydös 16: Ulkoministeriö on kehitysakatemian myötä luonut ja ylläpitänyt kontakteja kiinnostuneen ja hyvin informoidun toimittajaverkoston kanssa. **Löydös 17:** Vaikka toimittajaverkosto muodostaa hyvän pohjan mediasuhteiden kehittämiselle, ulkoministeriön kyvyssä huomioida median agenda ja vastata sen tarpeisiin on parannettavaa.	6. Kehitysakatemialla on tärkeä rooli ulkoministeriön toimittajaverkoston kehittämisessä ja mediasuhteiden ylläpidossa. VIE-30 ei hyödynnä toimittajaverkostoa täysimittaisesti.	6. VIE-30:n tulee jatkaa kehitysakatemiaa ja järjestelmällisemmin hyödyntää toimittajaverkostoa paremmalla sisällön kohdistamisella, sisällön linkittämisellä uutisaiheisiin ja esittämällä ulkoministeriön asiantuntijoita haastatteluihin ja puhetilaisuuksiin
Löydös 19: Ulkoministeriö ei täysin hyödynnä kansalaisjärjestöjen ja muiden toimijoiden aineistoja kehitysviestinnässään. Vuosien 2018 ja 2022 tulosraporteissa järjestöjen ja muiden toimijoiden aineistoja käytettiin, mutta tulosraportoinnin ulkopuolella käyttö on vähäistä. Suurin osa järjestöistä jakaa ja käyttää ulkoministeriön aineistoja toisinaan tai harvoin. **Löydös 20:** Ulkoministeriö ja kansalaisjärjestöt käyvät yhdessä läpi viestintäsuunnitelmiaan kerran puolessa vuodessa, mutta muiden toimijoiden kanssa ministeriön koordinaatio viestinnän saralla on satunnaista. Järjestelmällisempi ja syvempi yhteistyö rajautuu pieneen määrään toimijoita. Sekä ministeriöllä että muilla toimijoilla on kuitenkin kiinnostusta yhteistyön syventämiseen. **Löydös 21.** Kansalaisjärjestöt ja muut toimijat täydentävät ulkoministeriön kehitysviestintää, sillä ne tavoittavat monenlaisia kohderyhmiä, käyttävät useita viestintäkanavia, ml. sosiaalisen median laajan käytön, ja viestivät monista teemoista. Vuonna 2021 kansalaisjärjestöt käyttivät 7.5 miljoona euroa ulkoministeriöltä saatua rahoitusta viestintään, globaalikasvatukseen ja vaikuttamiseen. **Löydös 22.** Globaalikasvatusta arvostetaan ulkoministeriössä laajasti. Globaalikasvatus kuitenkin ymmärretään osassa ulkoministeriötä ainoastaan kouluissa tehtävän toiminnan kattavaksi ja se nähdään erillisenä kehitysviestinnästä. Globaalikasvatusta toteuttavat suureksi osaksi kansalaisjärjestöt ulkoministeriön rahoituksella, mutta järjestöjen ja ministeriön välinen koordinaatio ja yhteistyö on tällä saralla vähäistä.	7. Kansalaisjärjestöt ja muut toimijat ovat merkittävä kehitysviestinnän ja globaalikasvatuksen toimija. Ulkoministeriö ei ole toistaiseksi järjestelmällisesti hyödyntänyt kaikkia koordinaatio- ja yhteistyömahdollisuuksia niiden kanssa.	7. Laajemman vaikuttavuuden nimissä, ulkoministeriön kannattaa jatkaa ja lisätä kehitysviestinnän yhteistyötä kansalaisjärjestöjen ja muiden toimijoiden, kuten yksityisen sektorin ja tutkijoiden, kanssa. Osana yhteistyötä kannattaa globaalikasvatuksen tukemista jatkaa ja tarkastella ministeriön ja järjestöjen välisiä synergioita sen saralla, ml. globaalikasvatus-käsitteen ja konseptin yhdenmukaistamisen osalta.

LÖYDÖKSET	JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET	SUOSITUKSET
Löydös 9. Ulkoministeriö voi oppia Tanskalta ja Norjalta kohderyhmien tarkkaa märittelyä, pitkäntähtäimen viestintästrategian kehittämistä, yhteistyötä muiden kehitystoimijoiden kanssa ja tiedolla johtamisen osalta seurantaa ja tiedon jakamista. **Löydös 18.** Verrokkimaiden ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan toimijoiden kehitysviestinnän parhaisiin käytänteisiin kuuluvat organisaation eri osien välinen läheinen yhteistyö ja johdon tukema kehitysviestinnän prioritisointi. Muita hyviä toimintatapoja ovat viestintätiimin jako yhtäältä ad hoc- ja toisaalta suunitelman mukaista viestintää tekeviin, ja harkittujen viestinnän osa-alueiden ulkoistaminen.	8. Kehitysviestinnän järjestelyistä ja toteutuksesta niin Tanskassa ja Ruotsissa kuin monissa suomalaisissa ohjelmatukijärjestöissä on tuloksellisuuden ja tehokkuuden osalta paljon opittavaa.	8. Ulkoministeriön kannattaa vahvistaa yhteistyötä ja kehitysviestinnän parhaiden käytäntöjen jakamista verrokkimaiden ja kansalaisjärjestöjen kanssa.

Sammanfattning

Utvärderingens syfte, mål och tillvägagångssätt

Utvärderingen granskar kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor inom Finlands utrikesministerie (UM). Den bedömer kommunikationen i fråga om resultatuppfyllelse, kostnadseffektivitet och extern koherens, med särskild tonvikt på enheten för kommunikation om hållbar utveckling och handel (VIE-30), och hur denna enheten kommunicerar – direkt och indirekt – och bistår UM i kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor. Kommunikation är ett centralt område inom UM:s arbete, och kommunikationsavdelningen (VIE) har ansvaret för all extern och intern kommunikation. VIE-30 fokuserar på kommunikation om utvecklingspolitik, utvecklingssamarbete, externa ekonomiska relationer och Team Finland. Utvärderingen granskar resultatuppfyllelsen genom att titta på hur UM har bidragit till utvecklingssamarbetets och utvecklingspolitikens synlighet, i digitala och sociala medier såväl som i andra kanaler, såsom UM:s websida, offentliga evenemang och möten.

Utvärderingen omfattar flera frågeställningar som påverkar resultatuppfyllelsen och olika modaliteter inom VIE-30:s kommunikationsverksamhet: policies som vägleder regeringens och UM:s kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor, den allmänna opinionen om utvecklingssamarbetet, förändringar i medielandskapet, inklusive det ständigt ökande bruket av sociala medier och kraven på "klickvänlig" kommunikation, den polariserade offentliga debatten och myndighetskommunikations särdrag, särskilt de som rör kommunikation om utvecklingspolitiska frågor.

Utvärderingsmetoden summeras i en utvärderingsmatris som innehåller tre utvärderingsfrågor och flera delfrågor. Samtliga frågor kompletteras med bedömningskriterier. Med hjälp av utvärderingsteamet tog UM fram en schematisk bild av hur man med kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor försöker uppnå synlighet i media och öka medborgarnas förståelse för utvecklingssamarbete och utvecklingspolitik.

Utvärderingsmetoden inkluderade en medieanalys, två fallstudier, en skrivbordsgranskning av rapporter och andra dokument, två online-undersökningar, intervjuer med UM-chefer och andra intressenter, samt fokusgruppsdiskussioner. Utvärderingsteamet kartlade den insamlade informationen med hjälp av analysmatriser och datatriangulering.

Svaren på utvärderingsfrågorna sammanfattas nedan.

Resultatuppfyllelse

UM har bidragit till allmänhetens kunskap om och förståelse för utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete genom olika kanaler, men brister i den långsiktiga kommunikationsplaneringen inom ministeriet har påverkat resultatuppfyllelsen negativt. Eftersom kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor sker inom en politisk miljö – som påverkar resurstilldelning, timing, personal och mål – behöver VIE-30 ett tydligt och starkt mandat att navigera och skapa långsiktiga strategier inom UM. UM:s utrymme i media är relativt begränsat och det förväntas att offentliga tjänstemän är transparenta,

neutrala och objektiva i sina uttalanden. Trots det låga nyhetsvärdet har UM i viss mån bidragit till att synliggöra utvecklingssamarbetet och utvecklingspolitiken, särskilt i riksmedia. De målgrupps-fokuserade ansträngningar som gjorts för att engagera och informera mediarepresentanter har varit tämligen framgångsrika, och bistått ministeriet att skapa ett nätverk av journalister och stärka relationer med media. Målgruppsanalyser har gjorts och VIE-30-medarbetare har full förståelse för behovet av ökad fokusering. Merparten av informationen når dock bara de som redan har ett intresse för och följer globala frågor och utvecklingssamarbete.

UM:s kommunikation anses allmänt vara relevant, även om det finns olika åsikter bland intressenter om hur lätt det är att hitta information, och flera inom UM skulle föredra en enklare och snabbare kommunikationskanal. Att nå igenom med mer komplicerade budskap om narrativet för utveck-lingssamarbete har varit svårare, och det verkar finnas begränsad kapacitet för att tydligt informera om kopplingarna mellan säkerhetspolitik, utvecklingspolitik, handelspolitik och investeringar, vilket även har att göra med bristen på långsiktiga prioriteringar och mål för kommunikationsarbetet. Det finns ett behov av att kommunicera resultaten av utvecklingssamarbetet, men för vissa intressenter har behovet redan mättats.

Opersonlig kommunikation och bruket av ett formellt UM-språk gör det svårare att nå ut till allmän-heten. I de flesta fall initieras diskussionen på sociala medier inte av UM och förmedlar en negativ syn på utvecklingssamarbetet, som är svår att påverka. Genom informationskampanjer och utkon-traktering av tjänster har UM lyckats nå ut till fler, särskilt ungdomar. Kommunikationsplaneringen är dock kortsiktig, lärdomar dras inte regelbundet och strategiska möjligheter tappas bort. Det finns god praxis från andra länder i fråga om långsiktig planering, starkare målgruppsfokusering genom olika kanaler, utnyttjandet av partnerskap, och förbättring av kunskapshantering.

Kostnadseffektivitet och intern koherens

Den interna koherensen och kostnadseffektiviteten hos UM:s kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor förminskas av det begränsade samarbetet, och att enheter fäster olika stor vikt vid kommunikation. De flesta enheter och alla avdelningar som arbetar med utvecklingssamarbete vill kommunicera externt utanför UM, men har varierande kapacitet för detta ändamål. VIE-30 har skickliga kom-munikatörer, men bristen på karriärmöjligheter påverkar intresset för att arbeta på enheten, och generellt sett gör personalrotationen det svårt att bygga kompetens på området. På olika enheter finns de som brinner för kommunikation och skulle kunna fungera som talespersoner för politiker, anställda och chefer på UM, men det behövs resurser för att planera och ta fram kommunikations-material och utbilda personal. Detta har inte prioriterats av UM:s ledning.

Merparten av UM:s chefer och personal är nöjda med det stöd de får av VIE-30. På grund av den krävande service-funktionen och dagliga, oplanerade uppgifter och förfrågningar om stöd som måste hanteras skyndsamt är VIE-30:s personalresurser mycket ansträngda. Det finns outnyttjade synergier och möjligheter till effektivitetsvinster inom VIE-30, såväl som mellan enheter och av-delningar, som inte förverkligas på grund av hierarkin inom UM och den rådande silomentaliteten.

Introduktionskursen för journalister (utvecklingsakademin) har stärkt kunskap om och intresset för utvecklingssamarbete bland journalister och på nyhetsredaktioner i Finland. Det finns dock utrymme för att på ett bättre sätt använda nätverket av journalister för att öka UM-informationens nyhetsvärde och göra det mer intressant för media.

Enlighet förändringsteori ansvarar VIE-30 för kommunikationen med allmänheten men det finns också ett starkt önskemål inom UM att kommunicera mer med en internationell publik, vilket skulle sätta ytterligare press på redan ansträngda resurser.

God praxis bland civilsamhällesorganisationer och andra länder omfattar ett nära samarbete mellan olika delar av strukturen, en ledning som prioriterar kommunikationsarbetet, uppdelning av ansvaret för oplanerade och planerade uppgifter, samt utkontraktering av en del av kommunikationsarbetet.

Extern koherens

Vad gäller extern koherens finns det flera förbättringsmöjligheter inom UM:s kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor. UM och civilsamhällesorganisationer delar sinsemellan med sig av sina kommunikationsplaner halvårsvis, men med andra intressenter, som t ex organisationer som arbetar med affärsutveckling, företag som är aktiva inom utvecklingssamarbetet eller forskare, finns det för närvarande ingen samordningsstruktur. Samarbetet sker mestadels genom samordning av kommunikationsinnehåll, d v s att civilsamhällesorganisationer sprider UM-information i sociala medier eller att MFA tar in material från civilsamhällesorganisationer i den utvecklingspolitiska resultatrapporten. UM utnyttjar dock inte fullt ut den information som tas fram av civilsamhällesorganisationer och andra aktörer, eller samarbetet med dessa organisationer, trots att civilsamhällsorganisationer och andra externa aktörer gör betydande kommunikationsinsatser som finansieras av UM.

UM har till stor del en snäv syn på global utbildning, och begränsar begreppet till den utbildning som ges i skolor. Det finns dock ett starkt stöd för global utbildning inom UM och hos externa intressenter. VIE-30 producerar globalt utbildningsmaterial för lärare och deltar i EDUCA-mässan. De finska civilsamhällesorganisationerna genomför omfattande global utbildning som finansieras av UM, men samordningen och samarbetet mellan UM och civilsamhällesorganisationer är begränsat.

Tabellen nedan återger utvärderingens 22 resultat, 8 slutsatser och 8 rekommendationer till UM.

Resultat, slutsatser och rekommendationer

RESULTAT	SLUTSATSER	REKOMMENDATIONER
Resultat 1. Resultatplanerad styrning sker då planering, uppföljning, rapportering samt även utvärdering i viss grad äger rum, om än inte på ett systematiskt sätt. Den långsiktiga planeringen har ökat under utvärderingsperioden, men eftersom UM:s kommunikationsstrategi inte sätter tydliga mål och prioriteringar för kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor är den långsiktiga planeringen och lärandet från uppföljning otillräcklig.	**Slutsats 1.** Även om viktiga framsteg har gjorts är kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor inte tillräckligt strategiskt. UM har inte fastställt de långsiktiga målen och prioriteringarna för kommunikation. Enligt intervjuade har UM inte fastsätt eller klart uttryckt sina allmänna strategiska mål eller prioriteter, vilket gör det svårt att definiera målen för kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor.	**Rekommendation 1.** UM:s ledning bör skapa förutsättningar för kommunikationsavdelningen att bättre definiera sina långsiktiga mål och prioriteringar, och att VIE-30 sedan kan ta fram strategiska och operativa planer med detaljerade prioriteringar, nyckelbudskap, målgrupper, mekanismer för uppföljning och systematiskt lärande, samt resurskrav, inklusive utkontraktering av tjänster på tillräckligt långsiktig basis.
Resultat 2. VIE-30 har arbetat mycket med att identifiera kanaler, målgrupper och nyckelbudskap men de förslag som har tagits fram har inte sammanställts på ett systematiskt sätt eller genomförts fullt ut.		
Resultat 3. Under nuvarande omständigheter med begränsade personalresurser och budget är det motiverat att utkontraktera tjänster, även om det inte görs på ett strategiskt sätt. Pilotprojektet med en långsiktig partner har gynnat VIE-30.		
Resultat 4. Trots det ringa nyhetsvärdet har UM bidragit till att synliggöra utvecklingssamarbetet och utvecklingspolitiken i en mängd olika medier genom utvecklingsakademin och andra specifika insatser riktade mot media.	**Slutsats 2.** UM har i viss mån nått ut till allmänheten, men synligheten är begränsad för dem som inte aktivt följer och söker information, eller förstår den fackmässiga jargongen.	**Rekommendation 2.** Använd ett övergripande tillvägagångssätt för att ta fram kommunikationsmaterial om utvecklingsfrågor: begrepp och en databas som kan finjusteras för olika målgrupper. Tala mer klarspråk och använd konkreta fall som exempel.
Resultat 5. Även om UM har gjort information tillgänglig via en mängd olika kanaler, når de mestadels redan intresserade personer.		
Resultat 6. UM:s kommunikation är faktabaserad, men räckvidden är begränsade på grund av budskapens abstrakta karaktär, den fackmässiga jargongen, bristen på variation, och det lilla antalet talespersoner.		

RESULTAT	SLUTSATSER	REKOMMENDATIONER
Resultat 7. UM har deltagit i offentliga debatter, särskilt genom att bemöta anklagelser om korruption och kommentera aktuella frågor, men med begränsad förmåga att påverka diskussionens karaktär. Debatten på digitala plattformar som Twitter är polariserade och det negativa innehållet får flest reaktioner. **Resultat 8.** Fysiska möten ger bättre möjligheter för interaktion, men målgruppen tenderar att begränsas till dem som redan är intresserade av globala utvecklingsfrågor. Det förs sällan några diskussioner i de existerande UM-kanalerna, såsom på webbplatsen och konton i sociala medier.	**Slutsats 3.** UM har då och då påverkat den offentliga debatten. Fysiska möten med målgruppen har varit effektiva. Interaktionen är begränsad eftersom det sällan förekommer diskussion i UM-kanalerna. Bristen på talespersoner påverkar också förmågan att delta i debatten.	**Rekommendation 3.** Förstärk UM:s kommunikationskapacitet genom att välja ut, coacha och utbilda en grupp talespersoner bland den intresserade personalen och ge stöd till övrig personal med varierande kommunikationsförmåga på ett strukturerat sätt. UM:s högsta ledning bör vara förebilder som talespersoner och på olika sätt uppmuntra och motivera personalen att kommunicera offentligt. För att nå ut till andra än de som redan arbetar inom området behöver nya diskussionsplatformar utforskas, som redan har en stor publik och resurser för att främja dialog.
Resultat 10. Det finns en etablerad verksamhetsstruktur, men roller och ansvar är inte tydliga för alla. Graden av samarbete, intern kommunikation och förväntningar varierar mellan enheter och avdelningar. Utvärderingen fann vissa tecken på att UM:s ledning styr kommunikationsinnehållet. **Resultat 11.** UM:s tidigare kommunikationsstrategi betonade principen om att "alla kommunicerar", och därmed vikten av att identifiera särskilda kommunikationsämnen, planera kommunikationsarbetet, och ha färdigheter att producera innehåll. VIE-30 har kompetensen men många UM-medarbetare ser ett behov av att stärka sin kapacitet inom olika kommunikationsområden. **Resultat 12.** Vissa planer och rapporter är svåra att hitta i UM:s arkiv och det finns inga rapporter om det arbete som VIE-30 har utfört under de senaste två åren. **Resultat 13.** Kommunikationsplaneringen varierar mellan enheter och avdelningar. VIE-30 har inte på ett systematiskt sätt bistått enheter eller avdelningar i planeringen, men i intervjuer utryckte flera UM-chefer ett behov av stöd. Den årliga planen och aktivitetskalendern har inte sammanställts i en verksamhetsplan.	**Slutsats 4.** Den interna koherensen i fråga om kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor inom UM är begränsad, och möjligheter till synergier har inte utnyttjats fullt ut.	**Rekommendation 4.** Vid framtagandet av verksamhetsplanen, klargöra roller och ansvar både inom enheten och i förhållande till andra avdelningar, samt identifiera prioriterade teman och nyckelbudskap för varje avdelning som enheten kan kommunicera, samtidigt som utrymme lämnas för oplanerade förfrågningar.
Resultat 14. Merparten av UM:s chefer och övrig personal är nöjda med det stöd de får från VIE-30. VIE-30 arbetar framförallt med att bistå övriga UM. Medarbetare uppskattar att 50–70% av deras tid går åt till arbete som inte har planerats i detalj även om ämnesområdena finns omnämnda i den årliga planen. Det tar onödigt mycket tid i anspråk att delge kommunikationsmaterial för kommentarer och för godkännande av UM:s ledning. **Resultat 15.** Enheten genomför fullt ut sin servicefunktion även om personalresurserna halverades redan 2014. Servicefunktionens andel av det totala arbetet ökade under utvärderingsperioden. Det finns en stark önskan från vissa delar av UM att utvidga kommunikationen från finsk till internationell publik.	**Slutsats 5.** VIE-30 har inte lyckats prioritera och nedprioritera sitt arbete i tillräcklig grad, vilket påverkar resultatuppfyllelsen och kostnadseffektiviteten i negativ riktning. Förslaget att utöka VIE-30:s målgrupp till en internationell publik skulle förändra dess roll avsevärt och kräva omorganisation av hela avdelningen.	**Rekommendation 5.** VIE-30 bör minska sin arbetsbörda genom att prioritera och fokusera mer på den strategiska kommunikationen. Inga nya funktioner bör tillföras enheten utan att öka resurserna eller omorganisera arbetet på avdelningsnivå.

RESULTAT	SLUTSATSER	REKOMMENDATIONER
Resultat 16. UM har genom utvecklingsakademin byggt och upprätthållit kontakter med ett viktigt nätverk av intresserade och kunniga journalister.	**Slutsats 6.** Utvecklingsakademin är ett viktigt instrument för att skapa medianätverk och upprätthålla kontakter med journalister. VIE-30 har inte utnyttjat nätverket fullt ut.	**Rekommendation 6.** VIE-30 bör fortsätta att genomföra utvecklingsakademin med en blandning av journalister/media och använda nätverket av journalister mer systematiskt, genom att skräddarsy kommunikationsinnehållet, koppla innehåll till nyhetsagendan och föreslå UM-experter för intervjuer och presentationer.
Resultat 17. Även om nätverket med journalister ger UM en god grund för att vidare utveckla relationer med media är den allmänna uppfattningen att det finns en begränsad lyhördhet för medias agenda och behov.		
Resultat 19. UM drar inte full nytta av civilsamhällesorganisationers och andra externa intressenters material. De två resultatrapporterna för utvecklingssamarbetet, för 2018 och 2022, beskriver samarbetet med och återger material från en mångsidig grupp av aktörer, men förutom i rapporterna används materialet i begränsad utsträckning. Majoriteten av civilsamhällesorganisationerna använder och sprider ibland eller sällan vidare UM:s kommunikationsmaterial om utvecklingsfrågor.	**Slutsats 7.** Civilsamhällesorganisationer och andra intressenter är betydande aktörer inom kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor och global utbildning i Finland. UM har hittills inte på ett systematiskt sätt utnyttjat möjligheter till att stärka samarbetet och samordningen med dessa aktörer.	**Rekommendation 7.** För större genomslag, bygg på befintlig praxis för att utforska möjligheter för samarbete med andra aktörer som bedriver kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor, såsom civilsamhällesorganisationer, organisationer som arbetar med affärsutveckling, företag och forskare. Detta bör inkludera fortsatt stöd till global utbildning och att identifiera synergier med civilsamhällesorganisationer för att uppnå högre effektivitet samt att omdefiniera och förtydliga begreppet global utbildning.
Resultat 20. UM samordnar kommunikationen om utvecklingsfrågor med civilsamhällesorganisationer genom informativa möten vartannat år, och genom att ibland samarbeta med andra intressenter. Det mer systematiska och djupgående samarbetet är sporadisk och sker med ett fåtal organisationer. Det finns dock ett intresse både inom UM och bland externa intressenter att stärka samarbetet.		
Resultat 21. Civilsamhällesorganisationer och andra externa intressenter kompletterar UM:s kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor i hög utsträckning när det gäller att nå ut till olika målgrupper i Finland, genom att använda ett brett spektrum av kommunikationskanaler, såsom ett mångsidigt bruk av sociala medier, och kommunicera kring olika teman. UM bidrog med cirka 7,5 miljoner euro i finansiering för civilsamhällesorganisationerna utgifter för kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor, global utbildning och påverkansarbetet under 2021.		
Resultat 22. UM:s ledning utrycker ett starkt stöd för global utbildning. Inom UM uppfattas den globala utbildningen framförallt som den utbildning som ges i skolor, och som en separat verksamhet. Civilsamhällesorganisationer står för en stor del av den globala utbildningen i Finland. Denna utbildning bekostas av UM men samarbetet är i övrigt begränsat.		
Resultat 9. De viktigaste lärdomarna som UM kan dra av Danmark och Sverige är att noggrant definiera målgrupper, ta fram en långsiktig kommunikationsstrategi för utvecklingsfrågor inklusive kommunikation med andra aktörer, och förbättra kunskapshanteringen genom uppföljning och informationsdelning.	**Slutsats 8.** Det finns flera lärdomar att dra från det sätt som kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor är organiserad och genomförs i länder såsom Danmark och Sverige, såväl som inom finska civilsamhällesorganisationer som får programstöd av UM, och som kan bidra till ökade resultatuppfyllelse och kostnadseffektivitet.	**Rekommendation 8.** Förstärka samarbetet med andra länder och civilsamhällesorganisationer för att förmedla god praxis i fråga om kommunikation om utvecklingsfrågor.
Resultat 18. Civilsamhällesorganisationer och andra länder har utvecklat god praxis for hur arbetet kan struktureras på olika sätt för att stärka kostnadseffektiviteten inom organisationen. Denna praxis omfattar ett nära samarbete mellan olika delar av strukturen, en ledning som prioriterar kommunikationsarbetet, en uppdelning av ansvaret för oplanerade och planerade uppgifter, samt utkontraktering av en del av kommunikationsarbetet.		

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale, purpose and objectives of the assignment

Communications are a central function of the MFA. While the Department for Communications (VIE) has the responsibility of all external and internal communications, the Unit for Communications on Sustainable Development and Trade (VIE-30) works for and supports other departments in communications related to the ministry's development policy, development co-operation, external economic relations, and Team Finland. The unit is responsible for the strategic planning, development, and co-ordination of communications in co-operation with the departments and missions. The main duties of the VIE-30 are communications with citizens, the media and stakeholders in matters relating to development policy and development co-operation; support for global education through communications and in co-operation with authorities; communications with citizens, the media and stakeholders in matters relating to external economic relations; and Team Finland communications of the Foreign Service. This evaluation focuses on the communication of development policy and development co-operation only.

This evaluation focuses on the communication of development policy and development co-operation only.

All government communication is guided by the 2016 Central Government Communications Guidelines ((Prime Minister´s Office, Finland 2016) that outline the values governing communications as well as the duties of the government communications. The guidelines serve as a basis for different government organisations to draw up their own more detailed communications strategies and guiding documents. During the evaluation period, MFA had two different communication strategies, the last of which was drawn in 2022.

Development communication is an essential part of other actors implementing development co-operation with MFA funding. Among these, especially CSOs are active in communication and advocacy toward ordinary citizens, special target groups and politicians. Global education is another way of informing and increasing knowledge among children, youth, and adults. MFA, through its civil society unit (KEO-30), provides funding for CSOs' communication and global education projects, for a maximum of 2 years.

This evaluation looks at the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of MFA Finland and its development communication unit VIE-30. It assesses the internal coherence of work within the ministry, and the external coherence and collaboration with partners such as CSOs. The effectiveness of communications is examined by looking at their contribution to the visibility of development co-operation and development policy both in digital and social media. The context for the evaluation involves several issues that affect the modalities and the achievement of the VIE-30 work: the policies guiding government and MFA development communication, public opinion on development co-operation, changes in the media landscape, including the ever-increasing use of social

media and the demands for 'click-friendly' communication, the polarised public discussion and the particular difficulties of government communication, especially those related to development policy issues. The VIE-30 and its work are presented together with the change pathways leading to the outcomes of MFA development communications.

In the context chapter, the evaluation team also presents the general findings of the media analysis, painting a picture of the media visibility of development co-operation and development policy in 2015-22. After that, the findings and their conclusions are presented. Finally, the evaluation team makes recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of MFA development communications.

1.2   Scope of the evaluation

The temporal scope of the evaluation covers years 2015-2022. Content-wise, the evaluation only covers development communication activities funded by MFA Finland, including those of CSOs that received funding for development communication. The main focus is on VIE-30 communications. The assessment of the visibility of development co-operation in the Finnish media includes both traditional media (newspapers and government broadcasting company) and a limited sample of social media (Twitter).

The evaluation does not assess as such the performance of CSOs or their communications, but valuable lessons from CSO communications are included to benefit the MFA in the orientation of its future activities.

During the evaluation, the evaluation team has worked closely with the VIE-30, MFA staff and a number of CSOs, who have participated in focus group discussions and in discussing the evaluation findings. The main users of the evaluation will thus include the VIE-30 and other VIE staff, including the leadership; as well as the leadership and staff of the department for development policy (KEO), the department for the Americas and Asia (ASA), the department for Africa and Middle East (ALI) and the department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ITÄ). It is expected that the evaluation will provide useful lessons to the CSOs communicating about development co-operation and global issues as well as the development communication units of the reviewed peer countries.

> **The assessment of the visibility of development co-operation in the Finnish media includes both traditional media and a limited sample of social media.**

1.3   Evaluation questions

The evaluation matrix is provided in Annex 4. The evaluation has three major EQs with varying numbers of sub-questions (Table 1) and judgement criteria for each question. The focus was on looking at effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of MFA's development communications.

Table 1 Main evaluation questions and sub-questions

EVALUATION CRITERION	MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS
Effectiveness	EQ 1. To what extent has the ministry been able to contribute to the openness of government by increasing the public awareness and understanding about development policy and co-operation?
	EQ 1.1. To what extent has MFA used development communications efforts strategically to promote Finland's objectives and inform the public about global development issues and related challenges and successes?
	EQ 1.2. To what extent have the MFA's development communication efforts managed to reach the public?
	EQ 1.3. Whether and to what extent have the development communications efforts influenced public discussion on development policy and co-operation? To what extent has the discussion been interactive?
	EQ 1.4. What can MFA learn from peer countries in terms of effectively communicating about development issues?
Efficiency and internal coherence	EQ2. Is the development communication organised in an efficient way?
	EQ 2.1. To what extent has MFA made use of the synergies and interlinkages between its development communication and development co-operation (internal coherence)?
	EQ 2.2. To what extent has the unit in charge of development communications been able to adjust (prioritise and de-prioritise activities) to changes in the resources?
	EQ 2.3. To what extent has MFA been able to maintain and proactively develop media relations?
	EQ 2.4. What can MFA learn from CSOs and peer countries in terms of organisation of development communications?
Coherence (external)	EQ3. What is the external coherence of MFA development communications?
	EQ 3.1. To what extent has MFA utilised the materials of relevant CSOs, and other partners involved in the production of the contents and vice versa?
	EQ 3.2. To what extent do the development communications of MFA and other stakeholders such as CSOs complement each other?

The judgement criteria applied for each of the questions are shown in the evaluation matrix and under each sub-question title in the chapter on findings (section 3).

1.4   Approach and methodology

The evaluation team used a mixed-method approach and distinct tools to create the evidence-base for the evaluation. At the end of the data collection, both quantitative and qualitative data from different sources was compiled in an analysis matrix for the final examination and triangulation. Annex 3 shows the data collection methods, and Figure 1 illustrates the evaluation process.

The theory-base of the evaluation lies in the theory of change (ToC) drafted first with the partici-pation of VIE-30 staff during the inception phase and further modified by them during the imple-mentation phase (section 2.8). At the inception phase the EQs were placed in the diagram ToC of development communication. The logic model (section 2.8) describes how the development communications attempt to achieve the media visibility and changes in the understanding of

development co-operation-related issues by using the MFA's human and material resources, including the contribution of departments and units working with development co-operation in the MFA organisation. With the facilitation by the evaluation team, the VIE-30 staff also elaborated 10 assumptions that influence the change pathways.

The evaluation matrix (Annex 4) formed the background for the data collection. The evaluation used structured interview templates with questions drawn from the judgement criteria of the sub-questions, and applied them for case studies, online surveys and the interviews of MFA directors, CSOs and other external stakeholders.

The evaluation is **outcome-oriented** by analysing the perceived outcomes such as the visibility and quality of MFA development communication among several direct target groups, including CSOs, journalists, and other stakeholders. The **process-orientation of the evaluation** included analysing the internal and external processes that shape the contents of development communications and the outcomes of these processes.

The conclusions of the evaluation are drawn both based on the EQ findings and the analysis on the plausibility of the assumptions.

Figure 1 Evaluation process
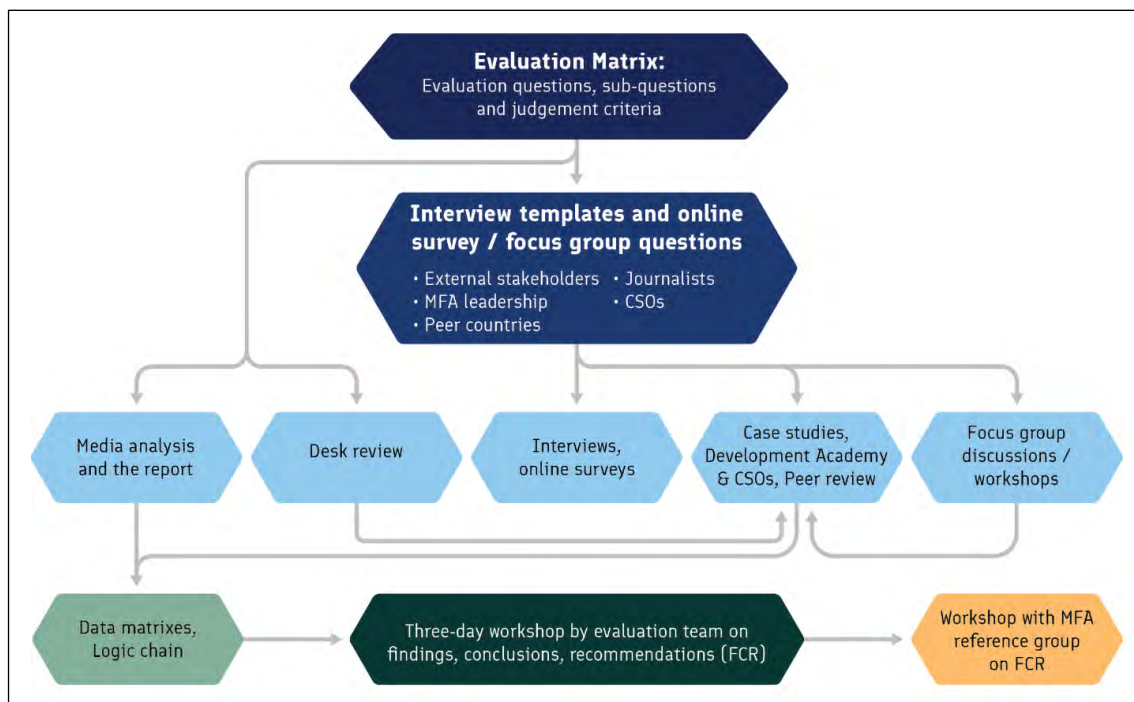
Source: Evaluation team

1.5   Limitations to the evaluation

Most of the limitations or risks that were anticipated during the inception period did not material-ise. The co-operation with VIE-30 was good and timely, but as always, meeting times had to be adjusted due to busy schedules. The MFA staff response rate in the online survey was very low despite several motivation attempts by the unit for development evaluation (EVA-11) and the di-rector of VIE-30.

Some editors-in-chief and journalists and MFA directors did not respond to interview requests.

Originally it was planned that peer review of development communication in Sweden and in Den-mark would be annexed to the evaluation report. It turned out to be challenging to carry out the review in Denmark without a visit and face-to-face meetings with the responsible people. Also, it would not have been possible to publish the review without some interviews and agreements of directors in MFA Denmark. Therefore, it was decided that the best practices as assessed by the evaluation team would be used in the report, but the peer review report would not be publicly available.

2　Evaluation context

This evaluation looks at how the MFA Finland and its development communication unit VIE-30 have organised their work within the ministry, and how do they collaborate with external stakeholders. The effectiveness of their work is examined by looking at their contribution to the visibility of development co-operation and development policy both in digital and social media. The context for the evaluation involves several issues that affect the modalities and the achievement of the VIE-30 work: the policies guiding government and MFA development communication, public opinion on development co-operation, changes in the media landscape, including the ever-increasing use of social media and the demands for 'click-friendly' communication, the polarised public discussion and the particular difficulties of government communication, especially those related to development policy issues.

In the context chapter, the evaluation team presents the general findings of the media analysis, painting a picture of the media visibility of development co-operation and development policy in 2015-22.

2.1　Policy context of development communication

According to the policy documents, the development communication in the MFA has at least two different objectives. First, the ministry is a public authority, and it has the responsibility of providing information about the MFA development co-operation and its results. Like in other ministries, MFA communication is guided by the Central Government Communications Guidelines (Prime Minister´s Office, Finland 2016), which draw on the fundamental right of citizens to receive information on public decisions and their preparation. The importance of openness in the public offices' activities and producing and disseminating information about their work increases accountability and understanding of how the taxpayer's money is used. The information to the public must cover the basic facts of development co-operation, e.g. budgets, grants provided to different implementing actors and reports on the achievements.

Secondly, the communication aims to increase public knowledge of Finland's development policy, which "*promotes the worldwide goal aiming at sustainable poverty reduction and the realisation of fundamental rights, the rules-based multilateral system, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in the UN*"[1]. Development policy is an integral part of Finland's human rights-based and value-based foreign and security policy, and it is grounded in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, the promotion of better understanding of Finland's role in the international community and the principle of interdependence in the global system is an important part of communication.

1　https://um.fi/goals-and-principles-of-finland-s-development-policy

The 2021 Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms (MFA 2021) emphasised citizens' and development policy stakeholders' need for up-to-date and easily understandable information on the state of the world, Finnish development policy, and the results of development co-operation. The role of communications (information) was to introduce into topical public debate the aspect of international interdependence and Finland's ability to influence global

Promotion of better understanding of Finland's role in the international community and the principle of interdependence in the global system is an important part of communication.

development. The report concluded that "*Communicating transparently and actively is part of the work of everyone involved in development policy implementation. Global education and lifelong learning also play an important role in understanding complex issues. The authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGO) collaborate to provide support for the school-attending age groups to grow into responsible global citizens*". In the report, also good communication and co-operation with the media are seen as important in inspiring a variety of Finnish actors to participate in development policy and development co-operation.

The MFA communication strategy (MFA 2022) has no specific objectives for development communications or global education, but the general objectives emphasise bringing communication into the very centre of strategic operations. The strategy gives increasing importance to international communication stressing the close co-operation between the ministry and embassies in terms of planning and implementation of communications, capacity development and joint communication choices.

According to the strategy, the communications are to be more targeted and hence more effective through improved understanding of audiences and models to help prioritise various target groups. The plan is to use data analytics techniques to produce content that is better tailored and timelier for the target groups. The most important channels of communications in which MFA must be visible and present in the 2020s will be defined. The ministry envisages to share the knowledge and information openly and bring the experts / expertise to the fore in discussion on Finland's foreign and security policy. At the same time, MFA is committed to participate in discussions and offer constructive solutions. In discussing their work, the specialists are encouraged to use their own voices. Each staff member is responsible for doing his/her part in the planning of communications and for participating in the public discussion by traditional means of communications or through social media.

2.2   The context of government communication

The contexts of governments and public authorities are complex with a variety of constraints, such as changing citizen and stakeholder expectations and requirements, managing political as well as national guidelines, international co-operation, ideologies, and the bureaucratic culture of administration. In this way, *"public sector communication must balance the democratic communication aims of engaging citizens with organisational and institutional goals, as well as with survival in the midst of budget restrictions"* (Canel and Luoma-aho 2020). A number of aspects of political organisations have consequences for the way that they can structure and perform communication activities, such as the levels of autonomy; the tasks and roles attributed; the multiple stakeholders that need to be addressed and listened to – groups that often have incompatible claims; and the often-prominent role of professional groups with their own values and principles (e.g. Fredriksson

2020). Organisations serving the common good tend to more or less always have to deal with complex, and even conflicting goals, and multipurpose organisations also always have multiple publics to care for.

Luoma-aho and Canel (2020) identify several traits of public sector communication, and as this is used as point of departure for the analysis of this evaluation, we have also made some modifications and added some further aspects to the traits. Altogether, they create complexities that need to be accounted for when assessing communication activities and the way that public sector organisations as well as governments can engage in strategic communication.

1. Communication work by governments is undertaken in a **political environment** that influence resources, timing, personnel, and goals.

2. The public sector has an **interdependent relationship with the media** influencing the scope of action. The overall role of media is to search for and uncover policy failures, corruption, inefficiency and other forms of malfunction in assisting citizens to evaluate governments and hold public officials accountable for their actions (Fredriksson 2020).

3. Compared to private sector and companies, **the public sector structures tend to be complex, diverse, and uncertain** in terms of objectives and decision-making criteria. The pace of decision-making processes is also slower in comparison to the private sector.

4. In addition, the public sector is also **heavily constrained by legal and regulatory frameworks**. For example, governments and public sector organisations cannot choose whom they serve, and nor can they tailor their services to meet the needs of for example their favoured customers.

5. **Legitimacy of governments depends on citizens approval**. Listening to citizens is therefore of key importance.

6. **The diversity and multiplicity of publics and stakeholders** are a natural part of governments and public sector organisation and exceed other types of organisations, such as for example corporations.

7. Most often the services that the public sector provides are intangible and long-term, which means that **measuring their success and the impact of their final products is challenging.**

2.3   Public opinion on development co-operation and policy in Finland

If the objectives of the development communication are to provide information about the development co-operation and its results and to introduce into public debate the aspect of international interdependence and Finland's ability to influence global development, the annual opinion survey is a proxy to examine how the development communication is achieving its objectives. The survey that the MFA commissions annually to Taloustutkimus to assess public opinion on issues related to development co-operation and development policy, is the way to measure the rate of Finns' support

to development funding. The opinion poll has been conducted annually for over 20 years. The questions probe people's perceptions on the importance of development co-operation and policy, their knowledge of the actual contents of development co-operation and the changes in people's attitudes. Every year some questions are changed or new ones introduced. In 2022 many new questions were added to probe the support to the humanitarian assistance, especially in Ukraine.

The polls show that public support for development co-operation grew slightly between 2015 (84%) and 2019 (89%) (Rahkonen 2019). Due to a change in the survey methodology in 2020 and another change in 2021, it is not possible to make the same kind of comparison for the rest of the evaluation period (Rahkonen 2021). The 2022 poll shows, however, that a quarter of Finns (21% of women, 33% of men) felt that their attitudes towards development co-operation have become more negative in recent years. The results were the same as for 2021 (Rahkonen 2022).

In 2022, only 27% of Finns trusted that development co-operation was closely monitored, and abuses are addressed. The reliability of information was also criticised. While in 2017, 89% of respondents believed that public authorities' information on development co-operation is reliable, in 2022 the percentage had dropped near to 70%. Based on the preferred sectors of development co-operation by the respondents, the idea of development policy is somewhat traditional and the newish sectors of co-operation such as private sector support and decent work, support to democracy, improving taxation or developing social security were much less popular than e.g. education, women's and girls' role or water and sanitation.

Attitudes towards development co-operation are strongly tied to values and not for example to whether a person believes that development co-operation is effective and achieves results.

In 2022, the MFA contracted Aula Research Oy to carry out an additional statistical analysis based on the data from the 2021 opinion poll. The objective of the analysis was to identify what citizens' opinions are based on, and to identify demographic groups based on their attitudes towards development co-operation. Ultimately, the purpose of the analysis was to guide the MFA's development communication (Aula Research 2022b).

The analysis confirmed that in Finland attitudes towards development co-operation are strongly tied to values and not for example to whether a person believes that development co-operation is effective and achieves results (Aula Research 2022b). In fact, there seems to be a contradiction in opinions: on the one hand, development co-operation is considered important, but on the other hand, its effectiveness is not trusted. The share of those who consider development co-operation to be effective has been gradually declining since the beginning of the survey in 2002. The 2022 opinion poll showed that only about a third of Finns (29% in 2022) trust that development co-operation achieves results, meaning that also those who support development co-operation and policy in principle still doubt whether it achieves results. The report on the 2022 Opinion Poll noted that the contradiction may be explained by the fact that, according to previous studies, Finns have a rather negative image of the situation in developing countries. For example, Finns believed that since 1990 the global situation had deteriorated in relation to the UN's Millennium Development Goals, when in reality a large part of the goals related to e.g. the reduction of extreme poverty were exceeded (Rahkonen 2022).

Aula Research's report highlights that women, people with high incomes, the highly educated and those living in urban areas as well as supporters of leftist and green parties tend to have positive attitudes towards development co-operation. Negative attitudes are most found among people with lower incomes, men, people with lower levels of education, those living in sparsely populated areas and supporters of right-wing parties.

Views vary by age, level of education and place of residence.

The report also noted that youth and people with lower education levels seem to be 'less fixed' in their views. Also, Finns with a relatively good income, over the age of 60 and living outside the Uusimaa-region are more undecided in their views than other demographic groups. The report noted that this group of 'unde-cideds' is a potentially receptive target group for development communication (Aula Research 2022a).

Because of the strong value-basis for opinions related to development co-operation, Aula Research noted that emphasising a moral obligation ("*Finland has a responsibility and an obligation to do development co-operation and to help those in the weakest position*") might be the most effective message when attempting to convince the undecided of the importance of development co-oper-ation. The report recognises, however, that getting this message across is challenging, because influencing people's values is much harder than communicating facts (Aula Research 2022b). In-terviews with MFA staff also highlighted that development communication that appeals to a moral obligation-based on 'aid/help'-narratives would not be in line with the MFA's approach or values.

To strengthen the Finnish public's trust in the effectiveness and efficiency of development co-oper-ation, Aula Research concluded that the most effective messages could be those emphasising that development co-operation improves the capacity of developing countries to take charge of their own wellbeing and addresses the root causes for migration. The report notes, however, that while this this may increase trust in the effectiveness of development co-operation, it is not the most effec-tive way to gain more support since attitudes are so strongly value based (Aula Research 2022b).

The 2022 Opinion Poll noted that crises affect opinions on development co-operation in two di-rections. On the one hand, crises clearly increase and underline the importance of development co-operation and especially humanitarian aid. On the other hand, crises can be accompanied by a global increase in food and energy prices, which also affects the citizens of donor countries and reduce the willingness to invest tax funds in any purpose beyond the borders of one's own country. To what extent Finns relate to and identify with the affected people also has a bearing. At the time of the 2021 poll the Taliban-takeover in Afghanistan was indeed one of the main reasons cited by respondents for reduced support to development co-operation. The war in Ukraine in 2022 had, on the other hand, the opposite effect: the support to humanitarian aid clearly increased (Rahko-nen 2022). To influence public opinion, Aula Research recommended that communication efforts need to consciously react to these moments. Crises cross the news threshold much easier than less dramatic news (Aula Research 2022b).

2.4   Public's news consumption in Finland

Finland is considered a media welfare state, where free media is publicly supported and there is equal access to information. Still, research gives indications of the stratification and politicisation of media use in Finland as well: the well-to-do participate in social decision-making and make extensive

use of many different media, while the media landscape of those with less education, lower income and less social participation is significantly narrower (Heikkilä et al. 2022). In addition, dwindling resources of traditional media threaten the quality of political journalism, and in an interview study with Finnish civil servants and political advisors, they state that contemporary political journalism is characterised by a higher degree of sensationalism and even that "*journalists no longer seem to have time to be careful in their work*" (Niemikari et al. 2019). The evaluation interviews with journalists confirm the changed conditions for their work and indicate that it has become significantly more difficult for them to justify publishing news articles about development co-operation.

Digitalisation has resulted in a fragmentation of media formats, which among other things, makes it more difficult for actor groups who want to reach out via media channels to "*estimate what kind of publicity they are going to get, and for what benefit*" (Niemikari et al. 2019). In this new digital media landscape, there have also emerged challenges with fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, which has raised requests for new methods to manage digital source criticism and verification

> **Conditions for media work have changed and it has become difficult to justify articles about development cooperation**

(Kalsnes et al. 2021). At the same time, digital channels allow MFA staff to find new ways to communicate with target groups, through for example campaigns on Instagram and the use of digital ambassadors on Twitter. Communication in social media has also become a way to influence the overall media agenda as journalists are frequently finding their news stories and reporting about what is being posted in social media (e.g. Niemikari et al., 2019).

With digitalisation, the public communication and consumption of news have considerably changed in Finland during the evaluation period 2015-22. The use of social media services has taken over from traditional media, becoming even more common during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 69% of Finns aged 16–89 used social media services. Also, many seniors have made the digital leap and started, for example, to use social media services and consume news online (Kohvakka and Saarenmaa 2021).

The opinion polls highlighted that only about 10% of Finns (2021) follow the topic of development co-operation actively and approximately the same proportion disregards it entirely. The rest (79%) take note of the contents if they come across it. The main sources of information on development co-operation for most Finns are the media, particularly print media and TV, and communication from public authorities. These are also considered to be the most reliable sources. Social media and a person's own circle of friends are the least trusted sources (Rahkonen 2021), although the questionnaire did not have an exact question about the different sources followed by the respondents.

2.5   Media landscape for development communications

The political agenda, how the people consume news in today's digitised media landscape and their interest for development co-operation as well as how these issues are covered by and framed in the media are key contextual factors that set the stage for public communication and therefore can have profound impact on development communication (Grafström and Strand 2021). The media organisations themselves are undergoing radical change. In the public debate we hear of the death

of the newspaper, 'fake news', and 'click journalism'. Established media are experiencing difficulties in finding sustainable business models and they face tougher competition for readership. The situation has been understood as enhancing a conflict between the watchdog role of media and commercial interest of the media industry (e.g. Breit & Vaara 2014). To generate 'clicks' and sell more newspapers, for example, the media may "*accentuate dramatic features of organisations and their undertaking*" (Breit & Vaara 2014, p. 50), having consequences of what kind of information is considered newsworthy and how it is presented. Another aspect of the constraints facing established media and qualitative journalism today is the decline in the number of specialist journalist (Von Krogh, T. (Eds.) 2011). The situation creates problems for resource-intensive journalism, as expressed by a Swedish journalist who has extensive experience of covering foreign aid and policy: "*Foreign aid is widely distributed and multifaceted. It's almost impossible to get hold of*" (Schibbye 2015)

Media is particularly relevant in forming understanding about global issues, people's lives in other countries and the role of development co-operation.

When it comes to development co-operation, the position of media as a meaning maker for the public has been suggested to be particularly important (Grafström and Windell 2019). Since the actual development work is undertaken in other parts of the world and the donors are not the same as the receivers, few people have direct experiences of development co-operation. This 'broken feedback-loop' (Martens, B. 2005) suggests that media is particularly relevant in forming people's understanding about global issues, people's living conditions in other countries as well as the role and possibilities for development co-operation.

News do not mirror reality, and news-making processes are structured according to certain criteria for what is considered newsworthy (Harcup & O'Neill 2017). Events are not out there ready for journalists – or others, such as communications professionals – to pick up and forward as news. News-making processes are shaped by multiple factors that include everything from journalists' normative ideas on the news' value of potential stories to practical, economic, and format considerations (Strömbäck et al. 2012) There is no shortage of lists of criteria for newsworthiness (in the form of event properties) in journalism studies, including aspects such as closeness to the audience in time and space, references to elite persons, something negative, conflict-related, extraordinary, or entertaining (Harcup & O'Neill 2017). Newsworthiness may also be created through the use of different storytelling techniques, such as simplification, polarisation, dramatisation, and stereotypisation (Strömbäck 2019). News stories therefore tend to be short and episodic, focus on a single event, favour unambiguity, and include human faces.

The nature of content that is attractive in social media is significantly different from a traditional media logic. The character of content is also heavily dependent on the type of platform (for example Twitter is very different from Instagram or LinkedIn). Hermida and Mellado (2020) offer a framework for how to understand the dynamics of content on Twitter, which is today one of the main channels for the communications from the MFA and the embassies. According to their analysis, there are five dimensions that are decisive for what type of material is suitable on Twitter:

- *Structure and design* – chronological manner with posts that are evanescent and ephemeral as they are quickly overtaken by more recent tweets. The platform is designed to be very much in the now, event-based and event-driven, immediate and instant exchanges of fragment of information.

- *Aesthetics* (verbal and visual styles) – simple, brief textual messages that are concise and to-the-point. Even though other media elements such as images, graphics interchange formats (GIF), short video clips can be included in the posts, short bursts of text still dominate.

- *Genre conventions* – Twitter represents a form of content that privileges the rapid production and dissemination of fragments of information. Speedy and pithy textual exchanges. Over time developed increasingly to reward news and information, rather than personal / private conversations. Tweets are expected to be related to current events.

- *Rhetorical strategies* – texts are seen as a work-in-progress, and almost as a replication of an oral, conversational form of rhetoric: "*The intent and purpose of a tweet is to present a sliver of information, which by its very nature is incomplete*" (Hermida & Mellado 2020, p. 875). This also means that the rhetoric on Twitter does not go very well hand-in-hand with formal professional communication (such as the MFA or traditional journalism), but are favouring more personal and emotional tones, and often also include grammatical or punctuation errors.

- *Interaction and intentionality* – interaction is favoured and the hashtag functions as a mechanism that organise posts around issues or topics. It serves as an "*updated and interactive index of public discourse*" (Hermida & Mellado 2020, p. 876). Interaction is treated as a 'social currency' and mentions can be seen as a way to "*tapping someone on the shoulder*" (ibid., p. 878).

The five dimensions show that information and knowledge are expected to be translated very differently in Twitter than in digital media. As social media today is key part of the everyday information and news flow in the society, the presence of these channels is influencing traditional values of newsworthiness. Consequently, to make people react on posts, share content and engage in conversations have become increasingly important regardless of media.

2.6 The overall visibility of development co-operation in Finnish digital media 2015-22

The media analyses commissioned by the evaluation and implemented by Meltwater observed data of seven years, from October 2015 to September 2022, in the Finnish digital media. During that time, development co-operation/aid/policy gained over 15,000 mentions (hereafter we use development co-operation as this is the most used term in the articles). Most of these mentions (85%) were in news articles, 13% were in opinion pieces and 2% in editorials. Most of them were also in the actual text and only 13% of the mentions were in lead of the articles and 11% in the headline .

> **Development cooperation is seldom visible in headlines.**

The overall visibility of development co-operation was relatively stable during the period (see Figure 2, note that 2015 and 2022 are not full years). In general, development co-operation is treated in the media coverage as a part of domestic politics and the highest peaks in attention during the period were related to budgeting for development co-operation, election campaigns and ministerial

positions. In this coverage, there are seldom in-depth discussions or descriptions about development co-operation or how it works, but rather development co-operation is mentioned as part of a broader discussion about budgeting and funding for development co-operation or a political election campaign. Worth noting is also that development co-operation was often mentioned as a sidenote, not being the actual focus of the article.

Figure 2 Yearly exposure of development co-operation/aid/policy in digital media

Potential Reach figures reflect the sum of potential viewership for publications, websites and social media posts. Meltwater's editorial content partner, SimilarWeb, provides monthly viewership figures of online publications from across the globe. These numbers are based on monthly website traffic, and do not reflect the amount each article has been viewed. Note that the year of 2015 as well as 2022 are not full years.

Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

Uusi Suomi was the digital outlet with the highest number of items in which development co-operation was mentioned. Mainly during the first years of the period, 2015-2017, this was a platform at which many prominent actors in Finland published their opinions (see Figure 3). Over the last few years, Uusi Suomi has become a less significant outlet for public debate. Second and third on the list over the outlets that have published the highest number of articles during the period were Helsingin Sanomat and Suomen Yleisradio (YLE) (Finnish Broadcasting Company). Note also that YLE is only included to the extent that it is an article text published on YLE.fi and/or YLE Areena.

Among the political party related media SDP's (Suomen Sosiaalidemokraattinen Puolue, Social Democrats of Finland) Demokraatti published the highest number of articles about development co-operation, while the Finns Party's (Perussuomalaiset) Suomen Uutiset published fewer articles (no. 356) but gained most reactions (647 671) on social media. The equivalent score for Demokraatti was 10 814 reactions. Reactions in social media are to a large extent created through emotive and negatively opinioned coverage (see further below). The share of neutral coverage was the largest in all analysed media outlets – indicating that the Finnish media generally treats development co-operation in an informative manner – except for Suomen Uutiset that focused on negative aspects in their coverage.

Figure 3 Top five digital news media (total for the period 2015-2022)

Articles		Potential Reach		Reactions (Social Echo)	
Uusi Suomi	917	YLE	1 213 454 932	Suomen Uutiset	647 671
Helsingin Sanomat	897	Helsingin Sanomat	861 927 072	Iltalehti	417 539
YLE	720	Ilta-Sanomat	582 672 096	YLE	323 379
Demokraatti	429	Iltalehti	516 067 565	Helsingin Sanomat	284 282
Etelä-Suomen Sanomat	428	Uusi Suomi	290 400 013	Ilta-Sanomat	253 717
Keskisuomalainen	415	MTV Uutiset	217 497 446	News Now Finland	141 308

Potential reach is based on the number of monthly visitors to the website. Data is provided by SimilarWeb. Reactions are based on a Social Echo metric, which monitors likes, reshares and comments pots sharing news article links gather on Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit.

Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

2.6.1 Sentiment of content in digital media

The overall sentiment or tone of communication in digital media between October 2015 and September 2022 consisted mostly of neutral mentions with positively toned articles gaining more mentions in bigger medias (potential reach) than negative. Even though the number of articles with a negative tone was of the smallest number, negative coverage sparked more reactions and conversation across social media platforms (Social Echo – a measure based on monitoring likes, re-shares and comments posts sharing news article links gathered on Twitter, Facebook and Reddit).

The sentiment analysis shows that in general Finnish media treats development co-operation in an informative manner and that this content was rather stable during the entire period. For example, both Helsingin Sanomat and YLE have mainly covered development co-operation in a neutral and informative manner. This goes hand in hand also with the part of the content that

> **Finnish media treats development co-operation in an informative manner.**

is produced by STT (Suomen Tietotoimisto, Finnish News Agency) news agency. Meltwater estimates in their analysis that STT was mentioned as the producer of the article in about 12% of all articles. The relatively high number of articles in which development co-operation is a sidenote further explains the large amount of neutral content.

The number of articles with positive tone is higher in number than those with negative tone. It is also important to note that the articles with positive tone appear in bigger media (e.g. YLE, Helsingin Sanomat, Ilta-Sanomat, Iltalehti and MTV Oy, commercial media channel) with potentially broader reach in comparison to articles with negative tone.

Even though the tone of the articles has been rather stable throughout the period, it is possible to distinguish some differences. Most positive content appeared during 2017 and 2018. This was mainly related to the presidential election during 2017 that made development co-operation visible as the candidates – mostly Haatainen and Haavisto – often emphasised the importance of development co-operation. In 2018,

> **Upcoming elections increased positive coverage, with many parties calling for increased development funding.**

the upcoming parliamentary elections increased positive coverage, with many parties calling for increased development funding, especially SDP.

Another driver for positive coverage was reports and statements emphasising positive results of development co-operation. One example is the coverage about Afghanistan when the Taliban re-took control over the country in August 2021. During that period many MFA representatives and other development co-operation actors defended Finland's development efforts in Afghanistan especially in improving the rights of women and girls.

During the years 2019 to 2021, the number of articles with a negative tone increased which was mainly driven by the Finns Party and in particular the publication of their shadow budgets. In 2019, there were news about misuse of development funding in Afghanistan and scamming funds from the MFA which further highlighted the negative aspects in the coverage.

Local media and Helsingin Sanomat were outlets for opinion pieces and editorials. Editorials were more often positive than negative (17% in comparison to 8%), while opinion pieces were more evenly divided between positive (27%) and negative (24%). In local media, the share of opinion pieces not written by development policy specialists was higher and the writers had stronger stance against development co-operation in general.

The amount of both negative as well as positive content has increased slightly over the period which could indicate that the polarised debate (that is for example found on Twitter, see further below) is somewhat more present also in digital media. Positive news often focused on highlighting the achievements of development co-operation, while the negative coverage strongly revolved around scandals, misuse of development aid funds or debates around funding.

2.6.2 Actor groups in coverage about development co-operation

Politicians are the most visible group of actors in the coverage and make up 40% of the total number of articles

A little less than 70% of the total articles about development co-operation in 2015-22 include mentioning of an organisation or an individual (Figure 4). Politicians are the most visible group of actors in the coverage and make up 40% of the total number of articles. As has been shown previously, particularly during election campaigns questions about development co-operation are mentioned. Yearly budget discussions and occasional additions or redirections of funding were other prominent themes when development co-operation and members of parliament were mentioned together in the articles.

The four biggest parties were dominating the coverage. Smaller parties, like the Green League, did not show very often. The Finns Party members did not gain as much media attention in digital media as on Twitter. Still, Finns Party clearly stands out as more critical toward the development agenda compared to all the other parties. When it comes to positive articles and share of voice, KD ('Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit', Christian Democrats) was the top party, even though both SDP and Kesk. (Suomen Keskusta) had a higher number of articles with a positive tone.

Figure 4 Actor groups visible in articles about development co-operation, digital media (number of mentions in percentage)

Development Policy Committee & Members

Ministry funded CSO's
12%

Top 5 most often mentioned
- *Kepa/Fingo 2%*
- *Kirkon Ulkomaanpu 2%*
- *World Vision 2%*
- *Fida 1%*
- *Lähetysseura 1%*
- *Others 3%*

Members of Parliament (Political Parties)
40%

SDP 15 %

KESK 8 %

KOK 4 %

PS 4 %

VIHR 4 %

Other parties 5 %

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
14%

No mention of a selected actor group / actor
33%

3 % 1 % 1 % 2 % 2 % 2 % 1 % 12 % 14 % 40 % 33 %
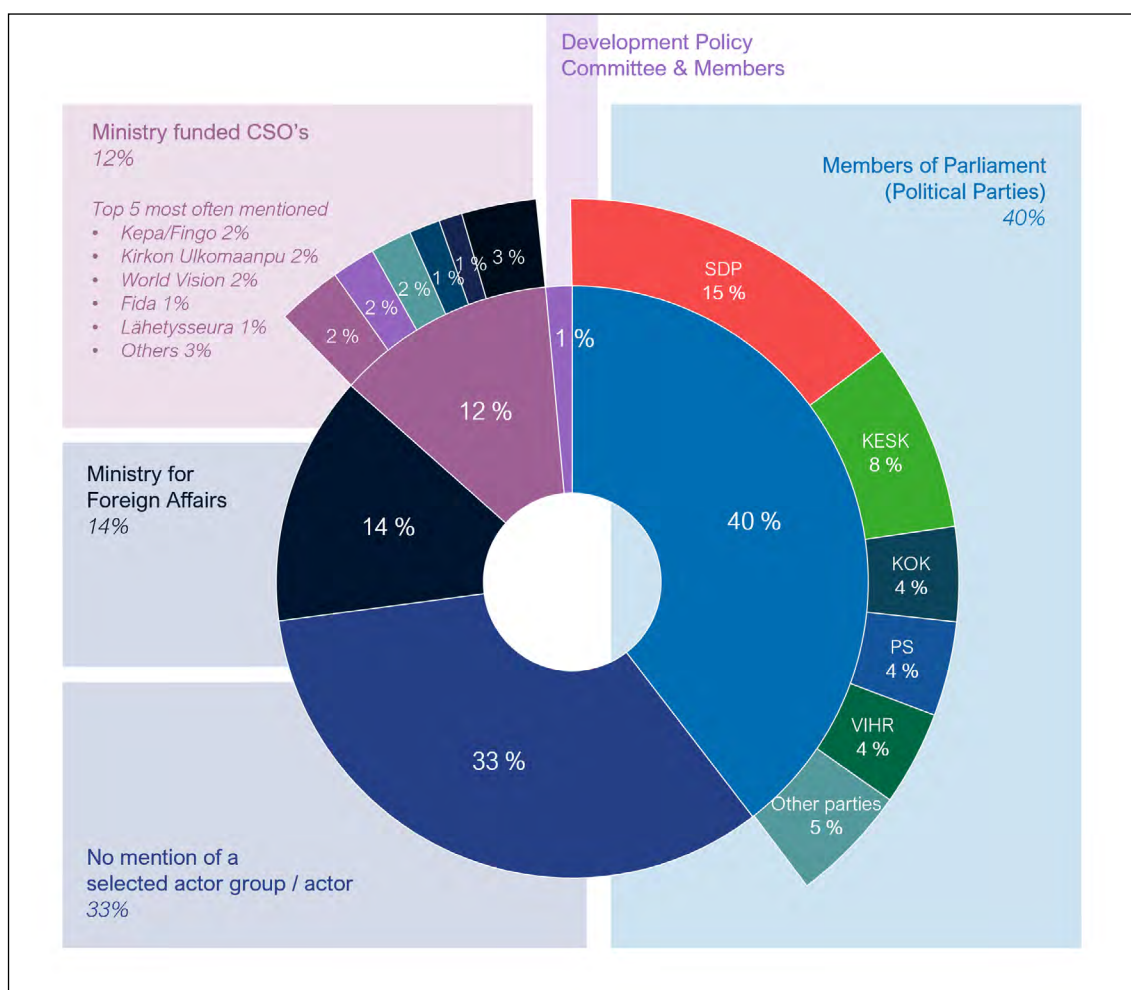
Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

CSOs funded by MFA were mentioned in a little more than every tenth article (12%), out of which Kepa (Finnish NGO coalition, now Fingo), Kirkon ulkomaanapu (KUA) and World Vision were the three most visible organisations. A few media events are worth mentioning. In April 2016, CSOs claim that stated a similar message in the news: "*development funding cuts deprive help from millions of people*". Also, in October the year after, 2017, Kepa was in the news arguing that *"Finland's climate action and equality support have collapsed after development funding cuts."*

The Meltwater analysis shows that traditional images of development co-operation tend to be rather common in the coverage. For example, church employees were presented in the media in articles that covered ongoing projects, often with a positive tone. These projects represent often a more traditional form of aid and are not as often criticised. Also, in our interviews with CSOs it becomes evident that CSO's fundraising campaigns also tend to maintain the old image of development co-operation in media. In addition, media, both large and small, as well as for example women's magazines regularly shared stories and portraits of other individuals participating in development

Traditional narrative of development cooperation is common in media.

aid work (and/or travel). For example, a longer article in the magazine Anna about a person who has been working in peace and conflict context in Sudan (in December 2018). Most often these articles were positive in tone and represented the (western) individual as the main character. Local agency was more seldom visible in this context, but another example, also in Anna, shows that there are also examples of such type of coverage[2].

Companies were not highly visible in the media regarding development work in partner countries, but the sector was not altogether missing. The articles varied from being about businesses participating in campaigns, having business relations in developing countries or encouraging investment in developing countries. One example of this coverage is an article in YLE[3] about a Finnish company working in Kenya as an employment platform. Another example is about the role of development funding in financial investments, not focusing on any specific company[4]. Most articles in which companies were mentioned were positive or neutral in tone, and these types of news also often emphasised the need to expand traditional development co-operation models to more equal opportunities through business. Many politicians raised the importance of private sector

Companies seldom make their development work in partner countries visible.

participation in development co-operation, highlighting the co-operation part over more traditionally perceived aid – financial or otherwise. Voices from research are almost entirely absent from the coverage. Selected researchers that have been funded by MFA and focus on development co-operation appeared only 14 times in total during the entire analysis period from 2015 to 2022.

The dominant role of the members of parliament as the most visible actor group can further be illustrated when taking both the potential reach of the media outlets as well as the reactions/social echo into account (see Figure 5). Large media outlets frequently cover news about politicians and these articles also tend to gain reactions in social media. The visibility in the figure can be seen as the highest possible regarding development co-operation related news coverage among the analysed actor groups. For comparison, top individual members of parliament (MPs) have been positioned on the graph (light blue) to emphasise how individual players in key actor groups can also gain major visibility.

---

2   Anna, January 2020, https://tinyurl.com/vmy8pwxh

3   YLE, June 2018, https://yle.fi/a/3-10222293

4   Helsingin Sanomat, September 2020, https://www.hs.fi/paakirjoitukset/art-2000005837053.html

Figure 5 Actor groups divided by potential reach and reactions/social echo
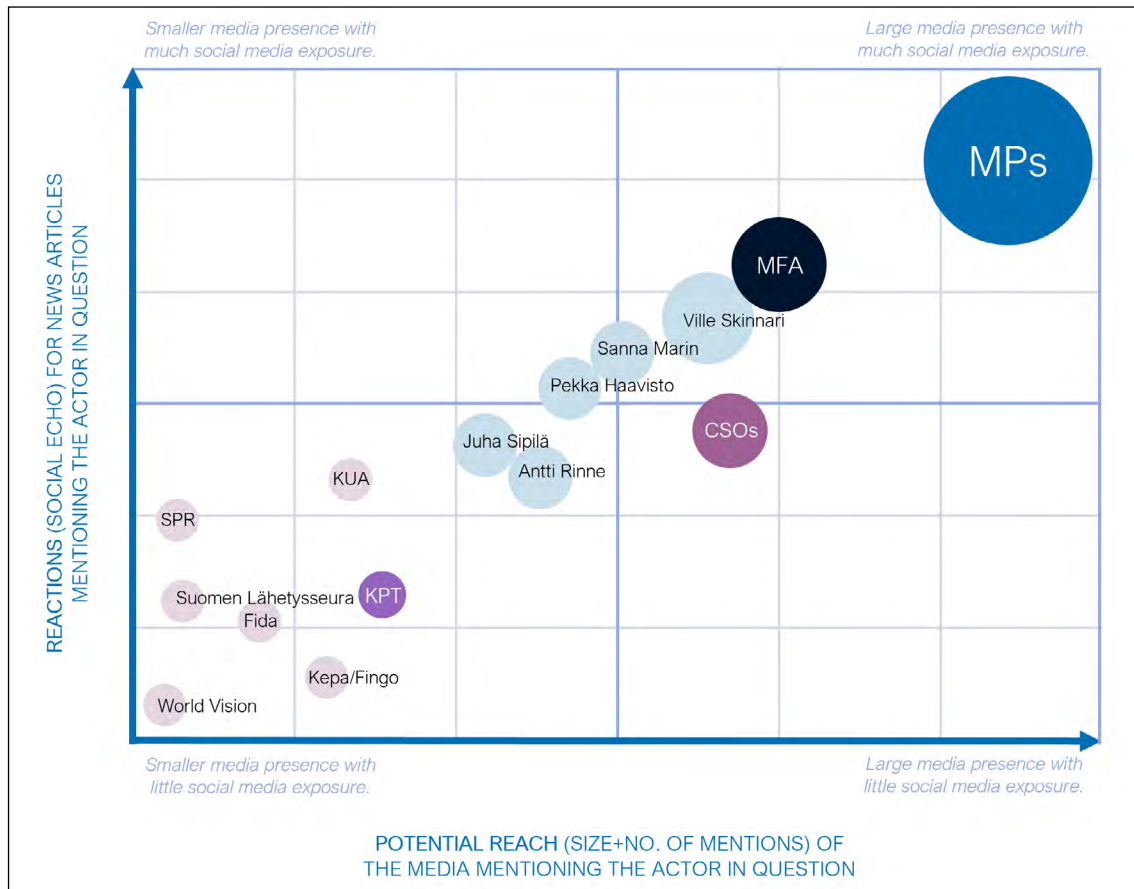
Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

2.7 The image of development co-operation on Twitter

Twitter is not to be seen as a representative of neither social media nor Finnish people in general. In 2021, according to Innowise, only 25% of Finns used Twitter on a weekly basis. Meltwater's analysis also shows an overrepresentation of Twitter accounts linked to the Finns Party. In this media analysis 43% of the tweets were negative in sentiment toward development co-operation. This can be compared with for example the MFA survey from 2021 that showed that 68% of Finns stated that they think that development co-operation is important.

Twitter is however still treated as an important platform for information sharing and interaction by many professional groups in the Finnish society and it is a social media channel that has been prioritised by the MFA in their communication. In this regard it is a relevant channel to include in our analysis. The monitoring and analysis by Meltwater cover 15 months, from August 2021 until October 2022, when in total almost 54,000 tweets had mentions about development co-operation/aid/policy (see Figure 6).

> **Twitter is treated as an important platform for information sharing and interaction by many professional groups in the Finnish society.**

Funding issues dominate Twitter discussion.

Although there were mentions throughout the period, some months stood out in the number of tweets and reactions to them. The content concerned mainly development co-operation from the perspective of funding, and how much Finland is spending on development co-operation as well as how this money could be used domestically . More in-depth discussions how development works or could work better were almost non-existent.

Figure 6 Tweets and mentions about development co-operation/aid/policy and potential reach (15 months, August 2021 – October 2022)

Potential reach for Twitter coverage is based on the following of the account. Higher reach figures indicate wider exposure. To keep the data comparable, only desktop reach is accounted for, since mobile traffic has only been collected from 2019 onwards. Traffic from mobile devices usually surpasses desktop viewership, so it is good to keep in mind these users are not included in the reach for this report.

Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

Twitter is a polarised platform. The most active Twitter accounts during the analysed period have been critical towards development co-operation funding. Those accounts are often owned by domestic political actors and most of them are members of, or somehow linked to, the Finns Party. Even though the tweets with a negative tone on development co-operation were posted and reposted by accounts with rather few followers (if compared to accounts posting neutral as well as positive tweets), they were the tweets that by far gained the most reactions.

2.8 The evaluation object: organisation and implementation of development communication in the MFA

The Unit for Communications on Sustainable Development and Trade (VIE-30) is situated in the Department for Communications, being one of the four units (see Figure 7). The other units are Unit for Communications on Current Affairs, Unit for Global Communications and Unit for Public Diplomacy. VIE-30 has two separate teams, the development communications (five staff) and external economic relations and Team Finland (two staff). There are two general career positions in the unit: the director and the communications coordinator, who is also the head of the communications team. The four other positions are for experts. The positions are titled as 1) content and communications specialist (also editor-in-chief of the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine), 2) communications coordinator as head of development communications team and 3) communications officers who are three in number. In the MFA, there is a well-established career path for the general career employees, while for specialists, the prospects are uncertain. During the evaluation period, the specialists have frequently resigned or changed positions, as many want to be better paid, even if only for short-term positions elsewhere in the ministry. The salaries for specialists vary between the grades 9A-10A while for those in the general career only the initial training period is as low as grade 9A.

Figure 7 Organisation of development communication in MFA
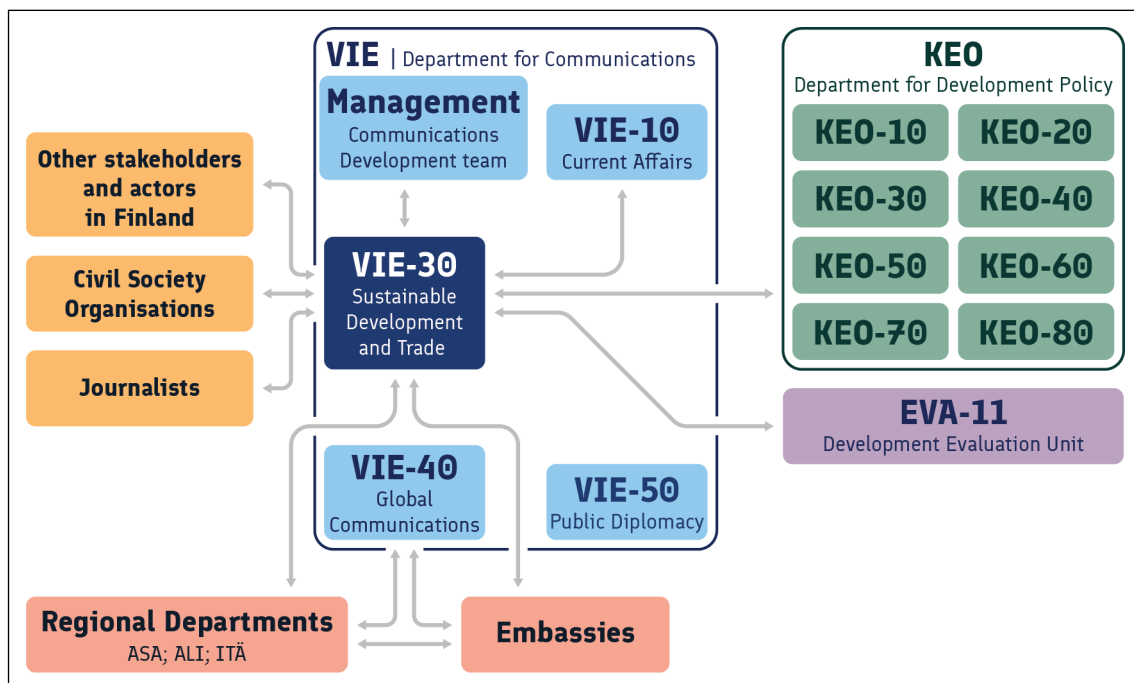
Source: Evaluation team

Inside VIE, VIE-30 regularly cooperates with the unit for communications on current affairs (VIE-10) on current affairs, while the contacts with the unit for global communications (VIE-40) and unit for public diplomacy (VIE-50) are sporadic.

The evaluation team facilitated the VIE-30 staff in designing a theory of change (ToC) for the development communications (see Figure 8). The idea of the visualisation was to make the logic chain visible, showing the activities that VIE-30 is carrying out and how is the change toward the objectives supposed to happen. The logic chains were elaborated to show the sequence of changes from the human and material resources of the unit, through the activities to the reaching of target groups and finally achieving the outcomes of the communication.

> **The visualised logic chain shows the activities that VIE-30 is carrying out and how is the change toward the objectives supposed to happen.**

On the left side, after the resources, the ToC shows all the main tasks of the unit. The chain of *"training, sparring and coaching of MFA staff"* was developed to a more independent pathway in which VIE-30 only provides initial support. The box of materials produced by the unit includes e.g. the website OpenAid.fi, different publications, and social media content. The co-operation with CSOs and other stakeholders is linked to the communication contents and information, as they do their share of development communications. Altogether six outcomes were described by the VIE-30 staff.

Figure 8 ToC of development communications in the MFA with assumptions
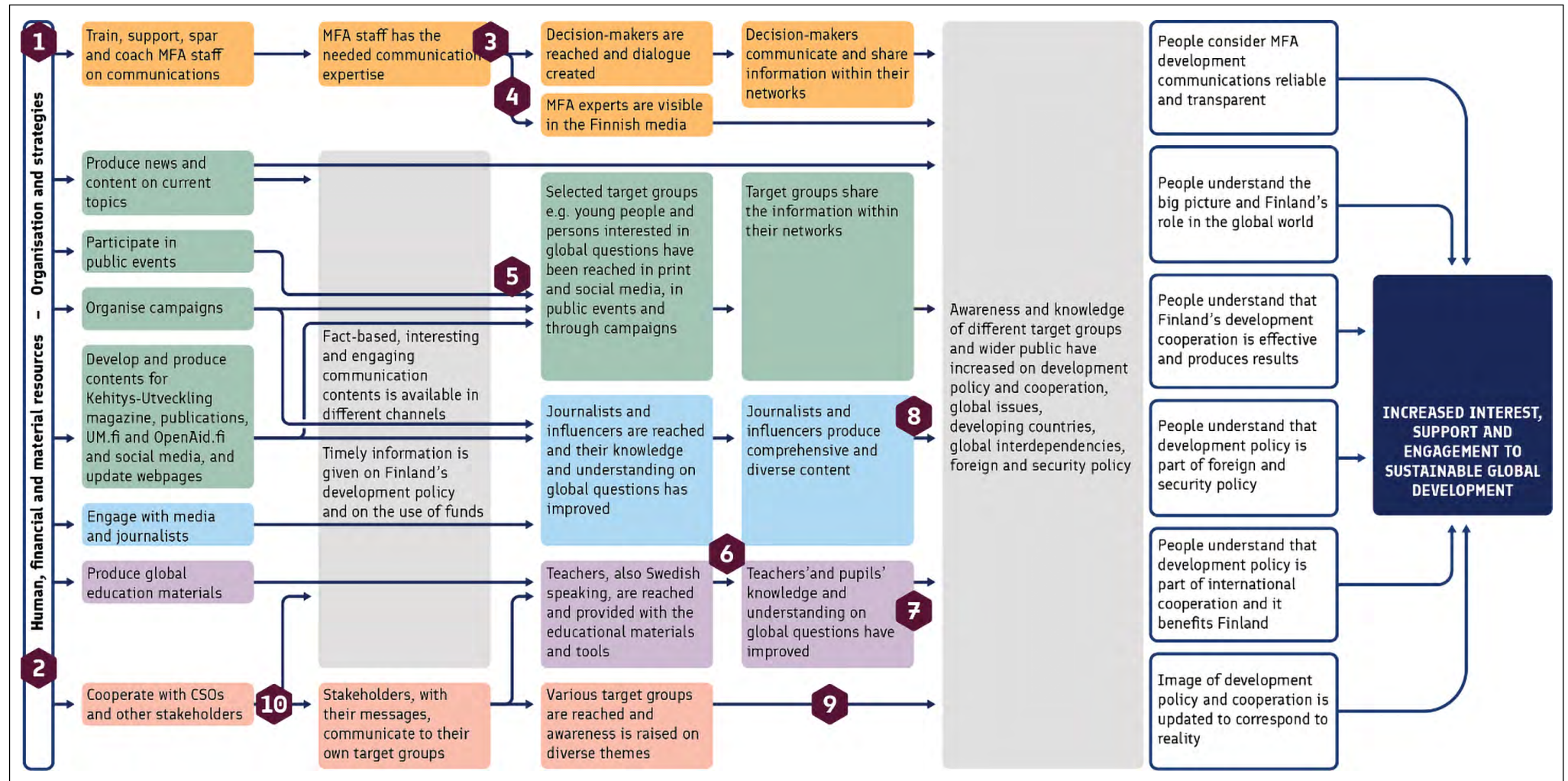
Source: Evaluation team

The VIE-30 staff modified the list of assumptions initially suggested by the evaluation team (see Box 1). These assumptions underlie the change pathways and after numbering they were set in the diagram. The evaluation team assesses under the conclusions (section 4) the validity of the assumptions and the strength of the results chains.

Box 1 List of Assumptions related to the ToC

1. Strategies and organisation are in place and functional. Communications is understood as a key function and central part of all work in the MFA. Co-operation between units and VIE-30 works: VIE-30 facilitates communications planning with units and departments and gets contents from units for development communications.

2. Human, financial and material resources are adequate for communications. VIE-30 staff has the needed expertise for effective development communications.

3. MFA staff has motivation, and incentive to communicate.

4. Communications is proactive and VIE-30 is active in media relations.

5. The right partners, target groups and channels are chosen, messages are well-formulated.

6. Global education materials are interesting, of high quality and useful to teachers and pupils.

7. Key authorities in Finland and the school leadership encourage and support schools / teachers to include global education in their teaching.

8. There is media space for publishing contents on development policy and co-operation.

9. The atmosphere of the society enables constructive and versatile discussion on development policy and co-operation in the media.

10. CSOs and other stakeholders have adequate resources and expertise, including a mutually agreed narrative, to communicate.

Source: Evaluation team

3 Findings

3.1 Effectiveness: To what extent has the ministry been able to contribute to the openness of government by increasing the public awareness and understanding about development policy and co-operation?

Summary: The MFA has contributed to the public awareness and understanding about development policy and co-operation by making information available in different channels, but the inadequate strategic planning both at MFA and VIE-30 have reduced the effectiveness. The efforts to engage and inform the representatives of media have been relatively successful and this has helped the ministry to obtain some visibility for its communication, especially in the national media. There has been some analysis of target groups and the VIE-30 staff fully understand the need for increased targeting, but most information only reaches those who already support and follow global issues and development co-operation. The MFA channels are mostly considered informative, although stakeholders have differing views on the ease of finding information and some staff would prefer a faster and easier channel for rapid communications. Getting through the more complicated key messages related to the development co-operation narrative has not been successful and there seems to be limited capacity to clearly communicate the links between the policies on security, development, trade and investments. There is need to communicate the results of development co-operation but for some stakeholders, this has already reached the saturation point. Impersonal communication and use of official sounding language makes it even harder to reach the general public. In most cases, social media discussion is not initiated by MFA, it is negative toward development co-operation, and it is difficult to influence the nature of the discussion. Through campaigns and outsourcing of services the MFA has been able to improve the reach of messages, especially toward youth, but as planning is short-term and lessons are not regularly learned from the efforts, the strategic opportunities are missed. The best practices from peer countries are related to strategic planning, increased targeting of undecided people through less obvious channels, using partnerships in communication and improving knowledge management.

3.1.1 To what extent has MFA used development communications efforts strategically to promote Finland's objectives and inform the public about global development issues and related challenges and successes?

Judgement criteria: Criteria for working strategically: result based management is in place (baseline data, planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E)); relevant target groups and appropriate communication channels for each of them have been defined; VIE-30 is using the monitoring data for learning; outsourcing has been planned strategically.

Finding 1. The elements of result-based management practices are in place as planning, monitoring, reporting and even some evaluation is done although not in a systematic way. Strategic planning has increased during the evaluation period but since the MFA communication strategy does not properly guide the work, also for development communications the clear objectives and priorities, long-term strategic planning and learning from monitoring are inadequate.

The evaluation team examined the use of tools for result-based management by the VIE-30 to assess whether the management of the work meets the needs for achieving strategic results. Based on the desk review and interviews of MFA staff, the evaluation team found that the VIE-30 uses the result-based management (RBM) tools presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The use of result-based management tools in VIE-30's work

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Baseline data	VIE-30 has collected baseline data through some surveys: in 2015 there was a survey in parliament; in 2021 Legendium implemented a survey among readers of Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and in 2022 there was a survey of magazine's website-use. MFA commissions an annual opinion survey on development co-operation and based on the 2021 survey, Aula Research conducted a target group analysis in 2022.
Annual planning	Annual planning has been conducted every year from 2015-23 although the 2019 plan was not found and some are not available in archives (only in individual staff computers). There are also TTS (MFA's financial and activity plans), the last one for the period 2021-24. During the evaluation period, VIE-30 has combined an annual activity calendar based on communication priorities from departments and units. The objectives of annual plans and their themes vary but Agenda 2030, results reporting, and global education are strongly visible every year. The unit staff meets twice a year to plan and brainstorm about the communications.
Monitoring	VIE-30 does monitor: • the reach and sharing of posts in social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter; • the work of media agencies implementing campaigns through final reports; • theme day visibility, i.e., the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) /MFA campaign on child rights in 2022 and the Girl's Day Instagram campaign in 2022; • the number of readers of Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and the reach in Instagram, the use of Um.fi and Maailma2030 website, visitors in World Village stand; • in some previous reports there is monitoring of numbers of events, articles, press releases etc. produced by the unit.
Reporting	There are no annual reports available after 2019 and VIE-30 has no reporting obligation. In some reports there is a table on objectives and measuring criteria but the tables have not been used for assessing the results. Also, there are more analytical and informative ASKI[5]-reports on some campaigns and annually on Development Academy.

---

5   MFA's electronic archiving and document distribution systems

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Evaluation	One evaluation was conducted during the evaluation period: in 2017 external evaluators assessed the decision-makers' development academy as well as the development and global education grants for CSOs.
Using monitoring data and studies for learning	As result of studies and monitoring, some search engine optimisation has been done to steer visitors to certain webpages on the ministry's website. Kehitys-Utveckling magazine is introducing a newsletter for marketing as suggested by the 2021 study. Meltwater sends weekly press reviews, but they are not regularly analysed for learning by VIE-30. After campaigns, VIE-30 staff goes through the monitoring data, but the learning is not regular. The main reason given is the heavy workload and being too busy.

Source: Evaluation team.

The annual plans have some elements of strategic planning, especially the two 2022 plans (VIE-30 annual plan and Kaskas media development communication conceptualisation) but they do not show significant alignment of the diverse communication needs from units and departments to the priorities of the VIE-30. According to VIE-30, their own annual plans have strongly guided the work, but it is not evident how much the Kaskas proposal has been used. The strategic thread of the annual plan 2022 is the increasing focus on highlighting that development collaboration is effective and delivers results, while the tactical approach is to broaden the focus on 1) what modern development co-operation is (and how it has changed over the years) and 2) that development issues are more clearly linked to both global and Finnish phenomena. The plan further defines the focus for current affairs communication and content production, describes key themes, campaigns, media work, support to global education, stakeholder co-operation and events. In the interviews of both external stakeholders and MFA staff many expressed the opinion that there has been enough and even too much attention to the communication on results. At this time, it would be important to discuss the 'why' of development policy and co-operation or the actual share of Finland in the results of pool-funded international organisations and development banks. It appears that the formulation of key messages has not involved all relevant departments.

The lack of clear strategic goals and priorities in the MFA communication strategy makes it challenging to adapt the strategy to the development communications. The MFA strategy was updated during the last year of the evaluation period, in 2022. The objectives are expressed e.g., as "communication is at the heart of strategic action", "the role of international communication in the work of the Foreign Service has been strengthened" and "each of us has a responsibility for internal and external communication". The strategy gives little concrete material to guide the deployment and operationalisation of the ideas. The strategic goals and priorities have not been identified to make them clear to everybody. It is challenging to communicate ideas like "development policy is part of foreign and security policy" if they are not elaborated as priorities of MFA and its communications.

According to the MFA, the deployment of the communication strategy should be done through the following practices:

- Unit/team level discussions about the practical meaning of communications strategy for the unit, followed by personal level engagement and target positioning in annual goal setting and development discussions (tavoite- ja kehityskeskustelut, TAKE discussions).

- Annual planning at department, unit /team level: TTS (MFA financial and activity plans) to be in line with the communications strategy.

- Annual calendar of work: communication activities of the unit for the coming year.

- Project/Campaign level: Project plan and performance evaluation after each project.

VIE-30 has not been able to deploy the MFA communication strategy by producing a document that would clearly define and assemble the objectives and priorities of development communication. The theory of change produced during the evaluation process shows that the MFA objectives expressed in various policy documents have been internalised in VIE-30. The practices for the deployment of the MFA communication strategy have not been fully followed by VIE-30 or other MFA's departments and units although some actions for implementation were identified and VIE developed indicators for monitoring.

Finding 2. VIE-30 has worked extensively to identify channels, target groups and key messages but the ideas have neither been systematically compiled nor fully implemented.

As communication channels, VIE-30 has used all those of MFA (um.fi, embassy websites, ministry's blog-portal and ministry's accounts in Instagram in English, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn and Facebook) and a few of its own: Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and its Instagram account, as well as the Maailma2030 website which hosts global education materials. There is also the databank of Finland's development co-operation (OpenAid.fi) and Teemapäivät (thematic days). The accounts of several influencers have published material for the campaigns (algorithms of equality, Agenda2030, #munvaikutus) and in 2022 the Girl's Day campaign was published in Tiktok. For intra-government communications Kampus is used and some external stakeholders mentioned having shared e.g. the results campaign messages from Kampus. In the online survey for MFA staff, 70% of respondents perceive the channels chosen by the MFA as the relevant ones.

Since 2022 MFA has a social media strategy, which discusses e.g. the objectives, target groups, channels and ways to measure the reach and the importance of monitoring. In the order of importance, social media channels are listed as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube, each associated with their own special function, such as informing or influencing. The target groups are described as mostly those who are already interested. For example, the general public as target group is described as *"citizens thirsty for information about foreign and security policy, interested in foreign and security policy, regardless of age, educational background or device"* (MFA, 2022).

In the interviews, Instagram is mentioned by many stakeholders as a relevant and popular communication channel, including the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine's account. Both external stakeholders and MFA staff support the active presence of MFA on Instagram, but the communication only in English is criticised by many. VIE-30 staff believe that as channel it is very slow as the management has been outsourced and messages have to be finalised six weeks before posting[6]. Many channels and their reach can be measured but only opinion polls measure the impact of

---

6   Since March 2023 all the Instagram posts are produced in-house.

communications. As a researcher commented: *"MFA probably communicates well to those who follow Twitter, websites, inform about events, publications. But what about the bigger audience?"*

Twitter appears as a difficult channel both according to the media analysis and interviews. Twitter is a strongly polarised arena, in which tweets with negative tone dominate and spur most of the reactions. This means that as public authority the MFA often has to participate in the conversations by correcting misinformation. VIE has identified and trained 'digital ambassadors', MFA staff who have Twitter accounts posting and sharing MFA posts. According to the monitoring data by VIE, there is considerable variation in the activity of these ambassadors. Many interviewees acknowledge that the arguments of the Finns party have a lot of visibility in Twitter, and many have seen that there is active campaigning against development funding. UNICEF and MFA organised a collaborative social media campaign in 2022 for different theme days such as the World Education Day. The campaign achieved 424,571 reaches and impressions in October-November in Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. The results were considered good by MFA and UNICEF, although the advertisements also attracted negative attention and it was recognised by UNICEF communication team that better targeting is needed.

> **VIE trained "digital ambassadors" to post MFA related tweets and actively engage in Twitter.**

According to interviews, some channels for reaching companies have not worked well. Although the work division within the VIE-30 gives the responsibility of communication with companies to the separate two-person team, private sector involvement is an increasingly important part of development co-operation. The few interviewed companies and Business Finland indicate that their preferred channels are the Alma Media newspapers, LinkedIn, Chambers of commerce and Confederation of Finnish Industries, while the Kauppapolitiikka-magazine or Kehitys-Utveckling magazine are not followed. Some are familiar with the MFA websites for keeping up with funding opportunities and they also occasionally check different MFA Twitter accounts, such as those of embassies.

Interviews with MFA management indicate that there may be a need for one additional communication channel: One director formulated it like this: *"There should be some other channel to post more freely and with a low threshold, it was noted several times that it could be used. In the Myanmar and Afghanistan situation, it was noted that the MFA account was not appropriate."* Ministry of Environment (MOE) was mentioned by some interviewees as an example of good communications, both because of being active in Instagram and having interesting video materials and also, because they have a movable studio in the ministry for filming short communications. The interview of a MOE representative further indicated that they use the partnership approach in communications working frequently and strategically with their stakeholders.

MFA is considered by interviewees and by the CSO online survey to fulfil its role as a provider of information and communicate well to those who follow and are active, such as CSOs, but not reaching the important groups of decision-makers, youth, or indifferent ones. One of the MFA directors wondered *"how to burst the bubble in which we communicate?"* The CSO online survey showed that MFA reaches at least the CSOs very well: 81% of CSOs that responded, use and share the development communication materials produced by the MFA. The main target group of MFA development communication is general public, although several campaigns have targeted youth. In addition, journalists have been targeted both through the Development Academy course and later as members of the media network. In interviews, MFA staff and

external stakeholders identified general public, youth, politicians, members of parliament, decision makers and expert organisations as the most important target groups of communications. In the online survey only 38% of the respondents agreed with the statement that MFA's development communication is directed to well-chosen target groups.

As mentioned in section 2 on the evaluation context, the Aula research analysis divided the target groups to the critics, supporters, and 'undecided' people. The group of 'undecided' includes more people with education of 2nd and 3rd grade, those over 65 or under 25, and more of those not living in the metropolitan areas. According to the research these groups are potentially receptive target group for development communication, whereas it will be difficult to convince those who are overly critical and, on the other hand, the supporters can easily find the communications even without specific targeting. There is no evidence that the group of the undecided has been targeted, apart from Instagram campaigns that have focused on reaching the youth.

In Sweden and in Denmark, in recent years there has been increased attention to targeting groups who are not following the obvious channels of development communication. In Denmark, special efforts have been made over the past three years to target the 'neutral' segment, which makes up 30% of the population: children and families with children, and young people. One of the principles is to appear where the target groups already are - at school, at work, on preferred media and event platforms, etc. The engagement team's work consists of communicating not on MFA's own channels or in the niche media that usually deal with development cooperation, but on platforms where the target group is already present. Much of the work is done through outsourced, pooled funding for CSOs and other organisations, as well as through numerous partnerships. Initiatives include projects in vocational schools and other schools, youth events, and targeted media campaigns.

> **Sweden and Denmark have searched for new ways and platforms to engage people who have no firm opinions about development cooperation.**

In Sweden, an important part of the effort to reach broader groups is to make the language of development cooperation more understandable and straight forward on Sida's various communication channels, including websites and social media. In the case of sida.se, this also means trying to better understand what people want to know more about and what questions they have. One way to find out is to analyse the terms people google when they search for information about development cooperation. In 2022, the communications department also organised training sessions for Sida employees to practice and learn how to write in 'plain language'.

Since the groups that are least interested in development cooperation are considered very difficult and therefore expensive to reach, Sida focuses instead on those that show a more 'lukewarm' interest. Examples of activities Sida has launched in the past year to change communication and reach new groups in society include participation in Järvaveckan (political festival in the suburb of Stockholm[7]), the development of a concept for working with Swedish musicians and artists to

---

7   https://jarvaveckan.se

reach young people ('A beat for democracy'[8]), and the press office has tried to focus its work more on building relationships with regional media in addition to national media[9].

The old-fashioned image of development co-operation hinders the achievement of the communication goals when the target groups are not aware of the wider context of development policy. Many interviewees, both external stakeholders and MFA staff, consider the public image of development co-operation problematic. The narrative is focused on development aid more than on development co-operation, it is a 'Nose-day narrative' which does not cover the multifaceted nature of current co-operation, such as e.g. in the MFA's 2020 Africa-strategy, the aim of building developing countries' own capacity and the support to economic sectors. Some MFA and many external interviewees, including CSOs, express the opinion, that the old-fashioned narrative is maintained by some CSOs for their fund raising but the evaluation did not examine this in detail. According to the media analysis, traditional narratives of development aid were also represented by projects by churches and interviews with church employees.

In interviews the key message for development communications that was mentioned by most MFA staff was *"development co-operation supports Finland's position globally."* This message was also included in the VIE-30 annual plan and according to the unit meeting minutes, the message has been promoted by KEO. The need for communicating the message is internalised by many in MFA but there were comments about not properly understanding the link in the MFA nor in the national government. There are indications, that development policy and development co-operation are seen by many as a separate policy area of MFA.

The messages of MFA producing results and being able to manage the risks were still mentioned by MFA and stakeholders as another key message, while the importance of making allies among the partner countries in Africa and globally is increasingly considered as the reason for increased communications to international audience. This is supported by the annual opinion surveys, which show that the share of respondents believing in results is declining. The CSO case study found out that CSOs call for more communication on results, Finland's role in the global world, challenges of development co-operation and global education, while some CSO respondents called for more critical communications where failures and challenges would also be discussed. These respondents felt that communication focuses too much on the positive results. The same was expressed by some interviewed politicians as well as journalists.

> **Respondents felt that communication focuses too much on the positive results.**

In the MFA, there seems to be little capacity to clearly communicate the links between the policies on security, development, trade and investments. According to several MFA and stakeholder interviewees the separateness of trade and development is shown even by VIE-30 having two different magazines, one for trade and one for development. The lack of linking the development communications to current affairs (war in Ukraine, famine in East Africa, climate crisis) is criticised by many and our interviews and workshops with VIE-30 shows that they are aware of

---

8   An event previously organized at the Gothenburg Book Fair, with artist Ramy Essam, an Egyptian singer and activist, as the main participant, https://www.sida.se/seminarier-och-kurser/development-talks-och-seminarium/globala-torget-pa-bokmassan/

9   e.g. Sida Director General Carin Jämtin has written letters to the editors of local newspapers, and the press office has tried to pitch stories to local newspapers to reach groups outside of metropolitan areas.

this. Also, external stakeholders think it would be important to emphasise that Finland contributes to development and is not making the change alone.

Finding 3. In the current situation of limited human resources and available budget, the use of outsourced services is relevant and justified, although not yet strategic. Piloting with a longer-term partner has benefitted the VIE-30.

The outsourced social media campaigns were first introduced by VIE-30 in 2019 when the media agency Ellun kanat implemented during for two years Instagram campaigns related to Agenda 2030, *"examining how Finland is contributing to the 2030 Agenda goals globally and where the handprint of MFA can be #SurprisinglyCompliant"*[10]. https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/kampan-ja-kokoaa-nuorten-nakemyksia-kestavasta-kehityksestaConsequently, the media agency Måndag conducted a #Munvaikutus campaign in 2021 and in 2022 VIE-30 contracted Kaskas media for a two-year period. The 2019-21 campaigns targeted the youth in social media channels. The

> **Bolder communication and less ministerial jargon needed for more engaging campaigns.**

Kaskas agreement covers the implementation of specific campaigns and events, such as the result report campaign in 2022 and the MFA participation in the World Village festival in 2022-2023. In addition, Kaskas supports VIE-30 in strategising, sparring in writing, theme day social media content design and production, design and production of communication materials, including visuals. They also support the VIE-30 by marketing the OpenAid.fi website.

There is also a contract with the Videotiiviste communications agency since 2019. Videotiiviste has produced six thematic videos for the MFA on themes such as Finland's support to sustainable economy and democracy. The videos were published in the MFA Youtube channel. Until February 2023 there were also two consultants to produce communications content although one of them has now resigned.

While the social media campaigns have had a relatively good reach, they appear separate from the unit's work and not developed as part of a comprehensive strategy. The latest collaboration with the Kaskas media has moved the outsourcing toward a more strategic approach as it is undertaken on longer term, the assignment is described as support for several functions of the unit, and it involves conceptual design and strategic planning. According to all the media agency interviews, they have not been able to implement the campaigns or produce materials in a sufficiently engaging way, using bolder communication and less ministerial jargon. At the same time, in our interviews with VIE-30 staff, they express that they would have welcomed more innovative and enterprising ideas from the media agencies.

MFA staff widely support outsourcing as they recognise the lack of resources and campaigning expertise in VIE-30. In the evaluation team's interviews with MFA staff, including VIE-30, the view appears that the salaries are not competitive to hire and keep experienced professionals and this has resulted in high turnover of staff: e.g. in 2019 four staff changed. However, some MFA managers fear further outsourcing as it would distance the communications from the rest of the

---

10   https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/kampanja-kokoaa-nuorten-nakemyksia-kestavasta-kehityksesta

ministry, and some feel that as they already work in silos, this would further complicate the communications. Some staff have experienced problems with the outsourcing: *"The challenge is that we would have liked to make a small video, but we would have had to contact the media agency to do it. We didn't have time to contact a third party."* All interviewed managers emphasise that control and strategy planning should be kept in MFA.

Outsourcing as such takes a lot of resources and time from VIE-30. TTendering that follows the public procurement law takes six months while the current contract is only for two years. The briefing of media agency staff to understand how MFA works and communicates is slow and takes time and administrative work around the contract is cumbersome, especially after the administrative staff was removed in 2022.

3.1.2 To what extent have the MFA's development communication efforts managed to reach the public?

Judgement criteria: Visibility of development co-operation in the media 2015-22: MFA communication on development co-operation and development policy is widely visible in Finnish media; monitoring data of Kehitys-lehti and social media campaigns show increasing trends; MFA websites on development issues show increasing visits; development communication materials are fact-based, easy to understand and show the complexity of development co-operation.

Finding 4. Despite the lack of newsworthiness in its own right, the MFA has contributed to making development co-operation and policy visible in a variety of media through the Development Academy and other specific efforts targeting the media.

The media analysis shows that there has been a constant flow of news coverage in the Finnish digital media that includes the term development co-operation (or aid/policy) from 2015 to 2022. The absolute majority of these 15 615 mentions were in news articles (85%), 13% were in opinion pieces and 2% in editorials. Most of the mentions were in the actual text of the article and only 13% were in the lead and 11% in the headline of the article. Most often, development co-operation was treated in the media coverage as a part of domestic politics and mentioned as part of broader discussions about budgeting, funding of development co-operation, or elections. The media analysis also indicates that development co-operation was often rather mentioned as a sidenote in the coverage and in these cases, it was not the actual focus of the article.

Despite the limited space for media coverage about development co-operation, the media analysis shows that the MFA has, to some extent, been able to reach the public and to occasionally actively comment on issues relating to development co-operation. Interviewed journalists explain that although most of them consider global development issues important and they would like to cover them more in their work, these issues are not considered newsworthy in their own right and tend to get buried by other items on the news agenda. The character of development co-operation also makes it difficult, according to journalists, to turn these issues into short, click-friendly stories that would attract readers in digital media. In addition, both the media analysis as well as the interviews with not only journalists but also stakeholders, MFA staff and

politicians, indicate that there is a limited space for the number of issues that can be on the news agenda at the same time. At the moment of interviews, as mentioned in several of the interviews, the topics of the news agenda in Finland were the war in Ukraine, the NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) process, and electricity prices. Questions and stories that are not related to those topics will be more difficult to make newsworthy, and this means for example that the work of embassies and local projects on development co-operation around the world are seldom visible in the news.

> **Linking development stories to current global events could make them more newsworthy.**

The analysis of content about development co-operation on Twitter during the previous 15 months showed that the content mainly concerned the perspective of funding: how much Finland is spending on development co-operation and how this money could be used domestically. Although there were mentions throughout the period, the number of tweets, retweets and comments fluctuated. More in-depth discussions on how development works or could work better were almost non-existent. Most Twitter content that gained reactions (that were retweeted or commented on) had a negative tone.

Most often, the coverage in Finnish digital media in which MFA has been mentioned concerns reports about development co-operation (e.g. opinion polls or results report), events (e.g. Taliban takeover in Afghanistan), or fund misuse cases (e.g. corruption or other misconduct) (see Figure 9 for a timeline of the amount of coverage in which MFA is mentioned). Launching of reports appears as one key possibility for the MFA to reach out with their own perspectives and information. However, the results both from the media analysis and interviews with journalists indicate that the MFA is often not in the position to influence what is on the news agenda, but rather their role is to comment and add material and perspective to current affairs.

It is important to consider that the objective of the MFA is not necessarily to make themselves visible in the media and elsewhere, but to make information and knowledge about development co-operation available and spread to a broader public. In our interviews with journalists, there are plenty of examples how the MFA and VIE-30 help with background information, with contacts, and other services. This work is not intended to result in any mentioning of the MFA, but to support the production of news articles about development co-operation and issues of global development. The amount of coverage in which MFA is mentioned rather gives one idea about the extent and ways that the MFA can reach out to target groups through media.

Figure 9 Timeline – MFA Share of Voice in digital media

According to MFA commissioned poll, the number of Finns supporting development funding has increased to 84%.

Ministry allocates development funds for sexual and reproductive health among other EU countries after US draws its development support.

Finnwatch reports claims of Finnfund money used in tax evasion.

Finnwatch: Almost a fifth of aid channelled through Finnfund used in questionable ways.

According to MFA commissioned poll, the number of Finns supporting development funding is at a historical hight.

MFA report calls for stronger participation and more funds foe development cooperation, especially in education.

No-confidence vote against the FM.

The government is set to raise development funding by over 70 MEUR.

Development fund misconduct suspected in Afghanistan.

Vast news coverage on Afghanistan after Taliban take over. Finland halts its development cooperation funding in the country.

* The blue area is the MFA share of voice, while the grey area is the total share of voice for all articles mentioning development co-operation.

Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

The media analysis also shows that when MFA was mentioned in the news coverage the content most often also included important key themes (basic principles and priorities of the Finnish development policy such as e.g. humanitarian aid women & girls, and democracy and societies, see Figure 10). This indicates that these broader themes are either put forward by representatives of the MFA and/or referenced in relation to the MFA by other actor groups in the coverage or included by journalists themselves.

Figure 10 Articles mentioning themes and the MFA vs articles only mentioning themes, Finnish digital media
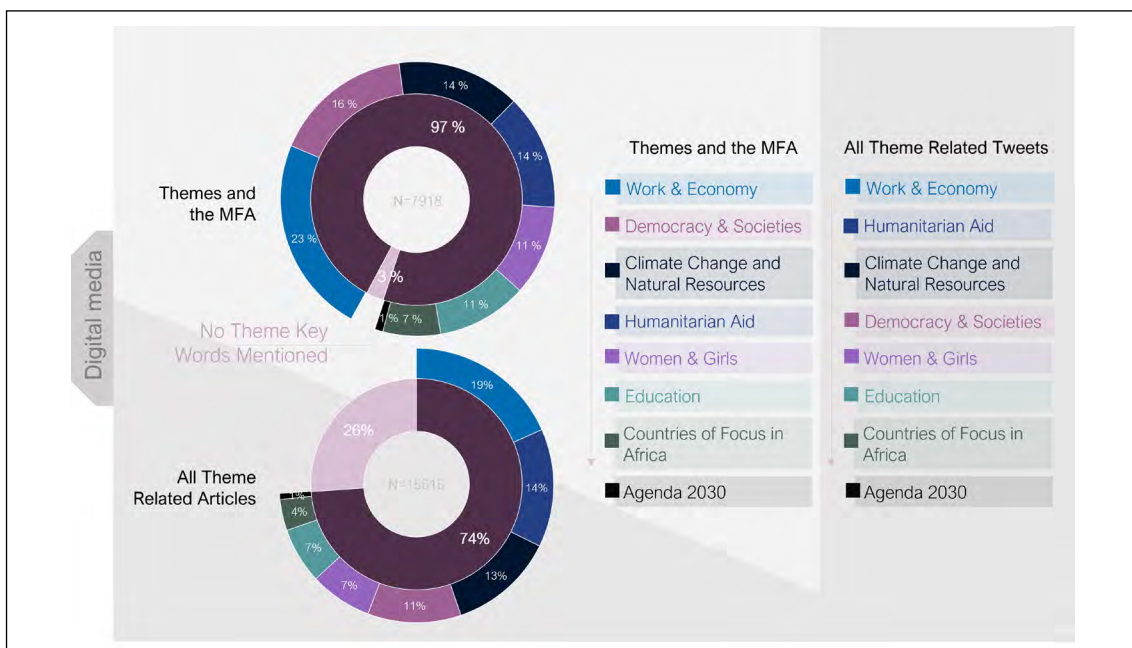
Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

When MFA material – or other information about development co-operation – are picked up by a news agency, the reach is geographically wide. One example is the results report from 2018 that was covered by both STT and Uutissuomalainen and thereby gained visibility in several media outlets around Finland. It is important to keep in mind, however, that sometimes one or a couple of articles – particularly if high quality and more in-depth about the issues – in any of the major media outlets such as YLE and Helsingin Sanomat may have a larger reach than many shorter articles in media outlets with less reach.

The communication work related to the last results report (published in November 2022) shows that there are also other ways to reach the public than through traditional media outlets. Both MFA and stakeholder interviewees stated that they had noticed information about the report in the online advertisement campaigns, such as in trams, metro, TV, and government intranet Kampus where people were also encouraged to share the news. In addition, many of the interviewed MFA staff emphasised the positive importance of having worked jointly to produce the report and plan the campaign. The situation was similar as in 2018 when the results report was mentioned as the biggest and most time-consuming work task in the VIE-30 annual plan.

For many interviewees the role of MFA does not cover only informing but also influencing the public opinion on development policy and cooperation. As public authority, MFA has the responsibility to inform the Finnish public about the development policy, development co-operation funding and contents of development co-operation (see section 2.2 on the context of government communication). According to the interviews with MFA staff and others as well as expressed in the workshops with VIE-30, there is also another, more influencing-type of role, which aims at building the Finnish people's knowledge and understanding of the role of Finland in the global world and the responsibilities referred to in the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs (see the outcome level state-

MFA can influence the understanding about Finland's role in the global setting.

ments in the theory of change in section 2.8.). These informing and influencing roles both have their supporters among the MFA management, but most people are of the opinion that all communication is also influencing and that it is an important role of the ministry. However, only some external stakeholders support the idea of MFA influencing people to support development funding, while this idea is completely refused by some MFA interviewees.

Finding 5. Even if the MFA has made information available through a variety of channels, they mostly reach people who are already interested in the topics.

The number of official online channels by the MFA are many, varying from the ministry website um.fi to social media channels such as Twitter and Instagram (see under Finding 1).

During the evaluation period, the overall number of visitors to the ministry's website (um. fi – note that the website is not limited to development co-operation and policy) was relatively even up until the year 2020. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a surge in visits to the MFA webpages, mainly due to visitors searching for MFA's travel advice. In 2022, the MFA's website received nearly double the number of visits compared to 2015: 4,8 million visits in 2022 compared to 2,4 million in 2015. Visitor data for UM.fi-webpages specifically related to development co-operation and policy are only available from 2019 onwards. The data (Matomo Webpage

Analytics) shows that the number of visitors for these webpages almost doubled from just above 100,000 in 2019 to almost 200,000 in 2022. These peaks are mainly explained by the funding application processes for CSOs and the publishing of related results, as well as trending news, such as the crisis in Afghanistan (August 2021) and the vote in the UN general assembly to expel Russia from the UN Human Rights Council (April 2022) (see Figure 11).

Figure 11 Visitors to MFA webpages related to development co-operation/policy
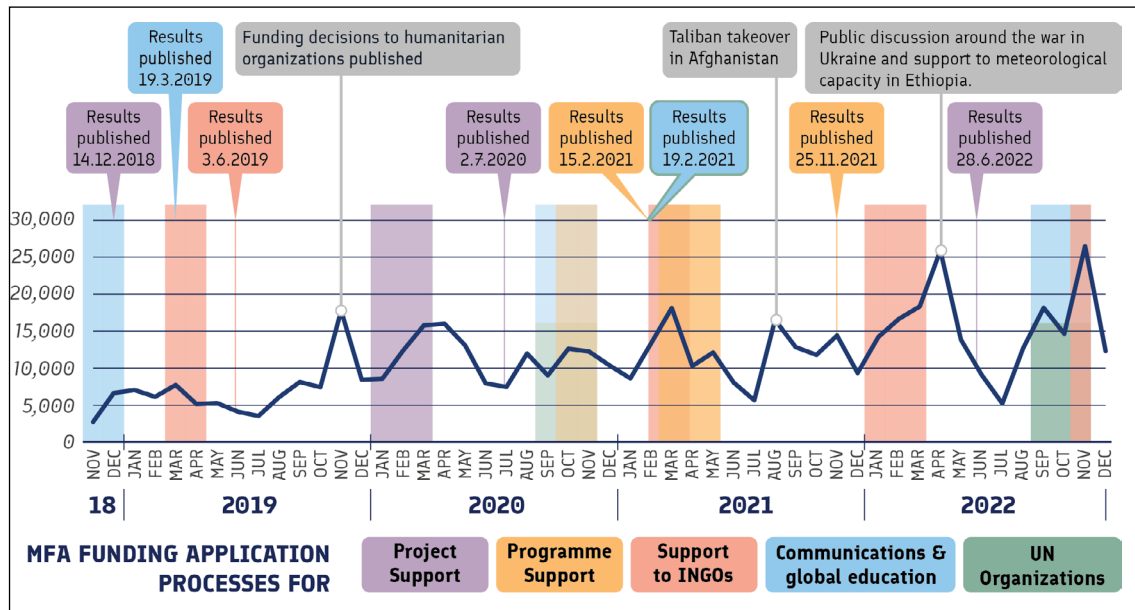
Source: Evaluation team, based data from Matomo Webpage Analytics and interviews of CSOs

VIE-30 has undertaken search engine optimisation of its webpages as of spring of 2021 but based on the visitor data, the webpage for appropriations was still clearly the most visited webpage in 2022. The search word-study, done by MFA (MFA 2020) showed that webpages hosted under UM.fi came out as the top search result in 90% of the searches. The same study also showed that 'development aid' ('kehitysapu') is the most commonly used term in searches related to development co-operation and policy. When using this term, the top one search result was the MFA's webpage 'Development co-operation appropriations'. When using the term favoured by the MFA, 'development co-operation' ('kehitysyhteistyö'), the top search results also included the MFA's webpage 'Development policy and development co-operation'. The ongoing optimisation work attempts to shift attention from funding towards other webpages that focus more on the substance of development co-operation, including the achieved results.

Interviewed stakeholders state that the most recent development co-operation results report (from 2022) was communicated well to them through SMS, emails, events, and meetings. Most interviewed journalists also think that the information on development co-operation available on the MFA's website is easy to find and accessible. External stakeholders express varying views on the website. Some state that they visit the website when looking for purely work-related information or for contact information to people at the ministry. Others believe that the news feed featured on the website is disturbing and makes it trickier to find the information that they are looking for. One person says that *"the story-like articles about results that have no news value pop-up in the feed."*

Many interviewees mention the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine as an example of a type of MFA communication considered to be for experts and those who already know about development co-operation. In interviews with MFA staff, stakeholders and politicians the magazine is described to have *"interesting"* content with an *"attractive layout"*, but also that the articles are *"for researchers", "too matter of fact", "preaching to the converted", "too 'ministry-like'",* and *"old-fashioned."* In addition, journalists state that they think that the articles in the magazine are of good quality but that that the magazine is hard to find. Some of them say that they occasionally browse the print magazine because the editorial offices have it, but that they would never take the time to actively visit the website of the magazine. Other interviewees, such as many MFA staff, say instead that it would be better if the magazine was online only, focusing on reaching out to readers through the website in combination with social media.

The online version of the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine experienced a significant increase of visits in 2022 compared to previous years (see Figure 12). In 2022 it received more visits than ever, increasing its number of overall visits in 2022 by 87% compared to the previous year (35,606 visits in 2021, 66,317 visits in 2022). The proportion of visitors arriving through links from social media, in particular Instagram, also increased to 42% compared to 15% in 2021. According to the magazine's current editor-in-chief and other staff at VIE-30, there has been a conscious effort to increase marketing of the magazine and its website in social media in 2022.

Figure 12 Annual online visits to Kehitys-Utveckling magazine (2015-2022)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Visits	46,156	14,841	40,004	33,644	38,468	47,565	35,606	66,317
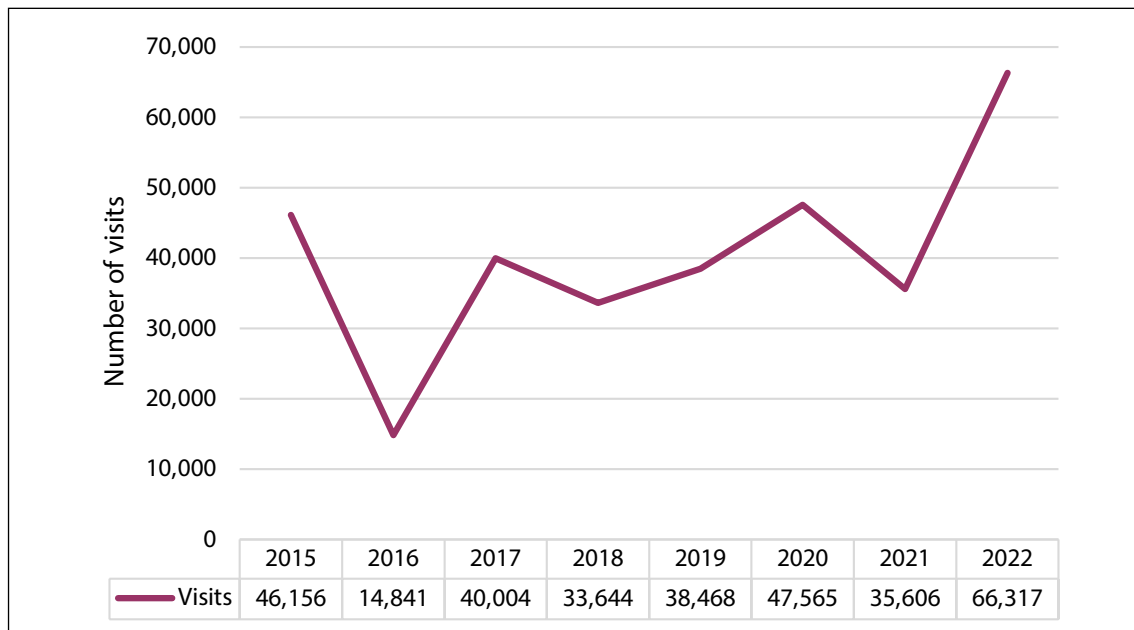
Source: Evaluation team, based on data from Matomo Webpage Analytics

Since its launch, the annual number of visitors in maailma2030.fi global education website has steadily increased (see Figure 13). It was created in 2016 with the purpose of providing an online platform for the MFA's global education material on SDGs and Finland's development co-operation, targeting schoolteachers, and their pupils. According to VIE-30 staff, the peak in visitors in 2020 was a result of teachers incorporating the online materials into distance education more than they had in classroom teaching due to the pandemic. In 2020 the MFA also established

the *Teemapäivät Maailma 2030* website – to support teachers in making the Agenda 2030 goals concrete for pupils in comprehensive school. Given the nature of these websites, the average visit duration is longer than on other webpages maintained by VIE-30 and the bounce rate is lower.

Figure 13 Annual online visits to maailma2030.fi global education website (2016-2022)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Visits	7,878	10,114	18,808	24,176	48,528	45,575	37,823
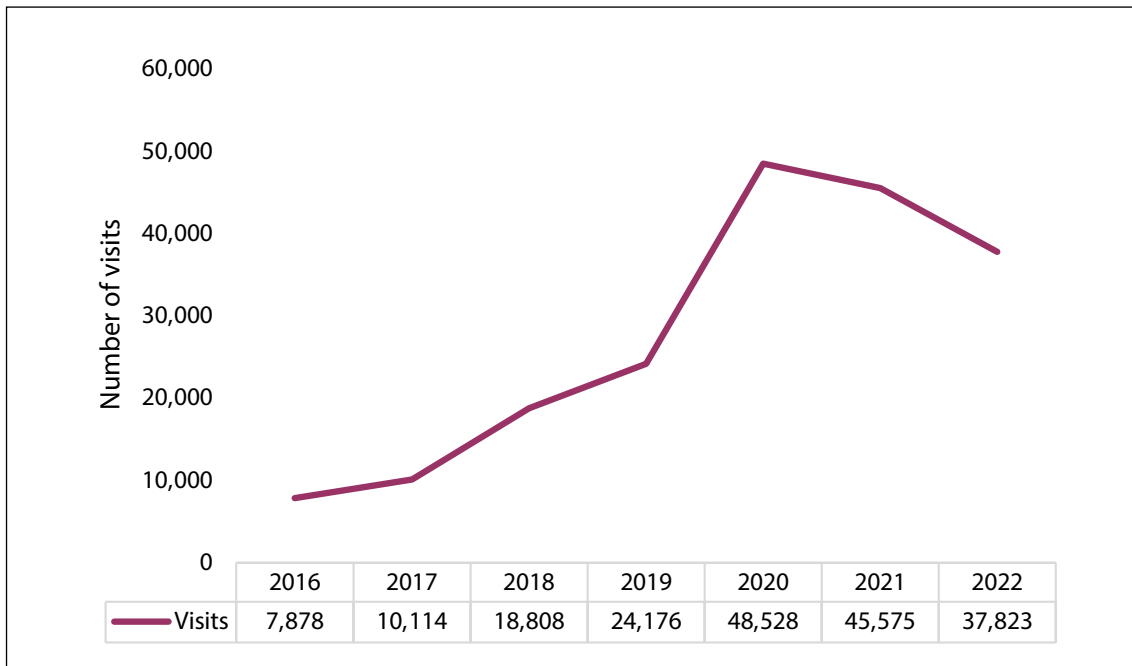
Source: Evaluation team, based on data from Matomo Webpage Analytics.

In interviews with MFA staff, politicians, other stakeholders and CSOs it is, however, recurrently emphasised that communication materials from the MFA tend to mainly reach professionals or others who are specifically interested in issues about development co-operation and who are actively themselves searching for information (e.g. following MFA in social media, searching for and reading news about development co-operation, and visiting festivals or participating in other events). Another aspect to consider is that experts, professionals and others with an interest in development co-operation most often speak only with one another and there are limited possibilities to reach out to other groups in the society. For example, the sentiment analysis of contents about development co-operation on Twitter shows that tweets are posted by two very separate groups. According to Meltwater, these two groups can be categorised into nationalists, emphasising the needs of Finnish people and Finland's domestic issues and being critical towards development co-operation funding; and internationalists emphasising the need for global solidarity and the benefits of international co-operation to the Finnish society. These two groups are in silos who rarely meet in the online landscape and are not part of the same networks.

> **Nationalists and internationalists engage in separate Twitter networks.**

Finding 6. The MFA's communication is fact-based, but the abstract level of messages and professional jargon limit its reach, as does the lack of the variety and low number of spokespersons.

The quality of MFA's development communication is generally praised by interviewed MFA staff, stakeholders, CSOs and journalists for being fact-based and informative. This is also confirmed by the online survey in which all the MFA staff who responded (100%) 'strongly agree' or 'agreed' with the statement that the MFA development communication is fact-based. Many of the interviewees also think that the information is easily understandable and that it focuses on important themes. In the only survey, most of the MFA staff responded that they 'strongly agree' or 'agreed' with the information being easily understandable (90%), focusing on important and timely (90%) as well as interesting (70%) themes. The online survey with CSOs shows similar results. Overall, the respondents of the online surveys gave a good score to MFA's development communication and 64% of the MFA staff rated the communication as eight or nine out of ten.

At the same time, in the interviews the language used in the MFA communication is recurrently criticised for being jargon-heavy and difficult to understand by others than professionals. In interviews with MFA management, one challenge with the communication material that is often mentioned is the long process of editing and commenting the text (videeraus) process that make messages overly complicated. MFA staff, some stakeholders and CSOs criticise the content for being insipid, too much like-minded, too cautious, and not reflecting enough diversity. The same interviewees were asking for more bold messages and for material with less text and more visuals and pictures. Interviewed journalists found the language of the MFA's messages and press releases often too general to attract the media's attention.

Another aspect that was stressed in many of the interviews was the lack of complexity and a continuous and open discussion about "why Finland funds development co-operation". The MFA's development communication was understood by interviewed journalists to involve an inevitable need to emphasise the positive, and especially external stakeholders said that they would appreciate also communication about more critical perspectives. The desk review and the interviews with MFA staff show that there has been a heavy concentration on reporting about results in the development communication since 2014, and less about challenges and complexity. In addition, 65% of the MFA staff who responded the online survey disagreed with the statement that the development communication materials show the complexity of development co-operation. The Kehitys-Utveckling magazine was highlighted, in particular by CSOs and researchers, as a good example of content that enabled to dig deeper into the questions about development co-operation and to some extent open up for and tell about the complexity of the work. VIE-30 staff emphasise in interviews that they have little time for producing journalistic content while most writing is to produce short informative pieces in the MFA channels.

Many of the interviewees among MFA staff and external stakeholders stress that the communication of MFA tends to be 'faceless' and there are many who are concerned that the number of possible spokespersons within the MFA is low. There is a common view that more MFA staff should present expert views in public debates and interviews. According to many of the MFA interviewees there tends to be a too high threshold to be visible in the media. There is also not a proper system for spokespersons in place which means that it is not always possible to quickly find the right person when there is need for an expert interview by a journalist or a global event to comment on. The professionals who have already been visible tend to be asked again by journalists.

3.1.3 Whether and to what extent have the development communications efforts influenced public discussion on development policy and co-operation? To what extent has the discussion been interactive?

Judgement criteria: MFA has regularly organised opportunities for dialogue on development policy; MFA participates in the public discussion and dialogue on development issues; Journalists use MFA and other relevant stakeholders as a source of articles about development co-operation; The 2018 and 2022 results reports are visible in media and there is public discussion about the results.

Finding 7. The MFA has been present in public discussion by addressing fund misuse allegations and commenting current affairs but with limited ability to influence the nature of the discussion. The discussion on digital platforms such as Twitter is polarised, and negative contents gain most reactions.

The media analysis indicates that the MFA is mainly present in the public discussion in relation to cases of fund misuse allegations or when asked to comment on current affairs. Due to the nature of how and what kind of content that tend to be commented upon and shared in social media, the representatives of MFA often have limited possibilities to influence the overall nature of discussions. In the media analysis the measurement of Social Echo (based on likes, re-shares and comments about news article links gathered on Twitter, Facebook and Reddit) shows that articles with negative tone spark more reactions and conversations in comparison to neutral and positive content (see Figure 14). Please note that the tweets included in the analysis are those that explicitly mention development cooperation, development aid and/or development policy.

Figure 14 Tone of communication, digital news media (October 2015 – September 2022)
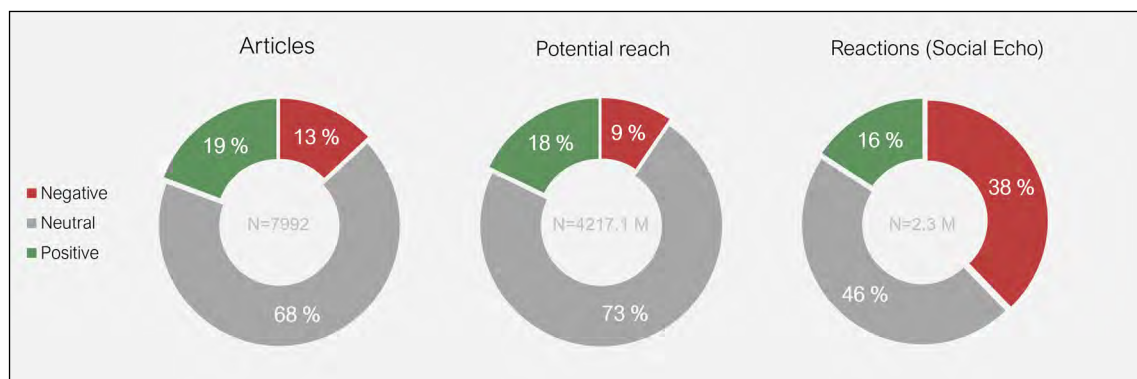
Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

In social media, and in this case Twitter, the polarisation is significantly stronger and not only do the negative tweets dominate the channel, but these also spur almost all engagement (see Figure 15). Even though the tweets with a negative tone on development co-operation were posted and reposted by accounts with rather few followers (if compared to accounts posting neutral as well as positive tweets), they were the tweets that by far gained the most reactions resulting almost 80% of the total engagement share during the 15 months-period. The amount of engagement also highly affects the visibility of a post to other users since Twitter algorithms

favour posts that spur conversation. This means that over time posts with less reactions (mainly neutral and positive tweets) will gain increasingly less visibility. One example of this, mentioned in the interviews with MFA staff, is the Instagram accounts of the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and MFA, in which there is no discussion and as the algorithms favour postings that are liked and commented, over time visibility of the account will decrease despite the number of actual posts.

Figure 15 Tone of communication on Twitter (August 2021 – October 2022)

* Engagement is based on the amount of likes and retweets that a tweet gains on Twitter. Comments and clicks are excluded from the figure. Engagement is here used as synonym to reactions.
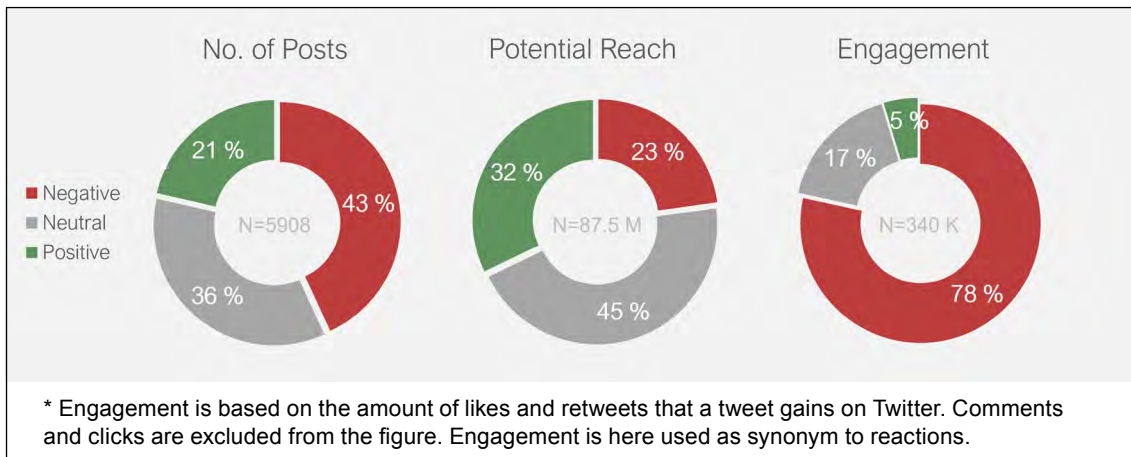
Source: Media analysis conducted by Meltwater

Against this background, the comments by the MFA most often have had limited ability to influence the overall nature of any online discussion. In general, discussions in the digital landscape rarely develop into more in-depth and continuous conversations. According to our interviews with external stakeholders and MFA staff, the public discussion is mostly negative comments about the use of funds. In this way, the MFA is described by interviewees as participating in the public discussion to some extent, but appears mainly in the social media feed in relation to negative issues. Also, the comments are often about correcting false statements, which the interviews stress are important and even mandatory to do by the MFA, but at the same time tend to make the MFA come across as defensive and not very proactive.

Finding 8. In physical face-to-face meetings the possibilities of interactive discussion are better, but the target groups tend to be limited to those who are already interested in global development issues. In the current MFA channels, such as the website and social media accounts, there is rarely any discussion.

Arenas that are mentioned by interviewees in which MFA has been active and engaged in discussions include Pori Areena, World Village Festival, Educa, the Minister's consultation with CSOs, lunches, breakfast meetings, panels, events and campaigns. However, as discussed previously, the various types of face-to-face meetings tend to be limited to those actor groups who are already interested in global development issues. Some improvements of these meetings were suggested by interviewees. For instance, both interviewed corporate representatives as well as journalists comment that meetings and events do not always have clear and defined purposes which makes it difficult to justify the participation due to tight schedules and other obligations. Also, there are suggestions about MFA participating more in events organised by other

actors. One example is events sometimes organised by the parliamentary advisory body Development Policy Committee (DPC), where MFA staff are not always actively participating. Also, a few stakeholders as well as journalists argue that the MFA should seize the opportunities to discuss development co-operation, such as the book by Matti Kääriäinen in 2015 (Curse of development aid), which reached wide public visibility in Finland.

Overall, many of the interviews with MFA staff, politicians and other external stakeholders highlight the lack of platforms and opportunities to discuss development policy. Many of these interviewees however also doubt that there would be enough interest to join the discussion if there would be possibilities.

The VIE initiative of digital ambassadors aims to increase the impact of MFA messages and experts, and to increase the number of traditional media appearances since 2016. In particular, the digital ambassadors are meant to strengthen the presence of the MFA on Twitter. According to the media analysis, the impact of the MFA official accounts and the digital ambassadors is, however, limited. In total (including all mentions of the ministry and its digital ambassadors) had a share of 4% of visibility over the 15-month period. Top posts mentioning development cooperation from the MFA account or from the digital ambassadors' accounts gained between 50 to 75 reactions on Twitter.[11] One post from the official MFA account about additional aid to Ukraine after the war received by far the most reactions (almost 700). The majority of the tweets mentioning and/or posted by the MFA were positive/neutral and only 5% of the visibility was made up of posts with a negative tone. Still it was the few negative posts when MFA commented on critics about funding and related scams that were highlighted in terms of engagement and reactions. The possibilities for the MFA and the digital ambassadors to post content that spurs reactions and engagement on Twitter are in this way limited. In addition, to initiate and maintain discussions in social media is time intensive and many of the interviewees within the MFA point out that there are not sufficient resources in VIE or in VIE-30 for such ongoing work.

> **There are few platforms for discussing development policy.**

The lack of public discussion was also mentioned by interviewees, particularly by MFA managers and external stakeholders, in the light of the scarce visibility of spokespersons. In general, many of these interviewees described a culture at the MFA in which there are too many managers who are not willing to participate in any public discussion, especially not in social media. Even though many of the MFA staff have a Twitter account, they are not active in the discussion. The director of VIE-30, Ville Cantell is however mentioned by many of the interviewees, both among MFA staff and external stakeholders, as a good example of a visible and active communicator. Many of the interviewees also reflected upon the lack of political debate about development co-operation. For example, the Minister of trade and development co-operation is rarely visible and when he is, the discussion mostly concerns only issues about trade. Overall, interviewees comment that they believe that there need to be more comments and debates among politicians about development co-operation.

---

11 Please note that accounts by for example digital ambassadors may have more reactions to specific tweets but that the tweets included here are only those explicitly mentioning development cooperation, development aid and/or development policy.

There is some support to MFA engaging more in discussions in the social media, but at the same time, many argue that it is not worthwhile. Two MFA directors say: *"I wonder if the Twitter debate has impact, it fuels the flames. Too many multi-layered responses, it should be effective, clear readings. The message disappears into the explanation." "MFA's cardinal sin is to draft long, official-like responses, the essential message is lost. For example, for reporting on irregularities, the response should include (only) two effective sentences: 'MFA investigates all reported and detected irregularities' and 'irregularities account for 0.2% of all funding.'"*

3.1.4 What can MFA learn from peer countries in terms of effectively communicating about development issues?

Finding 9. The main lessons that MFA Finland can learn from Denmark and Sweden focus on carefully defining the target groups, making a long-term development communication strategy including communicating with other actors and improving knowledge management through monitoring and sharing of data.

In 2021, the MFA Denmark decided to shift the strategic focus of development communication to engagement of Danes in global issues and in recent years, a stronger emphasis has been placed on reaching out to target groups not already engaged in or taking an interest in development and global issues. According to the engagement strategy, the people that have been found in annual opinion surveys as having a neutral attitude toward development co-operation people are open to input, but very rarely encounter information on global issues. They do not seek out knowledge themselves, they are not oriented towards the classic news media, and they are not the primary target group for the CSOs' campaigns. A special effort is therefore put on families with children as well as children and young people.

> **Denmark and Sweden use partnerships to reach broader audiences.**

Also in Sweden, the ambition at Sida in the last few years has been to reach broader groups of people in the Swedish society. Several initiatives have been taken to reach beyond those who are interested and already have knowledge about development co-operation, such as making the language of development co-operation easier to understand and more straightforward in all Sida's communication. In the case of sida.se. this also includes to better understand what people want to know about and what kinds of questions they have. The communication department has arranged training opportunities for employees at Sida to practice and learn how to write in 'plain language'. The press office has tried to focus their work more to develop relationships with local/regional media in addition to national media. Sida's director general has, for example, written letters to the editor to local newspapers and the press office is trying to pitch stores to the local newspapers to reach groups outside of the metropolitan areas.

Both in Denmark and in Sweden, there is strong co-operation with strategic partners such as CSOs, who receive development funding for communication. In Denmark, there is strong emphasis on other partners for reaching out in existing popular platforms like media, campaigns and festivals and development of new sustainable and engaging initiatives, customised to meeting the targets groups at eye level. The purpose is to secure the foundation for and the legitimacy of

the development co-operation through grass rooting. The strategy defines target groups, criteria for engagement activities, instruments to be used and the ways of sharing knowledge with partners. For many years, the Swedish Sida has employed a comprehensive Infokom-strategy, which has covered both Sida and partner CSOs' development communication.

Through collaboration with an analysis agency the MFA Denmark Engagement Team provides and disseminates knowledge and data about the target groups in the population both internally in the MFA and to relevant partners. The purpose is to create an informed basis for organising strategic efforts with the highest possible effect - both for the MFA and the partners in the sector as a whole. The Engagement team also seeks other ways to facilitate knowledge sharing in the sector – e.g. through seminars and conferences on relevant themes and subjects.

3.2 Efficiency and internal coherence: Is the development communication organised in an efficient way?

Summary: The internal coherence and efficiency of development communication in the MFA is hampered by limited co-operation and uneven attention given to communications in different units and by the leadership. Most units and all departments working with development co-operation issues are interested in but only partly capable of communicating outside the MFA. VIE-30 has skilled communicators, but the lack of career prospects affects the interest to work in the unit and generally, the rotation of staff affects the building of expertise. There are communication champions in MFA and potential to appear as spoke persons among the politicians, MFA staff and directors, but they need assistance in planning and producing communication materials together with training to communicate better. This has not been strongly supported by MFA leadership. Most MFA directors and staff are happy about VIE-30 services, but the resources of the unit are stretched because of the demanding service function and daily, unplanned tasks and requests for assistance that must be solved quickly. There are synergies and opportunities that have not been tapped into inside the VIE-30, as well as between units and departments, although the hierarchy and working in silos do not allow it happening naturally. The introductory course to the journalists (Development Academy) has been a successful way to create knowledge and interest about development co-operation among journalists and at editorial offices in Finland. However, there are opportunities to better use the network of journalists to make MFA content more newsworthy and of interest for the media. The current mandate of VIE-30, as expressed in the ToC, is to communicate to the Finnish public but there is pressure from the MFA for communicating more to international audiences, which would jeopardise the current mandate. The best practices from CSOs and peer countries include close collaboration between different parts of the structure, management-backed prioritisation of communication, dividing the team to respond to *ad hoc* and planned duties and outsourcing part of the communication work.

3.2.1 To what extent has MFA made use of the synergies and interlinkages between its development communication and development co-operation (internal coherence)?

Judgement criteria: Operational structure and roles/responsibilities are clear; staff expertise and skills match with the MFA communications strategy, annual workplans and job requirements; planning, reporting and monitoring are timely, and documents are available to all; development communication planning is adopted and appreciated by MFA staff.

Finding 10. There is a verified operational structure, but the roles and responsibilities are not clear to everybody. The extent of co-operation, internal communications and expectations vary between units and departments. The evaluation found some evidence of MFA leadership guiding the development communication content, such as in commenting the contents of sensitive messages.

Each of VIE-30 staff has a responsibility to serve as focal person of one of units under KEO, ALI, ASA and ITÄ (Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia) working with development policy and co-operation. In the same way, each unit is supposed to have a focal person who is responsible for communications.

For the MFA staff who responded in the online survey, the roles and responsibilities are mostly clear: 79% of the respondents know whom to contact in VIE-30 if they need support in communication; 77% are interested in producing communication material about their own work; 59% of respondents feel that the materials produced by VIE-30 tell enough about their work; and 56% have a clearly defined role related to communication. However, 40% of respondents do not have a defined role in communications, while 21% never contact VIE, and 64% sometimes. The answers also show that 64% of respondents sometimes, and 15% regularly participate in development communication on MFA's website, social media, or digital media.

In interviews with MFA directors, MFA is described as a hierarchical structure, where messages do not easily move between units or departments, unless there are personal contacts between friends and ex-colleagues working previously in the same unit or embassy. Similarly, the messages do not move from different levels to the minister of development co-operation for communicating. An ex-MFA employee explains in the interview: "*The line organisation is strict; things are done when a signal comes from above. If there was a different organisational culture and a bolder communication policy, initiatives would be taken from different levels of the organisation, and they would pass through the ministry.*" This may hinder the visibility of messages, as the minister holds the political position in the MFA and according to the media analysis, politicians are the dominating actor group visible in Finnish digital media. Politicians are attractive to the big national media, and they often figure in articles that are gaining reactions in social media. Finnish politicians thus have the position to increase the visibility of development co-operation with their messaging. This was supported by several external stakeholders and MFA directors who emphasised the **need for and importance of political communications to increase the visibility of development policy**, either from the MFA or from the parties and the parliament.

Another feature of the MFA, commented by several interviewees and raised also in other evaluations, such as the 2019 knowledge management evaluation, is the working in silos. The MFA interviews showed that the internal communication does not pass easily even between units working on similar issues or within departments, for example the two UN units KEO-40 (unit for UN development issues) and POL-50 (unit for UN and General Global Affairs) or the different units in VIE. On the other hand, KEO, and especially some of its units have a very close collaboration with VIE-30, some because of personal acquaintances. At the same time, according to the interviews of directors, some units are rarely working with VIE-30. The director of KEO holds communication in high importance but between units the importance given to communications varies. In ALI the general director gives increasing importance to communications, while in ASA there has been less interest until now. Some units do autonomous communication outside MFA (Unit for administrative and legal development co-operation matters (KEO-80), unit for humanitarian assistance (KEO-70)).

For companies providing services to VIE-30, MFA does not always appear an easy structure to work with. It can be a "*wild jungle, inquiries and orders coming from different people*". The ordered projects stretch longer than expected as there are long rounds of commenting and circulating the drafts in the ministry. Some issues are considered sensitive and communication products need to be commented by people in different levels of the hierarchy ('videeraus'). Sometimes MFA experts are too busy to attend the consultation meetings for communication materials and sometimes the contact person in VIE-30 is not sufficiently familiar with MFA people and practices to speed the consultation process.

According to MFA interviews, the management group meeting occasionally goes through the Meltwater media review, which regularly provides the MFA a list of articles related to development policy and development co-operation that appear in the Finnish digital media. They sometimes discuss the communications in relation to important thematic issues, but only for internal communication purposes, not for giving any guidance or making decisions. According to interviews, in other management groups communication issues are not raised. In the beginning of 2023, an *ad hoc* 'crisis group' was created to respond to the allegations of mismanagement of funds appearing in Finnish newspapers. The same happened in 2016 in two cases: the fund mismanagement case in Zambia and the case of concessional loans in Ethiopia.

> **In the beginning of 2023, an ad hoc 'crisis group' was created to respond to the allegations of mismanagement of funds appearing in Finnish newspapers.**

The whole communications department holds a weekly meeting for all the staff and VIE-10 (current affairs) has each morning a meeting for 15 minutes to coordinate the communication of such topics as the visits of the minister, press releases, social media publications. VIE-30 has a weekly meeting for the unit and a strategic meeting twice a year.

VIE-30 staff don't usually attend the meetings of development co-operation units or departments unless invited for a specific reason, except for the weekly KEO directors' meeting. According to VIE-30, in the KEO directors' meeting also campaign results, as well as future plans and other topical communication issues are presented and discussed. In the units, there is no time for spontaneous, non-planned participation, which could boost the communications. When people are aware, have skills and training, they could see the opportunities for communication in all work

– but they are too busy, there is no time. Although for two years the embassies' communications have been mostly handled by VIE-40, VIE-30 is still in contact with the partner country embassies but more with the country desks of regional departments in Helsinki. Each country desk and embassy are coupled with VIE-30 staff.

VIE-30 staff mention in interviews that they do have contacts with the embassies as each person has a role in contacting them for various reasons. There is common understanding among the MFA staff that embassies and projects would have even more important and interesting issues to communicate but it hasn't been thought how to take them effortlessly to Finland. However, late 2022 VIE-30 produced a series of articles on partner countries, in which the Finnish ambassador was interviewed to talk about the current political and economic situation in the country. Also the Kehitys-magazine and its Instagram account regularly share articles from Africa and Asia.

Some of the roles and responsibilities related to communications are presented in the annual work calendar of VIE-30 although the calendars have not been completed. The calendars are of high quality and quite detailed throughout the evaluation period, helping in dividing the responsibilities in the implementation of the plans. However, there is no formal follow-up of the implementation and monitoring to learn lessons from the communications.

Some MFA staff criticised the way that MFA reacts to the allegations of misconduct in development programmes or the reported misuse of funds. Many of these cases become public when the MFA conducts a financial audit and media brings it up as a demonstration of possible corruption, or there is some type of misconduct in the project / programme. CSOs have the responsibility of communicating about the cases in their programmes while officially it is not responsibility of MFA to communicate about them. This is, however, done which somehow leads many to think that the MFA can be blamed for the misconduct.

Finding 11. The previous communication strategy of the MFA emphasised the principle of 'all communicating', recalling for ability in identifying the topics, planning the communication, and having skills to produce content. The VIE-30 staff have the professional skills, but many MFA staff have expressed the need for strengthening their capacity in different areas of communication.

VIE-30 has knowledgeable and expert staff with diverse experience and skills while the degree of their familiarity with the MFA varies. They have good connections with media agencies and media. The unit has two positions for general career holders (the unit director and the coordinator). Salaries for non-general career expert posts are not competitive and there is currently no career prospect for specialists in the MFA, which makes it difficult to attract and keep professionals in the unit. The director and communications coordinator positions are general career positions and therefore may not be professionals of communication nor of development co-operation.

The job descriptions for the VIE-30 staff are mostly outdated, containing wrong information on the responsibilities toward embassies and MFA units between the staff members. Some job descriptions include duties that have already been removed from the unit.

Also, many MFA directors and other staff have substantial training, knowledge, coaching and experience in different ways of communication, some even with journalist background, but the motivation and time for communication varies. Almost all declare to have good skills in producing text, but many interviewed people, both in the MFA and stakeholders, point out that the communication is dominated by ministerial and professional jargon. The staff also write a lot in English. Most MFA interviewees are of the opinion that the younger staff are more skilled in social media communications.

Many MFA directors and other staff have substantial training, knowledge, coaching and experience in different ways of communication, some even with journalist background.

Due to the significant rotation of staff in the MFA, training courses involving communication issues, where applicable, are organised on a regular annual basis. The unit for Human Resources Development and Occupational Wellbeing (HAL-13) has the role of organising courses such as KAVAKU (course for newly recruited general career civil servants) and HALKU (course for newly recruited administrative career civil servants) for newly recruited general and administrative career civil servants, respectively. The courses include basic communication training for all, organised by the Communications Department (VIE) as part of the programme for about half a day. The KAVAKU course also includes a short two-day programme organised by the Development Policy Department. In addition, HAL-13 also organise orientation sessions for MFA newcomers (PEREKU) several times a year, including for trainees with a programme by VIE. Some training is given every summer for seconded officials working in delegations abroad, and this includes content produced by VIE. Crisis communication is also included in the courses organised by the consular services unit. There is no statistical data or reports on participants, numbers or contents in these courses.

According to interviews, human resources situation affects the building of professional expertise: people rotate, there are continuous changes, substitutes are not found in time which creates pressure to others in the unit. For general career staff it is difficult to build the expertise when time in one position is limited.

In the online survey, the statements measuring knowledge and skills related to development communication that respondents mostly agreed with were: *"VIE-30 has sufficient knowledge and proficiency in development communication"* (74%); *"I have sufficient communication knowledge and skills regarding my work tasks"* (72%); and *"I need more training on communication"* (62%). 59% disagreed that VIE-30 has sufficient resources for servicing the MFA on development communications and 79% consider of not having enough time for communicating about their work. More training was needed with social media (21 respondents), performance/presentation (21 respondents), media work (13 respondents), writing (12 respondents) and argumentation (10 respondents). Some staff are not happy about the communication duties nor of their skills: *"VIE's resources are limited to meet MFA's needs, which to some extent dumps communication work on officials who don't have the skills. This shows a clear difference between, for example, MFA and MOE, even though MoE only has a small communications team."*

Finding sufficient time to communicate and to participate in training is not always easy. According to interviews and the online survey it is common to think that communication is time consuming because one has to find e.g. proper angles or proper channels for communicating. There is commonly a fear of making mistakes, not using the right expressions, and giving incorrect messages which reduces the interest in communicating.

Finding 12. Some workplans and reports cannot be found in MFA archives and there are no reports on the work conducted for the last two years.

All annual plans but the one for 2019 are available in some format, sometimes only as the draft plans presented to the quality group. Also, the rotational plans 2017-21, 2018-23 and 2021-24 could be found. Annual reports 2015-2016 and 2020-21 were not found in MFA archives.

According to VIE-30, reporting has been done for two years through meetings with management groups and units. Financial reports are available for every year.

Finding 13. Communication planning varies between units and departments. VIE-30 has not systematically assisted units or departments in the planning, but several MFA managers expressed in the interviews the need for assistance. The annual plan together with the activity calendar has not been fully developed into an operational plan.

During the evaluation period, VIE-30 has annually collected the communication needs from the departments working with development communications. Each department has assembled the needs by different units and VIE-30 has combined this to an annual calendar annexed in the VIE-30 annual plan. Typically, VIE-30 gives the departments a commission for the plans but in 2022 it was sent by the communications coordinator at VIE. The commission requested the departments to "*list the main projects, events and other communication needs and wishes that need to be addressed at MFA-wide communication during 2023*". This was preceded by the new VIE director touring the department management meetings to emphasise the importance of communications.

The planning is done independently by units and normally there is no support or facilitation from VIE-30 for planning of communication. The need for assistance from VIE-30 is expressed by many in the interviews. Some units are very active in planning and communication, and the focal person or the director has an easy connection to some staff in VIE-30. Most units have an annual calendar with a few priority points and dates to communicate, often dealing with calls for proposals or press releases on agreements signed for funding of projects and programmes. *Ad hoc* events are typical, however, and often the requests for assistance come to VIE-30 at the last minute. A good example of planning is the development policy unit, KEO-10 (Box 2).

Box 2 Best practice of communication planning

> In KEO-10 (the unit for development policy), the unit director took the initiative to initiate the annual plan in a half-day workshop with the whole team. The director wanted an outside perspective on the communications, and invited an external expert speaker, whose name was suggested by the director of VIE-30.
>
> According to the unit director, *"the KEO-10 unit is slightly different, as it is not subject to such a big or direct public pressure. It is seen across the party spectrum as positive (because of European Union issues too), it doesn't have to be as reactive as some other units/reactive daily.""* All colleagues in the unit have a good grasp of communication, some with a very wide range of stakeholders within the ministry. But it's always welcome to get an update through training on the culture of communication, to understand what good tools are. The field is very much alive."*
>
> The KEO-10 communication plan shows the target groups of communication (Finnish, foreign, internal), objectives of communication, annual calendar and main messages for 2022: when, who is responsible, who are the partners, main messages and channels, as well as guidance on good communications and where to find photos.
>
> The events to be communicated included international meetings, reform of quality group, results achieved by MFA development co-operation, signing of agreements, communication about training with HAL-13, theme day: Europe.
>
> *Source: Evaluation team, based on the interview of KEO-10 director.*

In the annual joint workplan, ALI, ASA-10, ASA-40, EVA-11 and KEO have their own pages. The items for communication are divided between topics such as minister's development messages, result communication, Agenda2030 communication and global education. For some events the plan defines the responsible person in VIE-30 as well as co-operation partners such as MFA units, Finnfund and International Finance Corporation (IFC).

In the online survey, most respondents perceived that there is not much planning of development communication in their work communities. In most cases, communication about development co-operation is not part of respondents' meetings (80%), most respondents (62%) do not participate in the planning of development communication and less than half say that they plan their communication needs jointly with VIE-30. However, 56% plan beforehand what services they will need from the VIE-30.

At minister level, development communications planning is limited to joint discussions, but there is no formal plan related to development policy or co-operation. In September 2022, for example, the director of VIE-30 initiated the meeting to agree about the messages on the results report. However, for some time now, there has been a weekly meeting between VIE and the Minister, where the issues related to VIE-30 are also on the agenda.

Many MFA interviewees are of the opinion that more assistance in planning the communications is needed from VIE-30. Some of them have a clear view that units should produce their own content and VIE-30's role is to help them in finalising the material and communicate it outside, which shows that the principle of 'all communicating' has been internalised in the ministry.

Although most directors undoubtedly see the importance of communications, for some directors, communication planning is not a priority and they do not see the purpose of having anything formalised. According to the KEO management, there is a weekly management meeting where VIE-30 is occasionally present to gather the priority topics to communicate. The development policy department, KEO, is generally very positive about communications and the attitude of the director general is supportive: *"If you don't communicate about it, it's as if it never happened."* Also the Africa and Middle-East department is now preparing a new communication strategy related to the MFA Africa strategy and generally to communications with partner countries on different issues including the line of Finnish thinking on Russia-Ukraine war. ITÄ department has a communication plan and the goals in communication are discussed in the annual individual development discussions.

3.2.2 To what extent has the unit in charge of development communications been able to adjust (prioritise and de-prioritise activities) to changes in the resources?

Judgement criteria: MFA leadership and staff are satisfied on services provided by VIE-30; Adequate resources are available (human resources, funds) for conducting the work of VIE-30, also in the future.

Finding 14. Most MFA management and other staff are happy with VIE-30 services. Most work by VIE-30 is servicing the rest of the MFA. VIE-30 staff estimate that 50-70% of their time is used for work that has not been planned in detail although the topics may appear in the annual plan. Circulating the communication material for comments of MFA staff or for the approval of MFA management takes unnecessarily much time.

Although most of the MFA management and other staff are satisfied with the VIE-30 services, several pointed out that due to the heavy workload of the VIE-30 staff, they often refrain from asking help with the communication. The respondents of the MFA online survey find the services of VIE-30 of high quality (79% agree). They feel that they get the help they need (79% agree) and they get it fast (62% agree). They also agree (77%) that it is easy to find a person from VIE-30 to help them with communication related issues. Help from VIE-30 was most often needed in writing content for websites, writing press releases, contacting journalists, and organising events. Lot of effort was put in the results report 2022 and the co-operation in assembling the report was found good. A respondent commented: *"VIE-30 is ready to help, but they don't have the resources. The threshold to ask for help is high when we know they are so busy. That's why some things are not communicated, for sure."*

The interviewed VIE-30 staff estimated that they use approximately 50-70% of their working time to service function and the work is planned at very short notice. The service function consists of the requests coming from units and departments, including both *ad hoc* demands and planned needs for communicating on events and other activities listed by the units in the annual calendars. The service function does not fully contribute to the overall and strategic objectives of the work of VIE-30, as the annual calendar is a long list of activities to communicate and takes a lot of VIE-30 time to work with (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 An example of a working week in VIE-30

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Weekly meeting of VIE	Unit meeting	• Adjustment of the Ukraine press release and sending it for translation	Team meeting	• Communication on Ukraine
• Replacing the UM logo with the new one – discussion within the department	• Adjustment of the Ukraine press release and sending it for translation	• Canceling the field trip to Mozambique, exchanging messages with the Embassy and the journalists	• Circulation of translations of the Ukraine press release, texts of social media and guidance for VIE-10 for Friday's distribution	• Humanitarian aid: continuing on the planning of the communication for the spring: updating a draft of communication calendar
• Planning of a field trip for journalists to Mozambique with the Embassy in Maputo	• Canceling the field trip to Mozambique, exchanging messages with the Embassy and the journalists	• Preparation of an ALI communication plan with ALI	• Discussions on for example about payments of costs of development academy and media pitching for 23rd March	• Communicating to different departments in the MFA on the renewal of logo in international communication
• Finland's support to Ukraine – Processing and circulating of the press release	• Visit of African ambassadors: press release processing and planning of communication	• Africa strategy 2-year seminar preparatory meeting with ALI		• Miscellaneous work, such as going through the OCHA photobank
• Process description and communication of suspected misconduct: offer for layout and agreeing on layout	• Finland's support to areas hit by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria: commenting the video		• Meeting on ALI's communication plan	• Follow-up on communication on Prime Minister's visit
• Foreign Affairs Council of the Ministers for Development and Trade: processing, adjustment and circulation of the press release in the office, sending for translation	• Plan's recommendations on the promotion of gender equality in Finland's foreign policy, editing the Kampus article I wrote the previous Friday and requesting photos from Plan		• Exchanging messages on Ukraine with the Ministry of the Environment	• Africa strategy 2-year seminar – commenting on the contents of the seminar, listing of journalists for invitations
• Africa Strategy 2-year seminar – working on the speaker for the seminar	• Circulation of translations of Foreign Affairs Council press release and guidance for VIE-10 for its distribution on Wednesday		• Briefing on communication on humanitarian aid for a colleague who starts as a responsible person for communication at her unit	• Commenting on ALI communication plan
• Planning on risk management training for KEPO-days with KEO	• Agreeing on the communication on a ADB related visit		• Participation in the presentation of gov.fi renewal	• Discussion on results report matters with a colleague and the continuation of the work during his absence
			• Publishing the Kampus article concerning Plan's recommendations	• Humanitarian aid: information from OCHA about the field trip to South Sudan and participant from Addis Ababa, exchanging messages with OCHA and Addis Ababa concerning the trip
			• Answering various questions	• How to utilize field trips in social media – message of brainstorming to colleagues in the VIE
				• Editing the article from ALI-30 on Malawi

GREEN = Weekly Meetings   **YELLOW** = Work related to the development communication 2023 plan   **BLUE** = Work related to requests from others

Source: Evaluation team, based on the material provided by VIE-30 staff

The circulating of contents for comments among the MFA staff as well as the process of getting the approval for the communication contents from the top management take considerable amount of time. One interviewee described how one tweet can take the whole day to finalise as there is no secure platform for collaborative editing and many staff want to have their say. MFA is a government body and there is a particular type of ministerial language and modes of expression that are mastered only by those who have worked in the MFA for some time. There are also sensitive issues that the leadership necessarily must check for the language and for the content. The roles and responsibilities are not always clear. The design and finalising of development communication materials such as publications or videos needs commenting and views of experts, who are constantly busy and may not have time for joint meetings. This slows down the work of VIE-30 staff as they depend on the feedback from others.

The discussions with the VIE-30 staff showed that the service function is essential in the unit's work and it has grown more significant and time-consuming over the years. The staff feel responsible and tries to fulfil all demands from the units and departments requesting for help or support in communication. As the VIE-30 services are appreciated and needed, and there is no guidance on what to prioritise and what to deprioritise in the unit, the service function has overtaken much of the space of communication activities that VIE-30 plan themselves. The unit is responsible for and carries out many communication activities beyond those servicing the rest of the MFA, such as:

> **VIE-30 services have become more essential, significant and time consuming over the years.**

- Campaigns (such as campaign on development co-operation results report 2022);

- Media work (development academy, media relations);

- Kehitys-Utveckling magazine (printed and online magazine);

- Public events (Educa, World Village Festival);

- Global education (material on webpages, co-operation with stakeholders);

- Stakeholder collaboration (co-operation with CSOs and other external stakeholders, participation in networks).

Finding 15. The unit fully implements their service function although the human resources were halved already in 2014. Service work's share has increased to a higher level during the evaluation period. There is a strong pressure from some parts of the MFA to extend the communication from Finnish to international audiences.

Several MFA directors find the workload of VIE-30 heavy, and the VIE-30 staff feel burdened with both internal and external pressure to meet the expectations. The human resources of the unit were cut to half in 2014, from 13 persons to seven and consequently down to the current number of 5+1 persons. The last reduction of the administrative person from the unit has increased the work for everybody. Still, for the most part, the same functions have remained in the unit until

today. There are differing views among the MFA management on the adequacy of the personnel: some think that VIE-30 is short on staff, especially as the longer term, and the experienced staff are few; others argue that the unit has significant resources, but not able to prioritise.

The unit has tried to prioritise its work and reduce its workload during the last years, especially by cutting proactive communication. E.g., the organisation of decision-makers' development academy was transferred to KEO; travel grants for journalists were stopped; and the co-ordination of grants related to communication and global education was moved to the unit for civil society more than 10 years ago.

According to MFA interviews, online survey and the examination of VIE-30 job descriptions, the current staff has the needed expertise to carry out their work. However, the unit has suffered from constant changes and staff shortages, while the building of expertise and familiarity with the MFA system is gradual. For example, in 2019 four staff members changed. In general, the staff turn-over is high due to the rotation system in the MFA, but also the recruitment processes are slow. Most job descriptions for staff are somewhat outdated and describe tasks that no longer exist or are under the responsibility of another person.

There is a strong pressure from some parts of the MFA to extend the VIE-30 communication from Finnish to international audiences on how Finland contributes to international funding and development, also to influence the opinions of some partner countries. According to discussions with the VIE-30 and VIE, there is a plan to add the function in the VIE-30.

> **There is a strong pressure from some parts of the MFA to extend the VIE-30 communication from Finnish to international audiences.**

The budget of VIE-30 has gone down from more than EUR 2 million in 2015 to EUR 1.1 million in 2022, while the budget utilisation rate has fluctuated between 25 and 35%, reaching almost 70% in 2021. The annual budgets for VIE-30 are shown in Figure 17, divided between the annual current budget and the carry-overs from the previous year and from two years back. This shows that the utilisation rate has been low, and carry-overs have often exceeded the current budget. Managing the budget is time-consuming. The unit does not have a possibility to employ more staff although it has financial resources. Outsourcing has been the way to get helping hands in the unit (see Finding 3).

Figure 17 Annual budget of VIE-30 with utilisation rate
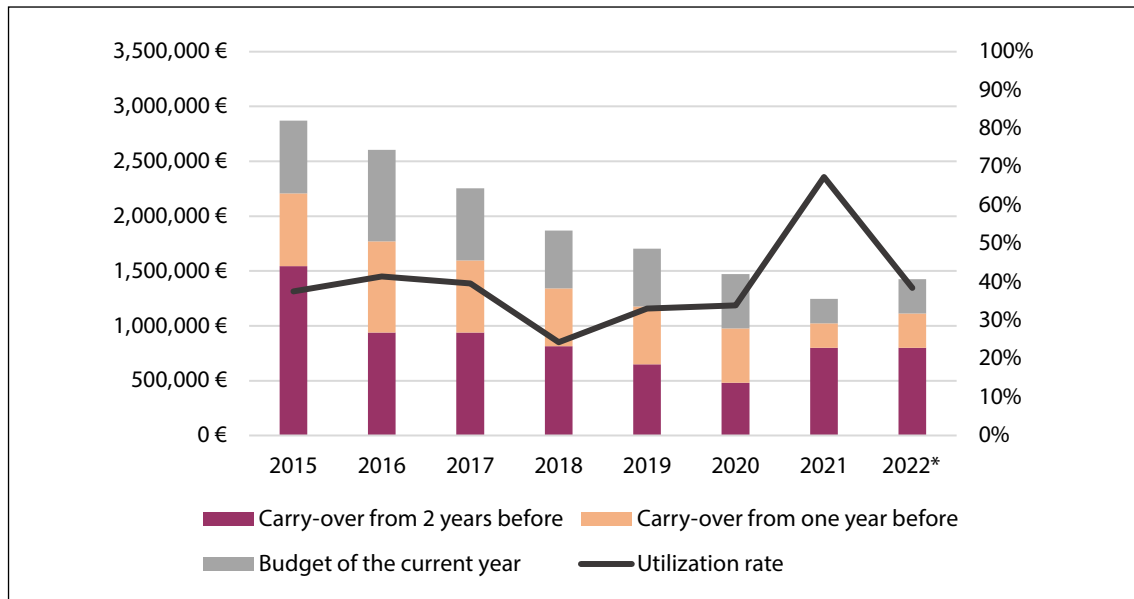
Source: Financial reports of VIE-30 2015-October 2022

The largest budget items are the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and, in the 2022 budget, the outsourcing to the media agency, which together took most of the budget. The VIE-30 budget has six sectors: publications; media and journalists; school and educational information; public services; stakeholder and internal communication; and regular publications, which in practice means the Kehitys-Utveckling magazine. Other single high expenditures are for the journalists' Development Academy, decision-makers' development academy (now implemented by KEO) and material for global education, including the updating of the website and games.

Compared to the funds used for development communications in Denmark, the Finnish budget is small. The direct annual budget of the Engagements team's own activities is around EUR 3 million, including partnerships and campaigns, whereas digital communication, press, and support to media amounts to approximately EUR 0.27 million. The separate pooled funds are approximately EUR 7.8 million. In Denmark, the information and engagement funds by strategic CSO partners are 2% of their budgets, which totals EUR 1.9 million annually.

Sweden's budget has also been much higher, but the recent cuts have severely affected the development communications work. From 2010, the annual budget for the development communication strategy (infocom) has fluctuated between Swedish Krona (SEK) 96 million (in 2011) and 158 million SEK (in 2020), equivalent to about EUR 9.6 million and EÚR 15,8 million, respectively. In 2022, the budget was reduced by SEK 50 million (about EUR 5 million). These funds were instead used for taking care of Ukrainian migrants. The recently announced radical cut (with 87% to only 20 million SEK, about EUR 2 million) in the infocom-budget for the year of 2023 means that the support to the development communication by the partnering CSOs will be completely terminated and the remaining budget will be used to fund the communication work of Sida (including also support to the magazine OmVärlden and The Global School). During 2023 about half of the decreased budget is dedicated to CSOs for them to wind down their infocom-projects.

3.2.3 To what extent has MFA been able to maintain and proactively develop media relations?

Judgement criteria: Development academy participants are satisfied with the courses and they think that they have been able to use the information in their work; VIE-30 organises regular events and communicates proactively with journalists; the journalists in the network have produced independent media content on development issues.

Finding 16. Through the Development Academy, the MFA has built and maintained contacts with an important network of interested and informed journalists

The Development Academy is an orientation course for Finnish journalists organised annually by VIE-30 with the purpose to expand their knowledge and interest in global development issues and Finland's development policy as well as to improve their possibilities to follow these topics in their work. In addition, interviews with VIE-30 also confirm that one more objective of the course is to create contacts between VIE-30 and journalists that serve both ways: VIE-30 gains a network of informed journalists who are interested in covering global development issues, and journalists get to know the MFA, lowering the threshold for contacting the ministry and its staff for interviews or information. The course usually includes two to three seminar days in Helsinki and a week-long trip to one of Finland's partner countries in Africa or Asia[12]. The MFA offers the option of covering the travel costs for participating journalists. In total 78 journalists have participated in the courses organised between 2015 and 2021.

The feedback from participants at the Development Academy, both in the surveys conducted by the MFA directly after the courses and in our interviews with journalists who have participated in at least one course, is overwhelmingly positive. Participating journalists – ranging from experienced foreign correspondents working at large media houses to journalists from smaller regional newspapers who rarely cover foreign news – state that the experience was valuable

> **The feedback from participating journalists on Development Academy is overwhelmingly positive.**

in many ways, such as giving them a deeper understanding of broader development issues and of their interconnectedness, clarity on the bigger picture of these issues as well as the Finland's role in relation to other actors, and a better understanding for the work of the MFA. The course also improved many participants' image of the MFA and many of the interviewed journalists specifically mentioned that the MFA staff who accompanied them on the trip left a lasting, positive impression.

---

12 In 2021 the destination of the trip was exceptionally Geneva, Switzerland, with the purpose of getting better acquainted with the multilateral organisations involved in development co-operation.

Finding 17. Although the network with journalists gives the MFA a stable foundation for developing media relationships, responsiveness to the news agenda and needs of the media are found wanting.

The Development Academy has created a stable platform for the MFA to create a network of journalists with both interest in and knowledge about development co-operation. Interviewed journalists confirm that they regularly receive emails with information from the MFA and that they appreciate to be on the email-list. The messages sent to the journalist network by VIE-30 include invitations to various events and press conferences, as well as suggestions for international guests to interview. At the same time, interviews with VIE-30 indicate that the mailing list is not regularly updated and the selection criteria for the list of 'active journalists' are not clearly defined. Previously, VIE-30 also used to maintain Facebook groups for Development Academy alumni. When the MFA staff member who created the group retired in 2019, the remaining staff had no longer administrative access to the group, and it was instead replaced by a new group – 'Globaalit Journalistit' created in March 2022 by the Finnish Foundation for Media and Development (Vikes) and VIE-30. This new group has a weaker connection to the Development Academy as it targets any journalist who is interested in global development issues, but the ambition stated in interviews with VIE-30 is to market the new group to all Development Academy alumni after updating the email list.

In the interviews, both journalists and editors emphasise that it is seldom sufficient to send general tips and information through emails to maintain contacts and develop long-term relationships. The interviewees would have preferred direct and proactive contacts as well as more targeted and tailored communication. For example, a journalist explained that because of his/her very busy schedule, invitations to general get-togethers are skipped unless there is a very specific focus that relates to the current news agenda. Among the many suggestions made by journalists and editors of the kind of appropriate communication, were the tying of content to local events or people, tailoring the format of the information to different types of media, targeting the selected UN-days or other key events with news value, and sending sum-ups every once in a while, about what Finland is doing with its whole development aid (instead of too many and scattered emails/ press releases).

> **The interviewed journalists prefer direct and proactive contacts and more targeted and tailored communication by the MFA.**

At the same time, interviews with staff at VIE-30 indicate that there are several factors that limit their ability to act on the media's suggestions for more tailored communication. For example, tailored information packages require time and resources that the unit lacks at the moment. Also, the unit needs to be able to quickly identify spokespersons with in-depth knowledge about specific topics which is challenging, not least because of the regular rotation of diplomatic MFA staff and the fact that not all people within the MFA are willing to be interviewed by journalists.

3.2.4 What can MFA learn from CSOs and peer countries in terms of organisation of development communications?

Finding 18. Both CSOs and peer countries provide best practices in how the work can be structured differently to support the efficiency of the organisation. The practices include close collaboration between different parts of the structure, management-backed prioritisation of communication, dividing the team to respond to ad hoc and strategic duties and outsourcing part of the communication work.

The well-established[13] Finnish CSOs have a clear structure and strategic plans that guide the communications work, including strong management-backed prioritising and continuous monitoring. All participants in the CSO workshop pointed out the importance of a good communication strategy where objectives, target groups, channels, key messages, and themes are defined . In the strategy, the resources are also defined as the amount of work must be balanced with the number of employees. Prioritisation comes from the top of the organisation, as the communication officials work in constant pressure to fulfil the expectations of all units and staff of the organisation but the principle 'communicate about everything' is not effective nor wise. The head of communications has the mandate and vision as well as uses the responsibility to decide what to communicate and what to leave out. Those organisations, who have prioritised their communication, for example Plan International Finland and Fingo, have found their communication to become more effective. The work is regularly monitored, data is collected and analysed. Plans and actions are updated according to the results data and analyses. See the example of Plan International Finland's structure for development communication in Box 3.

> CSOs point out the importance of a good communication strategy with objectives, target groups, channels, key messages, and themes.

---

13 Well-established CSOs refer to Finnish civil society organisations that are well-known, have a recognized position and long experience in the development cooperation and/or global education in Finland. Most of them receive programme support from the MFA.

Box 3 Plan International Finland's structure for development communication

In the CSO workshop, Plan International Finland presented their communication structure that consists of several layers of strategies and plans that guide their development communication:

- Communication strategy is derived from the organisation's strategy and ToC. Communication strategy defines the main themes, key goals and functions for the period of the strategy, as well as the role of communications in achieving the strategic goals of the organisation.

- The practical tool of implementing the communications strategy is the content strategy, which is made jointly with other staff. The content strategy consists of the target groups analyses, key messages and an action plan which is updated regularly.

- In addition, the tone of voice and a regularly updated channel strategy are needed.

- In the annual planning cycle, prioritisation and resources are defined and described. There are several regular meetings to implement the annual plan: a joint annual planning session, thematic quartal plans, monthly check-ups, as well as weekly checks and daily reactive communications.

- The results and impact are monitored and evaluated continuously. The plans and actions are updated according to the data.

Source: Plan International's presentation in the CSO workshop.

In the CSOs, communication strategy is discussed with the staff so that everybody understands why and what is communicated. Communication needs to be included in all plans and be part of everybody's work. When everybody understands why and what is communicated, it creates the trust that communication unit is doing the right things: 'I wait now, my turn in communication will come'. Otherwise, the expectations and the work will not meet. Communication is nowadays not only the work or responsibility of the communication unit and officials, but everybody needs to take part in it. The co-operation and co-ordination of work between substance experts and communication officials is important, and everybody needs training and skills in communication. It is important that the staff, to some extent, is able to communicate also themselves about the work they do without the communication unit.

> The co-operation and co-ordination of work between substance experts and communication officials is important, and everybody needs training and skills in communication.

The MFA Denmark completely reshuffled the structure of development communications after 60 years of one type of organisation and divided it into two teams, of which one focuses on engaging citizens that are not easily reached. Both the communication team (COM) and engagement team have the objective of making the Danes more knowledgeable of development co-operation and increase the support to international funding. *Ad hoc* communication and working with development co-operation units and departments is the responsibility of the COM department, where two staff work on development communications for an equivalent of one full

time staff. This leaves the three-person engagement team in the Humanitarian action, Civil society and Engagement department enough time to implement the engagement strategy and work with the partners, such as CSOs, Denmark TV. There is also pooled funding that has been outsourced to two organizations, which provide grants for engagement activities.

The Swedish Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) decides annually how much time the communication department will devote between internal support/advisory work and planned communication activities. At Sida's communication department in Stockholm there are 18 permanent positions plus two additional full-time consultancy resources. The employees at the communication department are working on everything from internal communication to the website, social media, media relations, and various events. The two consultancies are helping with producing everyday content to the website of Sida and other digital channels. When the communication department does not have the time to help with *ad hoc* – or more time-consuming, previously planned – activities, the other departments at Sida are allowed to use consultancy resources in the agency's framework agreement for communication services. This helps the communication department to secure that they will have sufficient time for their planned communication, and not to devote too much into the unplanned, ad hoc requests from other departments. The communication department is not only a support function for other departments, but these departments (including embassies) provide ideas, content and other material as well as spokespersons.

Sida has outsourced key parts of their communication work. Three examples of long-term contracts with external partners are: (a) the online magazine OmVärlden (equivalent to Kehitys-Utveckling) is owned by Sida but produced by an independent editorial office and it is clearly stated that the opinions that are expressed in the articles are neither Sida's nor official statements of Sweden. (b) UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Sweden is considered to be a neutral and trustworthy actor and therefore has been given a rather extensive role as professional communicator when it comes to spreading information and engaging in dialogue about global development with a focus on Agenda 2030. (c) An alumni network – Sida Alumni – with young people who have recently done field studies or traineeship in development countries (Minor Field Studies, a scholarship programme funded also by Sida and administrated by the Swedish Council for Higher Education). The alumni present their experiences, engage in discussion and undertake practices in schools to contribute to knowledge creation about development co-operation among Swedish pupils.

> **In Denmark and in Sweden, different solutions have been found to ease the workload between ad hoc and other communication.**

3.3 Coherence (external): What is the external coherence of MFA development communications?

Summary: External coherence of MFA's development communication has not been fully developed. The MFA and CSOs inform each other on their communication plans semi-annually but with other stakeholders, such as organisations supporting business development, companies related to development co-operation or researchers, there is currently no structure for co-ordination of activities. Co-operation mostly takes place through the sharing of each other's content such as CSOs helping to spread MFA social media campaigns or the MFA including CSO materials in the

development policy results report. MFA does not take the full advantage of using CSOs' and other external stakeholders' materials, or through collaboration, even though CSOs and other external stakeholders carry out significant development communication in Finland with the MFA funding. For the most part, the concept of global education is understood in the MFA in narrow way, limiting to the formal education given in schools. However, its support is strong in the MFA and among external stakeholders. VIE-30 produces global education materials for teachers and participates in EDUCA fair. With the MFA funding, the Finnish CSOs carry out extensive global education but there is little co-ordination or co-operation of actions between the MFA and the CSOs.

3.3.1 To what extent has MFA utilised the materials of relevant CSO and other partners involved in the production of the contents and vice versa?

Judgement criteria: Materials by CSOs and other actors have been used in MFA communication (result report, website) and vice versa.

Finding 19. MFA is not fully taking advantage of using CSOs' and other external stakeholders' materials. The two development co-operation results reports, from 2018 and 2022 present the work and materials from a diverse group of actors, but apart from the reports, use of materials is limited. Majority of the CSOs use and share MFA's development communication materials sometimes or seldom.

The MFA uses the materials of CSOs and other external stakeholders to some extent. Kehitys-Utveckling magazine cooperates with the CSOs and sometimes the co-operation leads to published articles in the magazine. For the development co-operation results reports (2018, 2022), the CSOs and other external stakeholders contributed a lot, especially in terms of providing the results of their work. Otherwise, the use of their materials in development communication in the MFA is sporadic and limited. According to the interviews, VIE-30 contacts the CSOs and asks for material. This finding was also supported by the CSO online survey where half of the respondents had been asked from the MFA to provide materials, usually examples of results, pictures, or articles, once or twice a year (see Figure 18).

Most CSOs (81%) who responded the online survey, use and share the development communication materials produced by the MFA. Only 64% use and share materials sometimes or seldom, mostly few times a year (see Figure 18). Most common ways or using and sharing materials are the following:

- Reading news, articles and press releases in the MFA webpage;

- Using result and other reports in the MFA web page as information sources;

- Reading Kehitys-Utveckling magazine and sharing its articles in social media;

- Sharing materials from result reports and other campaigns in social media.

Figure 18 Asking, using and sharing materials from CSOs (prevalence and activity)

Has the MFA asked development communication materials from you?	Do you use or share development communication materials produced by the MFA?	How often do you use or share materials?
■ Yes 50 % ■ No 33 % ■ I don't know 17 %	■ Yes 81 % ■ No 6 % ■ I don't know 13 %	■ Often 36 % ■ Sometimes 14 % ■ Seldom 50 %
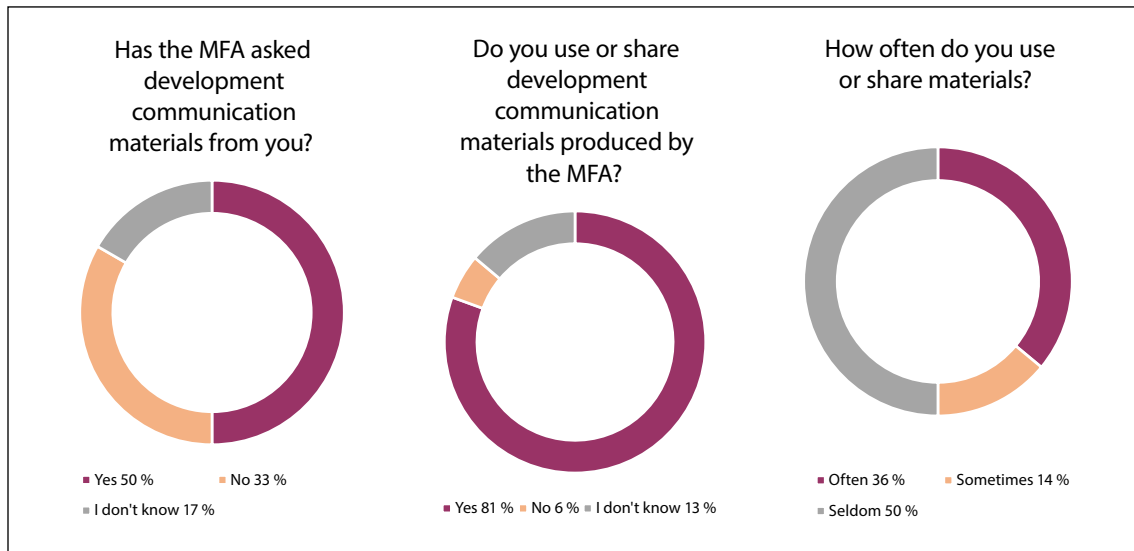
Source: CSO survey

CSO online survey supported the findings of the web analytics and VIE-30 interviews: CSOs are an important group of UM.fi webpage users and readers of the Kehitys-Utveck-ling magazine. CSOs find the webpage and magazine relevant channels where they search for information, read and use articles and reports. On the other hand, several CSOs stressed that the MFA development communication is not very visible, and it reaches you only if you intentionally follow it. To improve the communications between MFA and CSOs, several CSOs suggested a newsletter that would be targeted to them. This would probably increase both using and sharing of the contents of the MFA development communication by the CSOs, but also increase the reach for wider audiences through the CSOs.

CSOs argued that they would be willing to share more contents of the MFA for example in the campaigns, if they would be contacted earlier and offered contents in time. More time would allow them to adjust the messages for their own audiences. In the past campaigns, MFA has contacted CSOs too late for having enough time to align the messages with organisations' own com-

> **CSOs are willing to share more MFA contents in the campaigns, if contacted earlier and offered contents in time.**

munications. CSOs have their own communication strategies, plans, target groups and channels, and are not willing to suddenly post contents that do not fit their plans.

CSOs and other external stakeholders produce a lot of contents on development co-operation and more widely on global issues. For example, CSOs provide their annual results reports to the unit for civil society, in addition to other development communication contents and materials they produce. The advantages of and synergies with these existing materials are not fully taken advantage of in the MFA.

3.3.2 To what extent do the development communications of MFA and other stakeholders such as CSOs complement each other?

Judgement criteria: MFA development communication is coordinated and complementary with that of other actors funded by MFA; There are strategies / structures / networks used for partnering with external actors; Global education is adequately supported and monitored by MFA.

Finding 20. The MFA coordinates the development communication with CSOs through bi-annual informative meetings and by collaborating occasionally with other stakeholders. The more systematic and profound co-operation is sporadic and takes place with a few organisations. Nevertheless, there is interest both in the MFA and among external stakeholders for strengthening co-operation.

VIE-30 organises regular bi-annual meetings with CSOs where the MFA communication plans are presented. CSOs have also their chance to present their plans in the meetings. In addition, VIE-30 attends CSO meetings organised by the unit for civil society. CSOs find the meetings important but call for a more participatory approach in the meetings; they propose that joint planning and aligning of plans could take place in the sessions. Currently the meetings are more informative in nature, and there is no joint planning or strategizing. In addition to the structure of having bi-annual meetings, VIE-30 has agreed on joint communication with a few CSOs, for example with The Finnish National Committee for UNICEF and The Finnish Foundation for Media and Development (VIKES). In connection with the campaigns, VIE-30 has organised specific meetings with CSOs.

> **There is systematic co-ordination of development communication between VIE-30 and CSOs to some extent.**

The above-mentioned activities indicate that there is systematic co-ordination of development communication between VIE-30 and CSOs to some extent. However, apart from the above mentioned meetings, there are no other structures where CSOs more widely or other stakeholders are involved.

A third of the CSO online survey respondents (35%) cooperating with VIE-30, do it actively (see Figure 19). Note that as half of the CSOs don't cooperate at all, the percentage of actively cooperating CSOs of all respondents in the online survey is only 17% (6 CSOs). Especially the CSOs linked with the UN are active, some also with other units in the MFA. The co-operation consists of i) having joint development communication planning with VIE-30; ii) organising joint events and seminars; iii) producing materials and contents with and for VIE-30 and or other units; and iv) communicating actively through emails and phone calls.

Figure 19 Prevalence and activity of co-operation with VIE-30

Does your organisation cooperate with VIE-30?
■ Yes 50 % ■ No 42 % ■ I don't know 8 %

How active is the cooperation?
■ Active 35 % ■ Moderate 59 % ■ Not active 6 %
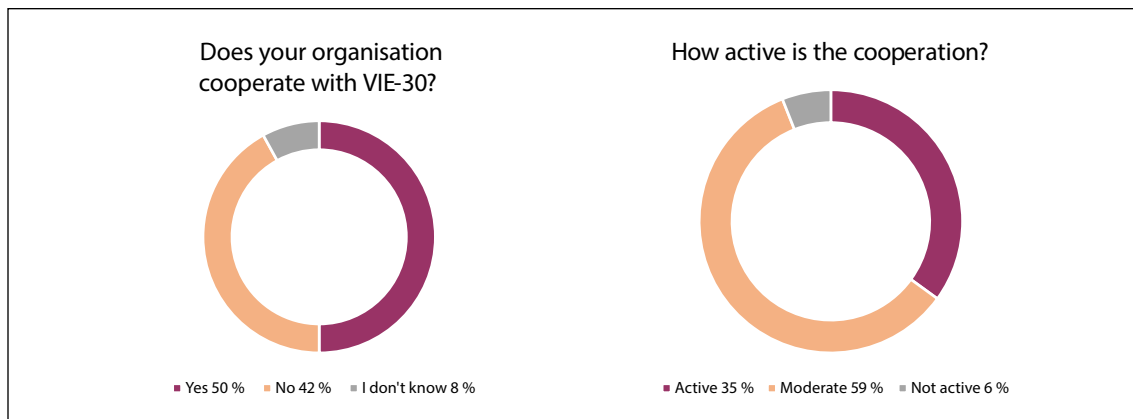
Source: CSO survey

For those CSOs who cooperate moderately (59%), the co-operation consists of: i) participation in annual meetings and morning coffee events organised by VIE-30; ii) sending information when asked, including contents for results reports; iii) sharing materials of the campaigns that VIE-30 has organised.

CSOs would be willing to cooperate more with the MFA, for example in planning and aligning development communication in the bi-annual meetings. Based on the interviews with the VIE-30 staff, there is also interest from their side in strengthening the co-operation with the organisations. CSOs suggest to have a few (1-2) agreed themes that all organisations could communicate about during the year, from their own work and perspectives. CSOs also suggest more co-operation in the development communication campaigns. In the past, the co-operation has been characterised by MFA asking CSOs to share their contents in the social media. CSOs would be willing to take part already in the planning phase which could be realised for example through Fingo. CSOs have both substance and communication expertise that could benefit the MFA in the campaigns.

As for the co-operation with other stakeholders, VIE-30 works actively with Finnfund, but with others such as private companies, researchers and Development Policy Committee, there is no or little co-ordination or co-operation in development communication. In the MFA interviews, all interviewed stakeholders stressed the importance of co-operation, willingness to share materials and the need for communicating on the stakeholders' work funded by MFA.

Finding 21. CSOs and other external stakeholders significantly complement MFA's development communication in terms of reaching out for diverse target groups in Finland, using a wide range of communication channels, such as versatile use of social media, and communicating on various themes. The CSOs' expenditure of MFA funding for development communication, global education and advocacy was approximately EUR 7.5 million in 2021.

The complementarity of the development communication of stakeholders was examined more closely with CSOs, focusing on target groups, the communication channels in use, the themes and topics communicated, and the funding used for communication activities.

According to the CSO online survey, two thirds of the CSOs target their communication to professionals close to their own fields of expertise and e.g. to CSOs working in the field of development co-operation. Half of the respondents target their communication to their own internal groups; members, volunteers and supporters, half to certain specific target groups among the citizens, and almost half to decision-makers and authorities. Every fifth CSO targets the communication to businesses (see Figure 20).

> CSOs more often than MFA have direct contacts with their target groups, especially those who are own members and supporters.

Many CSOs have the same target groups as MFA, e.g. the professionals, the youth or the citizens who are interested in global issues. However, CSOs more often than MFA have direct contacts with their target groups, especially those who are own members and supporters. In this respect, organisations can be considered increasing the reach of target groups through their communication, in addition to complementarity by reaching out for target groups different from those of the MFA: for example, persons with disabilities, young men or students.

Figure 20 Target groups of CSOs' development communication
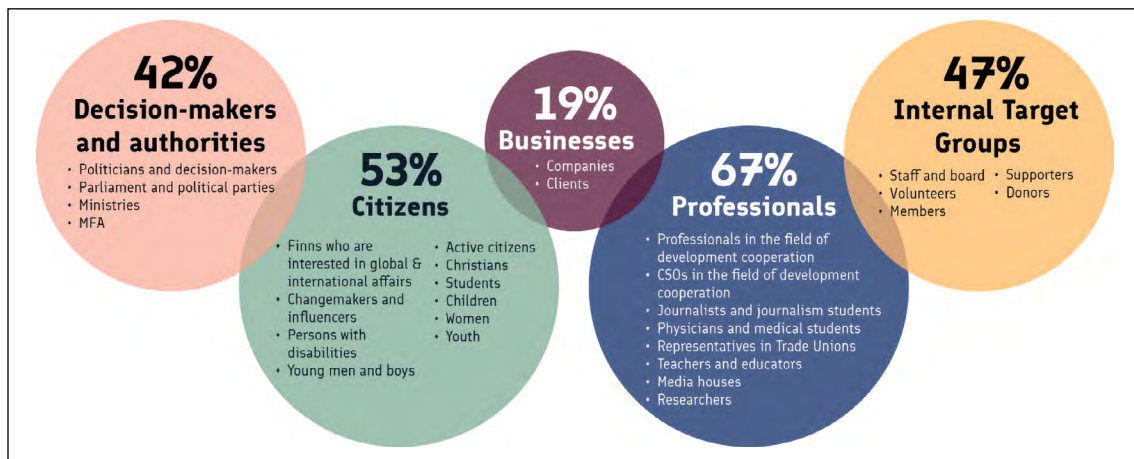
Source: CSO online survey.

CSOs complement the MFA development communications by the use of social media channels. In order of importance, CSOs' main communication channels are social media, organisation's own webpage, membership magazines and newsletters, events and mass media. The channels are largely the same as for MFA, but for most organisations, social media is today the most important communication channel. Almost all CSOs who responded in the online survey, have Instagram accounts, and nine out of ten have a Facebook page. More than two thirds use Twitter, almost half are in LinkedIn, and more than one out of four is in YouTube. The use of TikTok as communication channel is rarer, as only 12% of CSOs use it. In discussions in the CSO workshop, several CSOs reported that they are planning to open a TikTok account in the near future (see Figure 21).

Figure 21 Channels of CSOs in social media
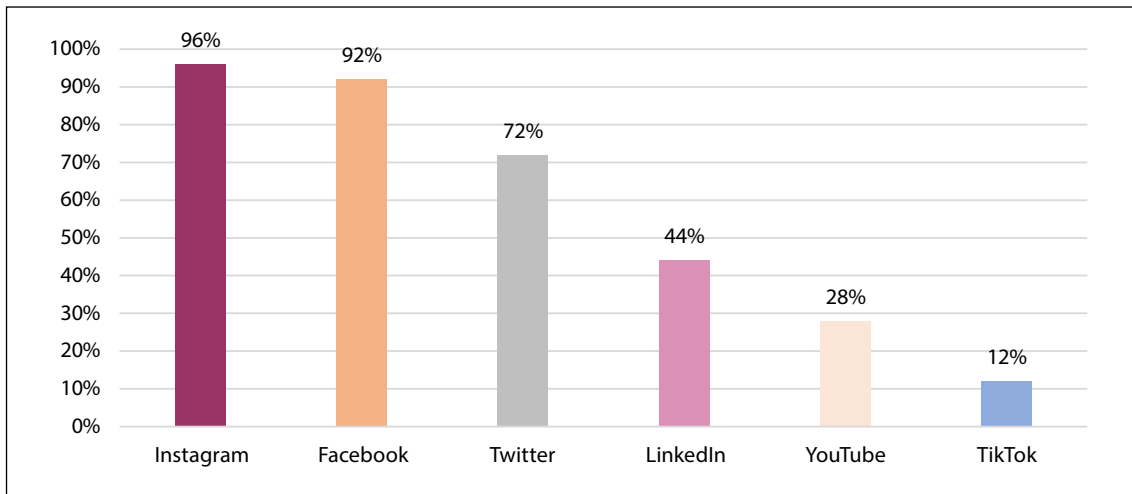
Source: CSO online survey.

The themes and topics used in CSO communications are aligned with those of the MFA. The CSO online survey also asked CSOs to list up the themes of their development communication. The themes cover a wide range of topics from CSOs' own programme and project work to variety of global issues. It is worth noticing that the topics also cover the main goals of Finland's development co-operation (poverty, human rights, Agenda 2030), cross-cutting objectives (gender equality, non-discrimination, climate and biodiversity) and priority areas (education, sustainable economy and decent work including innovations and entrepreneurship, peace and democracy including taxation and rule of law, climate change including food security and water).

> **CSOs use more resources for development communication than the MFA.**

It can be argued that CSOs significantly complement MFA's development communication. The evaluation team looked at the annual expenditures of development communication, global education and advocacy in 2021 of CSOs receiving programme support. These CSOs[14] are the ones receiving most funding from the MFA. In 2021 they used EUR 3.4 million for development communication, including both communication on their programme work and communication on more general development issues, while for global education and advocacy, CSOs used EUR 2.1 million. The total expenditure was EUR 5.5 million. When the annual support of other CSOs receiving funds for communication and global education as well those linked with the UN (average EUR 1 million / instrument per year), is added to the EUR 5.5 million, the total amounts to approximately EUR 7.5 million[15]. In 2021, MFA's expenditure for development communication was EUR 0.74 million.

---

14   Expenditure of KIOS Foundation is not included as the report was not available for the evaluation.

15   This sum includes the self-financing of the organisations (minimum of 7.5%)

Finding 22. The support to global education among the MFA management is strong. However, the term is mostly understood at the MFA as formal education given in schools, and a separate activity from development communication. With the MFA funding, CSOs carry out a large part of global education in Finland but the co-operation with the MFA is limited.

Finland is committed to achieving the SDGs both in Finland and in its international co-operation. In Finland, co-ordination and communication on the Agenda 2030 are the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office, but achieving the goals requires a wide range of societal actors, from ministries to civil society and private sector (MFA, n.d.). A key tool for achieving these objectives is the education of citizens: the goals cannot be achieved without motivated, active and competent citizens who use their own strengths and potential to promote sustainable development (Fingo, n.d., see Box 4). The SDG target 4.7 'Education for sustainable development and global citizenship' brings global education on the agenda of all of those contributing to achieving the SDG goals: *"By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."*

Box 4 Fingo's definition for global education[16].

> The goal of global education is to increase understanding of how each of us is connected to global issues such as poverty, inequality, racism, environmental disasters or refugees. Global education also promotes awareness of how everyone can contribute to global justice through their own actions. In addition to increasing knowledge, it is of providing concrete tools how to participate.
>
> *Source: Fingo website*

At the MFA, global education is under the responsibility of VIE-30 and the unit for civil society. VIE-30 produces global education material for teachers in Finnish and in Swedish, published in its websites maailma2030.fi and teemapäivät.maailma2030.fi, which also includes a printed version. VIE-30 also participates in the annual EDUCA fair, the largest event for the education and training sector in Finland. The unit for civil society manages the funding instruments for communication and global education to CSOs, programme and project supports as well as the support for CSOs linked with the UN. In addition, the unit for civil society maintains contacts with the National Board of Education, FinCEED – The Finnish Centre of expertise in Education and Development, the National Board of Education and it is member of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE).

The evaluation of support for communication and global education in 2020 found out that the role of communications and global education, and their interlinkages, in implementing the Agenda 2030 in Finland and achieving its goals is not yet fully understood within the MFA (Pensala and Silfverberg, 2020). This finding is also supported in this evaluation: the interviews of MFA management show that global education is understood mainly as formal education given in schools. The narrow understanding of global education is seen in the activities of the MFA: it is treated as a separate activity from development communication. However, those working with the

---

16 Fingo's definition on Global Education is based on Unesco's Global Citizenship Education and GENE's Dublin declarations (formerly Maastricht Declaration).

CSOs who carry out global education activities, had wider understanding of the concept. Some MFA interviewees pointed out that the word itself is confusing leading one to think about education when it should be rather understood as life-long learning of knowledge and skills. CSOs in focus groups also pointed out how target groups should be understood diversely: not only school-age pupils, but also all others e.g., working adults, seniors, immigrants, persons with disabilities, media professionals and students, companies. Also, contexts should be seen wide and diverse: besides schools, all other environments where learning happens, e.g., at working places, hobbies, libraries, media, local communities. Nonetheless, all the MFA interviewees strongly supported global education despite how the concept was understood.

The discussions with those working with global education in CSOs and in the MFA stress that communication and global education go hand-in-hand and have same goals: they are both needed in increasing awareness, knowledge, understanding and engagement among citizens. The CSOs in the focus group described the communication and global education as being part of the same continuum (see Figure 22, interpretation by the evaluation team). They also explained how development communication equals global education: communication becomes global education when the communicator thinks about how and what to communicate about; how the specific global issue links to the reader, how to present the complex issue in an interesting way so that the reader's / listener´s knowledge and skills increase and he or she understands how get involved and participate.

Communication and global education go hand-in-hand and have same goals

Figure 22 The continuum of development communication and global education in VIE-30 development communication activities

AWARENESS RAISED ▸▸▸▸ KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ▸▸▸▸ SKILLS, AGENCY AND ENGAGEMENT
Tweets, press releases, webpages, articles in Kehitys-Utveckling magazine, publications, social media campaigns, maailma2030.fi

Source: Evaluation team

MFA is currently not communicating on the results of CSOs' global education work, which the CSOs saw as a shortage in the development communication. CSOs have achieved good results of their work e.g. in Finnish schools that could interest audiences of the MFA. CSOs find MFA's global education materials interesting and of high quality. MFA's global education webpages are seen important, but more marketing is suggested to reach more teachers. CSOs also suggest adding in the pages links to their materials so that teachers could be served in one place. All in all, MFA's role as a public authority standing for and advocating for global education was seen very important by CSOs. The current support was seen as weak. However, MFA finds the authorities of the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture to be the key actors in supporting CSOs when it comes to global education in schools.

With the MFA funding, Finnish CSOs carry out extensive global education in Finland. CSOs complement MFA's work and play an important role in communicating about e.g. Agenda 2030. Fingo coordinates a national '4.7 working group' for multistakeholder collaboration and dialogue on the implementation of SDG 4.7. in Finland. The unit for civil society participates in the meetings. In the focus group discussion, the CSOs suggested more regular contact to share information, experiences and create synergies. The CSOs would also be interested in cooperating with the MFA in the communication campaigns, where their expertise of global education and engaging the youth could also benefit the ministry.

4   Conclusions

4.1   Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Although important steps have been taken by MFA, the development commu-nication work is not strategic enough. The strategic objectives and priorities of communi-cations have not been set by MFA, which makes it challenging to set the objectives for the development communications. As the work of development communication is undertaken in a political environment – that influences resources, timing, personnel, and goals – there is a need for clear and strong mandate for VIE-30 to be able to navigate and create long-term strategies in the context of the MFA. The strategic planning has not taken place sufficiently as a long-term plan is missing and monitoring of campaigns, websites, and development co-operation visibility in the media is not used for learning and adjusting the work. It appears that there has not been comprehensive, participatory discussion, involving KEO, regional departments and units on the main strategic messages of development communication. These include the linking of security, trade and foreign policy to development issues. The lack of reports is making it difficult for the leadership to follow VIE-30 work and to do any external evaluative assessments. There have been studies to improve the targeting and channels of communication, but they have not yet been fully used, while diverse channels work for different target groups. The use of outsourced services has focused on detached media campaigns. The current longer-term support by a media agency is improving also strategic aspects of development communication work, although the relationship between VIE-30 and the assisting agency appears very cautious, and they are not challenging each other for developing the communications.

> **The strategic objectives and priorities of communications have not been set by MFA, which makes it challenging to set the objectives for the development communications.**

Conclusion 2. MFA has reached the public to some extent, but the visibility is low to those who don't actively follow and search for information or understand the professional jargon. The combination of channels used by the MFA to reach out to the public ensures that there is infor-mation about development co-operation available in different settings and formats. The communi-cation work of the MFA has also contributed to supporting journalists with background information and contacts and the amount of coverage in Finnish digital media has been relatively stable dur-ing the evaluation period. Communication materials from the MFA tend, however, to mainly reach those actor groups who are actively following development co-operation issues and themselves searching for information. Cooperation with social media influencers in campaigns has helped in reaching people who do not follow the ministry's channels. The domination of professional jargon in much of the MFA communication further narrows the possibilities to reach broader groups of the Finnish society. Worth noting is also that there are certain contextual conditions when it comes to the role of media and the possibilities for and expectations on the MFA to be visible in the public arena: Newsworthiness of development cooperation in Finnish media is rather low and also, one of the key tasks of media is to evaluate governments and uncover malfunctions among public

authorities. The space for the MFA in media is thus rather limited and there are expectations on public officials to be transparent, neutral, and objective in their statements.

Conclusion 3. The MFA has occasionally influenced public discussion. Physical meetings with targeted audiences have been effective. As there is rarely discussion or debate in the MFA channels, the interactivity is limited. Also, the lack of spokespersons influences the capacity to engage in the discussion. Engaging in dialogue and discussion is always easier and more profitable in face-to-face, physical meetings. While such physical meetings are resource intense and mostly have engaged other professionals, they have been highly important for the MFA to participate in ongoing discussions with key actor groups. In the online landscape there are broader groups to reach and interact with but the possibilities for the MFA to spur interactions and engagement in social media have been limited and their own activity (posts, tweets) seldom gained many reactions. The role of the digital ambassadors on Twitter, to create discussions and dialogue with other users, has therefore been limited. This is also related to the particular role of the MFA as being representative of the government and active in a political context and with high expectations on being neutral, independent and fact-based (which is rarely valued in the conversations on Twitter). There are also too few spokespersons in the MFA who are willing and have the skills to represent and engage in public dialogues about development co-operation.

Conclusion 4. There is limited internal coherence and co-operation in the MFA for development communications and the synergies have not been fully used. It is difficult for the internal communication in the MFA to break down the barriers caused by the hierarchical structure and the silos caused by the compartmentalisation. Therefore, communicating jointly and finding common themes for communication is not always easy and due to informal relations, some staff and directors find it easier than others to get assistance from VIE-30. Communication is not frequently discussed in meetings and the leadership is usually not taking decisions on development communication. There is a lot of untapped capacity and interest to communicate among the staff, and many directors and other staff feel the need to strengthen their skills. Planning of communication is fully integrated in some units and departments, KEO being the champion, but it is not systematic. The operational plans of VIE-30 are not complete with defined responsibilities, target groups and channels making it difficult to programme the work and support to the units.

> **There is a lot of untapped capacity and interest to communicate among the MFA staff.**

Conclusion 5. The work of VIE-30 is not fully efficient nor effective as the unit does not manage to sufficiently prioritise and deprioritise its work. The suggestion to add the mandate to communicate to international audiences to VIE-30 would change its role significantly and require reorganisation of the whole department. The VIE-30 staff estimate that the service function takes 50-70% of their total time, and by stretching the resources they hardly manage to undertake their own communication activities. The fully implemented service function, good amount of other communication functions that have remained in the unit despite the cuts in the human resources, and the lack of sufficient prioritising of the work have resulted in a situation where the unit operates at the limits of its capacity. The work is not fully efficient, nor effective as considerable time is used for the unplanned communication instead of strategic communication. At the current situation with the existing human resources, the unit is not able to take more functions in its communication work, including communication to international audiences.

Conclusion 6. The Development Academy is an important instrument in creating media networks and maintaining contacts with journalists. VIE-30 has not taken full advantage of the network. Journalists appreciate the Development Academy, and the course is well-established and known for its high standard and interesting content. The course has proved to be a fruitful platform for creating a network with journalists interested in development co-operation and it helps journalists to develop contacts with key representatives in the MFA. Although the MFA has maintained the network of journalists over time, the VIE-30 and the MFA have not taken full advantage of the interest in and knowledge about development co-operation that these journalists have.

Conclusion 7. CSOs and other stakeholders are significant actors in development communication and global education in Finland. The MFA has so far not systematically exploited the opportunities of better co-operation and co-ordination of actions with them. Although the stakeholders, funded by the MFA, carry out significant development communication in Finland, produce communication materials on development policy and co-operation and have both substance and communication expertise, the co-ordination of actions and co-operation between the MFA and CSOs are limited. The actors are different in their nature, but they communicate on the same themes and have the same objectives of increasing the knowledge and understanding of Finnish target groups. The narrow understanding of global education has resulted in understanding the global education as a separate activity targeted to teachers and it hinders its use as an effective development communication tool to engage people in promoting the SDGs and it. One of the MFA's roles in relation to global education is to give it credibility and support CSOs in reaching large number of citizens in schools and other occasions. However, the co-ordination and co-operation of global education actions between the MFA and CSOs are limited. The global education webpages are important for teachers but could also benefit the CSOs.

Conclusion 8. The way that development communication is organised and implemented in peer countries Denmark and Sweden as well as by Finnish CSOs receiving programme-based support, provides several lessons learned for improved effectiveness and efficiency. The strategic planning of communications has been embraced by all the studied organisations and they recognise the benefits of better understanding the different population groups and targeting the groups that have less access to traditionally used channels. Co-operation with other development co-operation actors such as CSOs as well as communication partners is considered important in Denmark and Sweden, as well as the role of M&E. In terms of making the communication more efficient, the participation of all members of the organisation is considered important while the strong support of the management is seen as prerequisite for the mandate to prioritise communication. Outsourcing to a media agency or to other partners is successfully used both in Denmark and in Sweden to support the duties of development communication while the ultimate control remains in the MFA.

4.2   Validating the ToC

The validation of the ToC is conducted by assessing the plausibility of the ten assumptions in the ToC (section 2.8) based on the evaluation findings. This analysis shows that many assumptions in the beginning of the logic chain do not hold true but as those changes are within the power of MFA, it is possible for the MFA to remedy the situation and work on the shortcomings. Assumptions are coloured according to their plausibility: green marks good plausibility, yellow partial plausibility, orange some plausibility and red weak plausibility.

> **Assumption 1: Partial plausibility.** Strategies and organisation are in place and functional. Communications is understood as a key function and central part of all work in the MFA. Co-operation between units and VIE-30 works: VIE-30 facilitates communications planning with units and departments and gets contents from units for development communications.

Three findings relate to this assumption: finding 1, finding 9 and finding 12 which show that although steps have been taken to improve strategic planning in VIE-30 and there is an internal structure for co-operation between units and VIE-30, the assumption is not fully plausible. Most units do not make comprehensive communication plans and although some of them provide rich contents to VIE-30, others are less active.

> **Assumption 2: Partial plausibility.** Human, financial and material resources are adequate for communications. VIE-30 staff has the needed expertise for effective development communications.

Finding 10 shows that VIE-30 has the professional skills for the work in the unit, but the human resources are stretched because of the time-taking service function and continuous demands from different parts of the ministry. The budget of the unit has decreased by more than EUR 1 million from 2015 and the current annual budget (without carry-overs) just about covers the six budget items.

> **Assumption 3: Partial plausibility.** MFA staff has motivation and incentive to communicate.

The finding 10 refers to how in the online survey and in the interviews, MFA directors and staff have expressed the need for strengthening their capacity in different areas of communication. In the interviews MFA directors showed varying motivation to communicate and although setting objectives for communication should be part of even individual annual targets, some had a negative attitude toward it. Champions were, however, found among the staff and there are evidently those, who are motivated to communicate. There are no obvious incentives for communication and although communication should be part of TAKE discussions, they were mentioned only in one interview.

> **Assumption 4: Partial plausibility.** Communications is proactive and VIE-30 is active in media relations.

Findings 15 and 16 show that VIE-30 is active in media relations but the responsiveness to the news agenda and needs of the media should be developed. The unplanned communication takes most of the staff time (findings 13 and 14) and there is less space for planned, proactive communications. The successful media relations would also necessitate having active spokespersons able to talk to the media and appear in public but the number of spoke persons is still low (finding 6).

> **Assumption 5: Partial plausibility.** The right partners, target groups and channels are chosen, messages are well-formulated.

VIE-30 follows the target group and channel selection by MFA, thereby communicating mostly to the general Finnish public (findings 1, 5 and 8). It is important to keep in mind that governments, per se, must manage multiple and broad publics and interest groups and cannot, like corporations, exclude some of them because they are supposed to serve all citizens. The campaigns targeting the youth have gained some visibility in social media. If the target group is defined as those, who already follow and support international co-operation, the channels are well-chosen, but as stated in the finding 5, "*even if the MFA has made information available through a variety of channels, they mostly reach people who are already interested in the topics.*" Finding 6 shows that there are challenges in the quality of messaging such as their abstract nature and the ministerial language.

> **Assumption 6: Good plausibility.** Global education materials are interesting, of high quality and interesting to teachers and pupils.

The teachers were not interviewed for this evaluation. Nevertheless, the questionnaire by MFA in 2021 on the use of global education materials among teachers, showed that materials are appreciated. The pupils were not object of the study.

> **Assumption 7: Weak plausibility.** Key authorities in Finland and the school leadership encourage and support schools / teachers to include global education in their teaching.

Global education is in the school curriculum in Finland. However, CSOs working on global education in schools find it challenging to reach especially new schools and teachers as there is lack of support from the schools' leadership and key authorities in Finland (finding 20).

> **Assumption 8: Some plausibility.** There is media space for publishing contents on development policy and co-operation.

Most often, development co-operation is treated in the media coverage as part of domestic politics and mentioned in the broader discussions about budgeting or elections. In the current political context, development co-operation is not a question on the agenda and largely lacks political spokespersons, which also make the issues less visible. Still, the MFA has contributed to making development co-operation and policy somewhat visible in a variety of media through the Development Academy and other specific efforts targeting the media (finding 4).

> **Assumption 9: Weak plausibility.** The atmosphere of the society enables constructive and versatile discussion on development policy and co-operation in the media.

The media analysis and context research found that discussion especially in social media is strongly polarised and the MFA participation can be only limited. There is little discussion in MFA's own channels.

Assumption 10: Partial plausibility. CSOs and other stakeholders have adequate resources and expertise, including a mutually agreed narrative, to communicate.

Several programme CSOs have considerable expertise and adequate resources for communication (finding 19). The development co-operation narrative is still old-fashioned, as shown by interviews of journalists, MFA directors and stakeholders, and many interviewees are of the opinion that it is due to the fund-raising targets of CSOs. There is mutual understanding of priority issues for communication by MFA and CSOs, such as development co-operation achieving results and Finland's role in the global world.

5 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE UNIT / DEPARTMENT
Recommendation 1 The MFA leadership should support the whole communication department to better define its strategic objectives and priorities, followed by VIE-30 making more detailed strategic and operational plans with priorities, key messages, target groups, monitoring and systematic learning, means and resources including outsourcing of services with sufficiently long contracts.	The communication strategy of MFA should be improved by defining the strategic objectives and priorities, including those of the development communications. The strategy should be adopted at VIE-30 level to improve the strategic aspects of both planned and unplanned work. When the goals of the work, priorities and the target groups of communication are understood, it is easier to identify who should be involved in the production of the content and what should be the channels for communication. An example of more strategic planning guiding communication at ministry level is e.g., the communication guide (Viestintäopas) by the Ministry of Environment. Include co-operation with stakeholders (such as CSOs) in the strategic and operational plans. Earlier research such as the Aula research analysis of target groups and main messages should be operationalised and targeting channels identified. Outsourcing is one of the options to continue with even longer contracts to develop more familiarity on both sides, and to experiment bolder approaches in development communication. The outsourced services by the media agency can be used to support the unit in making longer-term plans, in which the campaigns and communication products can be aligned.	High	VIE, MFA leadership
Recommendation 2. Consolidate development communication materials through an umbrella approach to communication: concepts and a databank that can be calibrated for different audiences. Increase the segment of plain language and concrete cases in the content.	Today's fragmented, digital media landscape and the multiple channels used by the MFA are resource intense and risk making the communication work scattered. What MFA considers as platforms and channels of interest is also changing over time, not least when it comes to social media. MFA should consolidate materials about development co-operation and present different types of content and messages in a databank on their website. This could include but not be limited to the materials produced for the 100 development results-campaign. This will create a platform with high-qualitative content to be used by the MFA, and other groups such as journalists and CSOs, in various settings and events. The databank would include content with more plain language and concrete cases showing the complexity of development co-operation as well as discussing why this work is needed and how it is undertaken; it would be updated regularly. The databank should include a search function, or the materials should be categorised so that it is easy for the visitor to find the kind of information that they are looking for. Also, spokespersons should be presented in their roles as experts in relation to different questions or themes.	High	VIE-30

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE UNIT / DEPARTMENT
Recommendation 3. Reinforce the communication capacity in the MFA by selecting, coaching and training a group of spokespersons among willing staff and supporting other staff with different communication skills on an organised basis. MFA's top leadership should lead by example as spokespersons and find ways to incentivise and motivate staff to engage in public communications. To reach out beyond professionals, new discussion arenas need to be used that already have large audiences and more resources have to be dedicated to facilitating high-quality dialogue.	To have a voice in the public debate, MFA leadership must take an active spokesperson role and better support other staff representatives to take on expert roles, both in public events, in interviews with journalists, and as spokespersons in the digital landscape. The role of VIE-30 would be to find and select those representatives and help with education and guidance. The spokespersons should be better visible and known internally at the MFA, but also externally for journalists and other actor groups interested in development co-operation. To engage in dialogue with groups beyond those who are interested and have knowledge about development co-operation, more resources are needed and most likely there need to be activities that include both physical and digital formats to create possibilities for more in-depth dialogue and discussions. The Maailma2030 website, and closer co-operation with teachers and pupils, could be one starting point to develop arenas for dialogue that reaches beyond current actor groups.	Medium	VIE, KEO management and VIE-30
Recommendation 4. In developing the operational plan, clarify the roles and responsibilities both within the unit and in relation to other departments, also defining the priority themes and key messages for each department that the unit will agree to communicate while leaving room for ad hoc requests.	The operational planning at unit and department level should be assisted by VIE-30 by organising face-to-face planning workshops. This would be the occasion to explain the strategic framework in which the communication should be planned and identify the target groups and channels for the messaging and engaging. In these occasions, VIE-30 can also agree on how many topics, theme days or other events can be communicated and how much time would be left for the day-to-day reactive communication and support.	Medium	VIE-30 together with VIE management
Recommendation 5. VIE-30 should reduce its workload by prioritising and focusing more on the strategic communication. No new functions should be added to the unit without increasing resources or reorganising the work at department level.	VIE-30 should be allowed to reduce its current workload and be mandated to prioritise its work. The priority of the work should be on strategic communication and on the six work entities of the unit. The service function should be reduced, but also better aligned and closely tied to the strategic communication of the unit. For example, in Sweden certain time is reserved for the service function. In Denmark, the communication staff is divided into those working more in the service function and those implementing the strategic engagement plan. Prioritisation should be defined and decided by the management of the MFA and discussed throughout the organisation. It is important that everybody understands why and what is communicated in the units and departments at the MFA. For the commenting and approval of communication materials, a new secure platform for collaborative editing should be employed.	High	MFA management, VIE management
	For reorganising the work in the unit, the evaluation suggests several options: • Option 1: reorganise the VIE-30 team by dividing into two groups: one doing more ad hoc work with units and departments and responding to the urgent needs of communication, the other team being responsible for communication as per the annual plan. This team also supports planning in units and departments and develops the partnering with other actors (organisations, companies). Their task is to create and maintain the databank, where different articles and materials are collected etc. • Option 2: Change the job description of the communications coordinator to a complete specialist position that requires extensive experience in communications planning, targeted communication, and work counselling, in collaboration with the unit director. At the same time, pay competitive salaries to people in specialist positions. • Option 3: Continue and increase outsourcing of functions both to individual experts and media agencies.		

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE UNIT / DEPARTMENT
Recommendation 6. VIE-30 should keep doing the Development Academy with a mix of journalists / media and use the network of journalists more systematically, by tailoring the communication contents, linking contents to the news agenda, and proposing MFA experts for interviews and presentations.	First, VIE-30 should protect the valuable work that they are already doing with the Development Academy and ensure that their work with the course will continue also in the future. Second, to keep the plurality of the journalists/media participating in Development Academy, it is important to advertise the course widely among all Finnish media outlets. Third, the network of interested and knowledgeable journalists can be more useful by helping journalists with information, ideas, and contacts that are responsive to the current affairs on the news agenda as well as to working principles of the journalists.	Medium	VIE-30
Recommendation 7. For wider impact, build on the existing practices to explore ways to collaborate and cooperate for development communication with other actors, such as CSOs, organisations supporting business development, companies, and researchers. This includes the continued support to global education and finding synergies with the CSOs for working more effectively, redefining, and clarifying the concept of global education.	MFA should use the bi-annual meetings with CSOs as a platform where the synergies and co-operation are searched for, both for communication and global education. The co-operation could be facilitated for example through Fingo. Communication collaboration could be piloted e.g. in a campaign with CSOs, other organisations and companies while the agreed themes and materials could be shared, calibrated by different actors to match their own brand, and targeted. Clarify the term 'global education' by e.g. referring to the existing definitions of UNESCO or the Global Education Network (GENE) and continue to support global education by using the public authority role to highlight its importance. Continue publishing the global education webpages with better marketing for teachers and adding links for CSO materials. MFA should also communicate better on the results of global education.	Medium	VIE-30, KEO-30
Recommendation 8. Strengthen the collaboration with peer countries and CSOs to share the best practices in development communications.	Organise regular meetings with the Nordic peer countries, including their strategic partners to learn from each other's best practices related to effectiveness and efficiency in communication. The meetings should also involve people from KEO to discuss about the key messages and sharing of knowledge among the MFAs.	Medium	VIE-30, KEO

Annex 1. Evaluation team

NAME	ROLE IN THE EVALUATION
Merja Mäkelä	Team leader, interviews of external stakeholders and MFA management, MFA online survey, peer review in MFA Denmark. Reporting. Co-ordination of work, including reporting.
Maria Grafström	Media analysis, support to the case study on Development Academy, peer review in MFA Sweden. Support in planning interview templates. Reporting.
Sonja Huhta	Case study on Development Academy, analysis of web analytics. Support in planning interview templates.
Veera Pensala	Case study on CSOs' development communication, including CSO online survey, interviews on global education, Support in interviews of external stakeholders and MFA management and MFA online survey, Reporting.

Annex 2. Terms of reference of the evaluation

Terms of Reference

30th September 2022

Evaluation on development communications in the context of MFA

1. Introduction and rationale

Communications are a central function in any organization. In the context of Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Department for Communications (VIE-30) is responsible for external and internal communications. The department's goal is to highlight the priorities of Finland's foreign policy and Finland's strengths in foreign policy matters, to enhance the visibility of the services provided by the Foreign Service, and to promote the effectiveness of communications. In cooperation with the Ministry's other departments, organizational units providing services and missions abroad, the Department takes care of the planning, development and provision of the Foreign Service's communications and public diplomacy.

Among others, the department is responsible for communications and exercise of influence that supports the strategic focal points of the Foreign Service, including communications relating to development policy and development cooperation. (See https://um.fi/department-for-communications for details). All government communication is guided by the Central Government Communications Guidelines that clarify the values governing communications, outline the duties and describe the changes in the field of communications and how these changes impact public authorities. The guidelines serve as a basis for different government organisations to draw up their own more detailed communications guidelines.

Development communication is also part of the MFA-funded programmes and projects implemented by civil society organizations (CSOs). Many of them are active in communication and advocacy toward ordinary citizens, special target groups and politicians. Global education is another way of informing and increasing knowledge among children, youth, and adults. MFA, through its unit for civil society (KEO-30), provides a special two-year global education funding to several CSOs.

MFA communication strategy 2017-22 was updated in 2022 and it covers the whole ministry without any specific mention about development communications. The new strategy recognizes the change in the communications landscape, including the opportunities of direct, multi-channel digital communication, the intense competition for people's attention by the ever-increasing flow of information, and the eroding trust in information. Also, the international system is undergoing a transformation, and the principles of multilateral cooperation vital to Finland are called into question.

The demand for accountability on the use of development funds is justified. In the same time, the development communications can also influence the attitudes on development cooperation and create a favorable media image to increase public support.

- The purpose of this evaluation is to support the implementation and further improvement of the development communications by assessing their current organization and delivery within and by MFA and recommending measures for further enhancement of the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of related functions and efforts. The evaluation will follow two tracks: a descriptive one providing information on media visibility, communication work and its organization; and an evaluative one, assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of MFA funding and implementation of development communications. As an important part of development communication, global education will feature in the descriptive part. Furthermore, the evaluation will be informed by the the results of the Evaluation of Development Communications and Global Education 2015-2020. The evaluation pays attention to the simultaneous evaluation of education support (Right to Education, Right to Learn) on one hand to identify synergies and on the other hand, to avoid overlapping.

- The objectives and tentative list of issues to be evaluated is included in Chapter 4 of this terms of reference (ToR).

- The evaluation results will be used by the relevant departments and units in monitoring, measuring and further strengthening the effectiveness of their actions, as foreseen in the Communications Strategy.

In this ToR Development communications means communications related to the Ministry's development policy and development cooperation, used to inform public about global development issues and related challenges and successes.[17]

2. Context

2.1. Policy Framework

Sustainable Development Goals

The activities carried out to support development communications and global education are related to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and life-long learning and the sub-goal 4.7. in particular: "…by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

---

17 Definition formulated by EVA-11 on the basis of Chapter 15, Government Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms

Government Reports on Development Policy

The Government Report on Development Policy Extending Across Parliamentary Terms (2021) dedicates an entire chapter (Chapter 15) on the subject of communication and global education. It considers that high-quality communication is a key component of Finnish development policy. The report further mentions that "communication and global education are tasks for all development co-operation actors. Throughout Finland, small and large CSOs alike play a particularly important role in global education and development communication work. Global education encourages people to actively consider the global impacts of their own actions, and to take action for the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals".

Good communication and cooperation with the media are also seen important in inspiring a variety of Finnish actors to participate in development policy and development cooperation.

The full report can be accessed here.

The 2016 Government Report on Development Policy emphasized citizens' and development policy stakeholders' need up-to-date and easily understandable information on the state of the world, Finnish development policy, and the results of development cooperation. The role of communications (information) was to introduce into topical public debate the aspect of international interdependence and Finland's ability to influence global development. The report concluded that "Communicating transparently and actively is part of the work of everyone involved in development policy implementation. Global education and lifelong learning also play an important role in understanding complex issues. The authorities and NGOs collaborate to provide support for the school-attending age groups to grow into responsible global citizens."

Central Government Communications Guidelines

The Central Government Communications Guidelines draw on the fundamental right of citizens to receive information on public decisions and their preparation and they guide the communication of all ministries. Public authorities are responsible for promoting openness in their activities and for producing and disseminating information about their work, thereby increasing accountability. The aim is that citizens and other stakeholders can assess the work of public authorities and participate in initiatives under preparation, as well as supervise their own interests and rights. Public authorities should formulate communications in a way that reaches different target groups, provides advice on services, and responds to the specific information needs of the media. Communication both in Finnish and in Swedish (and in some occasions in Same language) is an important part of central government duties.

The core values in central government communications are openness, reliability, impartiality, intelligibility, interactivity, and service-mindedness. Therefore, key public documents produced by public authorities must be available online and be actively utilized for communications purposes. Citizens, organizations and companies must have a fair chance to form a general view of each issue at hand, while the guidelines stress the importance of recognizing target groups and their expectation and communicating in an interesting and timely manner. Different viewpoints, the background to issues and the impact of decisions need to be communicated and critical discussion should be tolerated by public authorities. Inviting feedback on execution and communications helps assess the impact of the communications.

In terms of organization, the guidelines emphasizes that senior management gives a face to the organisation and is responsible for the organisation's communications culture, competencies and information management procedures. Communications professionals must be part of the organisation's management team and they must have access to core matters related to preparations and decision making. Experts must keep communications professionals informed on a timely basis of matters that are being prepared or ready for decision making.

Communications planning should be part of all major projects and their execution. The benchmark for success and impact lies in the objectives set for communications, while there should be on-going assessment and monitoring of communications performance. These include customer feedback, monitoring and analysis of the digital services offered to the media and organisations as well as opinion polls and attitude surveys.

Meetings between public authorities and individual media companies and journalists are part of the normal management of stakeholder relations.

Central government communications are guided by various regulations, instructions, and recommendations.

MFA Communications Strategy 2017-22

The 2017 communications strategy ((Harkittua sinnikkyyttä outlines the objectives of the MFA https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/_harkittua_sinnikkyytt%C3%A4___ulkoasiainhallinnon_viestinn%C3%A4n_linjaukset communication work. The most important goal is to increase MFA communication readiness and the three actions of highest importance are changing the way that communication is thought about, organizing large-scale training on modern ways of communication and influencing and introducing new, easy-to-use ways of presenting and sharing information. The strategy stresses the principle of "all communicate", according to which all the MFA employees should become familiar with basic communication skills. Internal cooperation and collaboration with external partners are mentioned as important parts of the strategy implementation.

The importance of accountability is mentioned as a key fundamental right so that citizens can receive information from the authorities' public decisions and their preparation. MFA wants to feature as an open and trustworthy communicator,

Development communication is not singled out in the strategy.

New communication strategy 2022

The new communications strategy (2022) includes several objectives that communications department wants to achieve by 2025. While there are no specific objectives for development communications or global education, the general objectives include e.g.

- Bringing communication into the very centre of strategic operations. The strategy acknowledges that effective communication requires making choices between issues to focus on and those that have to be deprioritized.

- For the most important issues the communications will be planned jointly and implemented with ambition.

- Regular evaluations will be used to support effectiveness and development of communications.

- Prioritized themes will be clearly visible.

- and at the same time, it will be possible to make justified decisions not to communicate something.

The situation envisaged in the new strategy embeds that by 2025 the importance of international communications has been strengthened and there is a close cooperation between the ministry and embassies in terms of planning and implementation of communications, capacity development and joint communication choices. Successful partnerships are also a means to increase effectiveness. Finnish embassies abroad are active and effective influencers and can use multiple means of communications. Communications are used strategically to promote Finland's objectives.

MFA communications should be carefully targeted and therefore more effective. The ownership of communications cuts across entire ministry, including embassies. Each staff member is responsible for doing his/her part in the planning of communications and for participating in the public discussion by traditional means of communications or through social media.

The current strategy foresees also improved understanding of the various audiences and their needs. Moreover, the key channels for communications will be defined and analytics will be used to be able to produce timely contents that has been tailored for each channel of communication.

Another dimension that will be strengthened is the visual side of communications, including accessibility. Videos, infographs and images will be used to make the communications easier to understand and thereby more effective.

Monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of communications efforts is a core feature in the new communications strategy, and the objective is that by 2025 MFA will use advanced digital tools for measuring and analyses, and that with the help of those tools it will be easier to verify the effectiveness of communications and use the evidence for targeting and setting priorities for communications. The overall evaluation on the implementation of communications strategy will take place in the end of 2024 and it will guide the process of drafting the next strategy. This evaluation will be used to inform the design of the overall evaluation.

2.2. Operational framework

The objectives for the Department for Communications are expressed in the operating and financial plan (OFP). OFP is a document drafted for four years at a time, functioning as an instrument for steering central government finances and operations and including the operating guidelines, priorities and goals of the administrative sector, serving as the basis for the formulation of the one-year budget. The OFP also has a table with the annual and 4-year results, the activities for achieving the results and related indicators. The last OFP for VIE-30 was prepared for the period 2020-24.

Moreover, MFA units prepare annual plans with measurable targets for their contributions within the larger framework provided by the OFPs. (see Annexes a-b, in Finnish only)

The Unit for Communications on Sustainable Development and Trade (VIE-30) is responsible for communications related to the Ministry's development policy, development cooperation, external

economic relations, and Team Finland. The unit oversees strategic planning, development and coordination of communications in cooperation with the departments and missions.

The Unit has five staff working on development communication and it produces both informative content for accountability purposes and media content for the visibility of development cooperation. The functions include following categories:

- Producing and sharing development cooperation information (e.g., MFA webpages, twitter and facebook, Kehitys-utveckling-magazine (digital and paper), thematic calendar, communication support to MFA leadership and experts)

- Media work (e.g., development academy for journalists, travel grants for journalists, contacts with media, events)

- Global education (Maailma 2030.fi-webpage)

- Agenda 2030-communication

- Events

- Communication with stakeholders (e.g., decision-makers' development academy, journalists' development academy, annual poll on general public's views on development cooperation)

2.3. Other Finnish institutions dealing with development communications and global education

At the national level there are several institutions that are dealing with or contributing to the development communications and the global education:

- The key governmental players include Ministry of Education and Culture, National Board of Education, Ministry of the Environment and Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

- Finnish civil society organizations play a key role in the implementation of development communications and global education related activities. All 23 programme CSOs report annually about their extensive communication, advocacy and global education activities. Separate global education support is granted every second year to several CSOs.

- Fingo[18] coordinates Global Citizenship Education Working Group and other working groups related to global citizenship education, as well as the Global Education Network. The network members, such as UN organizations' local chapters are also active in development communications and global education.

Since the objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of development communications related functions in the MFA in terms of informing and influencing wider public in Finland, the work of other actors may inform the evaluation, but will not be subject to evaluation. Such evidence may include but need not be limited to the social media, websites and printed materials produced

---

18 Fingo (www.fingo.fi) is the umbrella organisation of almost 300 Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in development cooperation, sustainable development and global citizenship education and an expert in global development

by Finnish media, grant beneficiaries, or other Finnish partners that are intermediaries of Finnish development funding (e.g. Finnfund, Finnpartnership, DevPlat).

2.4. Relevant International Networks

Global Education Network of Europe (GENE)

Finland is a long term member of GENE. The Unit for Civil Society Cooperation represents Finland in the Global Education Network Europe and coordinates its work with the National Board for Education. Finland was one of the first members for whom a peer review was conducted in 2004-2005 by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe as part of the European Global Education Peer Review Process.

OECD Development communications network, DevCom

The OECD Development Communication Network (DevCom) is an international platform to explore ways to mobilise citizens for sustainable development through effective communication. Created in 1988, DevCom brings together communications and public affairs managers from government institutions, development agencies and multilateral organisations, as well as partners from civil society, philanthropy, the private sector and the communications industry. Together, these professionals share lessons on how to raise awareness about development success stories and today's most pressing global challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals. They collaborate to identify good practices in promoting global citizenship and rebuilding trust in international development co-operation. DevCom is hosted by the OECD Development Centre in Paris, France. VIE-30 is a member in DevCom network.

2.5. Earlier evaluations

Evaluation of MFA funding instrument for development communications and global education projects of CSOs (2020)

The funding instrument's overall objective is 'raising awareness and involvement of Finns in development issues'. The instrument was for the first time evaluated in summer 2020, with the purpose of assessing how the development communications and global education support has achieved its goal of raising awareness of development issues in Finland, how the support has involved and activated citizens to work on development issues, and how this has contributed to the achievement of Finland's development policy objectives.

The evaluation focused on approved projects of the application rounds carried out in 2015, 2016 and 2018. During the years 2015-2020, 4.85 million euros of VGK support was granted for 76 projects. In the past, the amount of support had been more than 2 million euros per year, but in the 2016-20 it was decreased to around 700,000 euros per year. Also, the number of operators has decreased from several dozen organizations annually to 19 organizations in 2017-2018 and 14 organizations for 2019-2020. A conservative estimate of the direct target groups reached by the projects in 2015-2019 (data for 2020 was not yet available) was approximately 160,000 people.

The report concluded that the role of communications and global education work in implementing the 2030 Agenda in Finland and achieving the objectives is not yet fully understood within the

Ministry and that global education requires greater cooperation between ministries. it was not possible to assess the overall effectiveness of the support within the evaluation, one of the recommendations was that the development communications and global education instrument should be regularly evaluated to identify the impact and to understand how the instrument can be developed in a more effective direction.

According to the evaluation, the organizations had paid attention to widen the projects' geographical coverage to cover almost the whole of Finland. The instrument had supported a diverse and pluralistic group of civil society actors, which had implemented a wide range of development communications and global education projects in Finland and reached different target groups especially at grassroots level. Preparation of a national global education strategy would also increase effectiveness and impact and improve cooperation as well as provide more long-term and better targeted basis for communications and global education work.

While support provided by the education sector administration is provided to the educational institutions, the support of MFA is directed to CSOs, also providing grounds for cooperation between institutions and CSOs.

The evaluation report makes 11 recommendations, most of which relate to the way the calls for proposals are organized. However, there are also general recommendations addressing e.g., cooperation between the various departments of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to link the work to the wider work of the 2030 Agenda in the ministry and to increase understanding of the importance of the development communications and global education work in Agenda work and achieving its objectives in Finland. The volume and effectiveness of global education work could be increased by increasing development communication as part of other development cooperation instruments of as well.

The evaluators also recommended that cross-sectoral exchange of information, cooperation and coordination in the field of global education should further be strengthened and developed, and ministries and other actors working with global education should launch a strategy process to **create a national global education strategy**. The strategy work would provide a framework for deeper reflection on the priorities and the role of actors as well as on financial arrangements. The strategy work should also actively consult organizations and experts from CSOs and academia.

The report is available in Finnish only and it can be accessed here. The management response and a table on detailed activities that relate to each recommendations can be found here (See: *Evaluointi 2020 ja johdon vastine*).

2.5.2. Evaluation of programme based CSO cooperation 2010-2016 (published 2017)

While none of the evaluation questions focused on the global education, the report recommended that it is an area of work that should be further developed. Recommendation 11 of the evaluation report says that **MFA should encourage CSOs to identify new ways to widen their global education work and to measure their work more efficiently**.

The reporting back on the fulfilment of recommendations took place in 2020. Several improved practices were noted, such as issuance of new reporting guidelines. Overall the collaboration between the Communications department and CSO unit has been strengthened, and the former participated in the preparation of the guidance for reporting on the global education activities and

its results. The joint objective is to synthesize the information and use if in the MFA's global education work. This evaluation is also part of the response to the recommendation.

The unit for development communications has also organized meetings with CSO partners and exchanged experiences on communications and global education. Such meetings are planned to be held annually. Closer cooperation between CSOs whose themes and objectives are aligned is systematically recommended by MFA and this has also become a criteria for evaluating grant applications. CSOs are also encouraged to collaborate with educational and training institutions.

The full report can be accessed here.

2.6. Other studies

MFA commissions an annual opinion poll to Taloustutkimus about public opinion on development cooperation. In 2022, VIE-30 contracted Aula Research Oy to carry out a statistical analysis of target groups, based on 2021 survey. The objective was to clarify, to what extent the level of knowledge of development cooperation issues and the use of various information channels and preferences among development policy priorities may explain a person's perception about the effectiveness of development cooperation. Aula Research Oy examined the results of the survey using the following methods in particular:

- With machine text analysis

- By clustering respondents

- With factor analysis; and

- With regression analysis

The analysis showed that the number of Finns who consider development cooperation very or fairly important has decreased from previous years, but a deeper examination shows that this is at least partly, if not completely, result of changes in the survey methodology. About a quarter of Finns say that their attitudes have become more negative recently. Only one third of respondents trusts that development cooperation achieves results. According to the analysis, political views and values correlate significantly with the attitudes.

3. Purpose, objectives, and scope

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to support the implementation and further improvement of the development communications by assessing the current organization and delivery within and by MFA and to recommend measures for further enhancement of the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of related functions and efforts.

3.2. Objectives

The evaluation is expected to examine the role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the development communications as well as to assess the efficiency and coherence of the current organizational processes and practices. The effectiveness of various development communications means, modalities and channels that are currently at the MFA disposal will be assessed. Based on the related findings the evaluation will draw justified conclusions and make recommendations for enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the Ministry's development communications for various audiences.

3.3. Scope

The temporal scope of the evaluation covers years 2015- 2022. The organization of development communications within the ministry was strongly impacted by cuts made in the numbers of staff already before the funding for development cooperation was significantly reduced in 2015-2017. The evaluation will only cover activities funded by MFA Finland, including those of programme CSOs that received funding for development communication, while the main focus is on VIE-30 communications. When using the CSOs' websites and reports made available to the public as sources of information it should be noted that the goal is not to assess the performance of CSOs or their communications, but rather to gain valuable lessons that could benefit the MFA in the orientation of its future activities.

4. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

Effectiveness: To what extent has the ministry been able to contribute to the openness of government by increasing the public awareness and understanding about development policy and cooperation?

- What is the public image of development cooperation and to what extent are development communications efforts used strategically to promote Finland's objectives and inform the public about global development issues and related challenges and successes?

- Whether and to what extent have the development communications efforts influenced public discussion on development policy and cooperation?

- What are the groups / segments targeted by MFA communication and media work; communication channels used; main themes covered; and presentation modalities used? To what extent do they differ from those of the CSOs?

- To what extent has MFA utilized the resources of relevant partners funded by VIE-30 and KEO-30 involved in the production of the contents and vice versa?

- To what extent is the MFA communication interactive and allowing the feedback of target groups in the development communications?

- To what extent is the MFA able to collect evidence on the effectiveness of its development communications and is MFA learning from the evidence? What can be learned from CSOs?

- What could be learned from international peer institutions in terms of effectively communicating about development issues?

Efficiency: Is the development communication organized in an efficient way?

- How are the roles and responsibilities for communication within the ministry divided?

- To what extent does the MFA organization of development communications related duties support the effectiveness of development communications?

- To what extent has the unit in charge of development communications been able to manage (prioritize and de-prioritize activities) to adjust to changes in the resources?

- To what extent is MFA able to maintain and proactively develop media relations?

- What could be learned from CSOs and international peer institutions in terms of organization of development communications?

Coherence: What is the internal and external coherence of MFA development communications?

- To what extent are the synergies and interlinkages between the MFA development communication and development cooperation in general made use of (internal coherence)?

- To what extent do the development communications of MFA and other stakeholders such as CSOs complement each other (external coherence)?

5. General approach and methodology

The evaluation will be based on two tracks of inquiry. The **first inquiry track is descriptive** (how has MFA supported and implemented development communication and global education), and **the second is evaluative** (how effective, efficient and coherent has the MFA been in funding and implementing development communication).

The descriptive track is theory-based, seeking to define the theory of change for development communications. To establish the "how and for what objectives", during the inception phase an indicative theory of change or logic model based on MFA development communications will be drafted jointly with VIE-30. Also, the organization of global education and VIE-30 role in it will be described.

The evaluative track of inquiry is:

- results-based;

- outcome-oriented: analysing the perceived outcomes among some of the direct target groups;

- process-oriented: analysing the internal and external processes that shape the contents of development communications and the outcomes of these processes; and

- evidence-based, utilising a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This will allow for effective triangulation and verification of the evidence

5.1. Proposed methods for data collection

The key methods anticipated for the evaluation include:

Desk review of MFA strategies and guidelines (communication and global education), VIE-30 plans and reports, printed and digital communication materials / media content of MFA and programme CSOs. Also, the reports and evaluations / reviews of media campaigns, development academy and media academy will provide insights in communications. The programme CSOs reports on the most important results of their development communication, and the lessons learned from the VKG evaluation will be included.

An interactive workshop on the theory of change with VIE-30 staff will help to understand how the unit perceives the change process, including different assumptions behind the outcomes and impacts of their work.

Key stakeholder interviews should include both those who produce contents for development communications and those targeted, among others: (i) the reference group for the evaluation (ii) staff and management from VIE-30 and KEO-30; (iii) desk officers and advisers from departments and units (ASA, ALI, KEO, POL); (iv) Embassy staff in 2-3 countries providing contents for development communications; (v) representatives of key CSOs active in development communication and global education; (vi) representatives of target groups, including development and decision-makers' academy participants, other representatives of media with whom VIE-30 has regular contacts politicians who have participated in the decision-makers' development academy and private companies. The stakeholder analysis will take place during the inception phase and it will inform the identification of the key stakeholders to be interviewed,

Media analysis. The media coverage of communications will be evaluated through digital analysis, partly assisted by outsourced services. This will include web scraping in digital media by using key words on development cooperation themes. A separate ToR will be drafted for the assignment and its accurate role in the evaluation will be developed for the inception report. However, the aim is to

- assess the volume and attitude / nuances of communications / media content / fluctuation

- assess what are the as preferred channels in media, including social media

- assess the tone of social media and traditional media discussion in the event of MFA results report publication and related to other campaigns

- assess the contents of campaigns and digital communication channels used by MFA (rate of users, duration of stay on pages etc)

- VIE-30 has regularly monitored the attitude of citizens towards development cooperation and the 2022 study can be further analysed to understand the target groups, their attitudes, and the opportunities of improved targeting.

Web panel survey to MFA staff, CSOs and other stakeholders on the organization of communications

Web panel survey to journalists and media representatives as target group of VIE-30 activities

Comparison with development communication in a peer country

- possibilities include Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden

- learning lessons on targeting and organizing communication

- **Case studies.** There are two alternatives for the studies and the final topic/s will be agreed at the inception phase

Development academy[19]

- the design and organization of the academy

- impact on participants and on the volume of media attention

Development communication campaigns by 2-3 programme CSOs

- learning lessons on the use and efficacy of MFA funding through CSOs

5.2. Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative analysis through the desk review of collected data will be conducted jointly by the evaluation team and it will follow the questions in the evaluation matrix. A qualitative analysis of questionnaires will follow the quantitative analysis of the web panel survey. Common patterns, dominating views and weak signals will be assessed from interviews and the desk review material will be described and analysed in the report.

The use of data science will result in statistics and databases to be cleaned and analysed manually by the evaluation team. Also, the evaluation team will conduct a manual analysis of the nuances (positive, negative, uncertain) in the sample of traditional media articles and social media discussions.

The case studies will be used as tools of analysis to further understand the effectiveness of MFA development communications.

Team's initial findings and conclusions will be shared with the reference group in a workshop organized in Helsinki in February 2023.

5.3. Potential limitations

There are limitations to the evaluation, and they will be further explored during the Inception period. For example, answering the question about the changes in target groups' knowledge and attitudes will be based on the annual development cooperation polls rather than creating another web-based panel survey among target groups. The definition of target groups has not been defined by the MFA as the communication is directed toward public. The target group of certain activities, such as

---

19 the activity has been evaluated in 2017

development academy, or travelling grants for journalist is more limited and therefore changes in their knowledge and attitudes can better be detected through interviews and on-line questionnaires.

Data scraping is still a new tool in MFA evaluations. Together with the evaluation on HRBA assistance, the tool and its usefulness will be tested in this review.

Participation in web panel surveys usually needs several rounds of solicitation and therefore some extra time needs to be allocated for following the rate of responses.

5.4. Some critical issues

Although the concept paper is quite clear about the focus of the evaluation on organizational functions and the impact of communications, there are several critical issues that will partly have to be addressed already during the inception phase.

- what are the planned outcomes and impacts of development communication? What are the assumptions behind certain types of communication campaigns and media engagement organized by the unit? This can be verified by drawing a theory of change in a participatory workshop with the staff of responsible units and by examining the assumptions behind the logical chain from inputs to impacts.

- who are the main target groups and how is the communication specifically targeting each group? The group categories have not been defined in the strategy nor in workplans but there are silent assumptions held by the staff. The same applies to CSOs, whose media strategies and campaigns will be studied for learning purposes.

- how are VIE-30 and KEO-30 learning from monitoring their work? Annual surveys on citizens' attitudes toward development are conducted by Taloustutkimus and in 2022 a related analysis was conducted by Aula Research. Also, programme CSOs and the CSOs receiving support for global education report annually of their communication activities. How are the units using this information?

- to what extent has the approach of "everybody communicates" (kaikki viestivät) been successful in development communications? This was presented in the 2017 communication strategy as the main idea for addressing the problem of unit's reduced human resources but features differently in the 2022 strategy. What are the implications in the concrete day-to-day communication work?

- how is VIE-30 working with partners: are the partners contributing to the design of the work, and are they motivated to work with VIE-30, to what extent is VIE-30 learning and extracting positive stories from partners' work and communicating it to the larger audience?

- How to differentiate the impact of MFA and CSO work in media analysis? CSOs are funded by MFA to communicate about their individual themes, and they are active in the same media arena as MFA. A careful organization of web scraping is therefore needed.

- Communication about Agenda 2030 cuts across many stakeholders and may have affected public's knowledge attitude toward development cooperation and global issues. How balanced is the information about Agenda 2030 and its different parts – on what themes has the unit focused on?

6. Evaluation process, timelines, and deliverables

The evaluation will take place during 2022/2023. It follows the general phasing of the Evaluation Management Services (EMS) framework used by the Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11). The timetable below is tentative, and it will be finalized during the Inception Phase. The evaluation consists of the following phases and will produce the respective deliverables. During the process, particular attention should be paid to strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team.

Communication between the Evaluation Manager and Team Leader and the Evaluation Management Service (EMS) Coordinator is crucial. It is highlighted that a new phase is initiated only when the deliverables of the previous phase have been approved by the Evaluation Manager. The revised reports must be accompanied by a table of received comments and responses to them.

The evaluation is divided into five phases. A summary of the deliverables defining each phase is listed

here, with details and a tentative timeline below.

Phase A: Planning phase: September 2022

- Preparation of the draft Terms of Reference for discussion with the Reference Group (RG)

- Deadline for the draft ToR: 16th September 2022

- Finalization of the ToR and submission for approval (including commenting in writing by the

- Reference Group): mid-October 2022

Phase B: Start-up phase: September 2022 (SO2)

- Recruitment of the evaluation team members

- Kick-off meeting with the Reference Group, 29th September 2022

Phase C: Inception phase: October – November 2022

- Submission of Draft Inception Report, 16th November

- Inception meeting, 30th November 2022

- Submission of the Final Inception Report, 15th December 2022

- Preparations for data scraping and initial media analysis

Phase D: Implementation phase: December – March 2023

- Data scraping and initial media analysis, November - January 2022

- Desk review and conduct of interviews, December – February 2022

- Case studies, December - February 2023

- Validation workshop with reference group (findings, tentative conclusions and recommendations, FCR), end March 2023 (tbd) (Helsinki)

Phase E: Reporting/Dissemination Phase: March – April 2023

- Draft Final Report submission, beginning April 2023

- Meeting on Draft Final Report (and commenting), late April 2023

- Final Report, May 2023

- Public Presentations, May 2023.

The language of all reports and possible other documents is English. The time needed for the commenting of different reports is 2 weeks. The timetables are tentative, except for the final reports.

C. Inception phase

The inception phase includes preliminary desk analysis and preparation of a detailed evaluation plan. The desk study includes preliminary context and document analysis based on existing evaluations, studies, VIE-30 workplans, reports and documentation of the case studies and relevant reports from CSOs. It will also include the initial mapping of development communication campaigns, the themes and communication channels used by VIE-30. The case studies to be conducted will be selected and decision justified in the inception report. Initial interviews of VIE-30 and KEO-30 personnel will be conducted as well as a theory of change workshop.

The ToR for data science exercise will be prepared in close collaboration with the MFA and the external company subcontracted for the task by the EMS service provider. The exercise will be conducted and initial findings for further elaboration presented in the inception report.

The Inception Report shall include the following:

- context analysis

- initial findings and conclusions of the desk study (strategic level) and data scraping

- constructed theory of change and analytical framework

- a graph describing the division of development communication roles and responsibilities in MFA

- finalization of the methodology

- an evaluation matrix including evaluation questions, indicators, methods for data collection and analysis

- final selection of case studies

- tentative implementation plan for stakeholder consultations with a clear division of work (participation, interview questions/guides/checklists, preliminary list of stakeholders and organizations to be contacted)

- final work plan and division of work between team members

- anticipated risks and limitations plus mitigation

- budget breakdown

The draft inception report will be submitted by 16 November 2022. It will be discussed and the needed changes agreed in the inception meeting, tentatively scheduled for 30th November 2022, to be held both in person and online.

D. Implementation phase

The implementation phase will take place from December 2022 until beginning of February 2023. It will include interviews, analysis of media study, web panel surveys and case studies.

A validation workshop of the initial overall evaluation findings (not yet conclusions or recommendations) will be arranged in February 2023. The purpose of the validation workshop is to share initial findings and also validate them. The meeting may be in-person in Helsinki or online.

After the workshop, it is possible that further interviews and analysis will still be needed to complement the information collected during the earlier phases.

Deliverables/meetings: At least a validation workshop supported by presentations on the preliminary results of the evaluation. Participants will include the Evaluation Unit, the reference group, other relevant staff/stakeholders, the Team Leader (responsible for chairing the session), team members and the EMS Coordinator.

E. Reporting and dissemination phase

The reporting and dissemination phase will take place in March 2023 and produce the final report. The draft report will be delivered early April 2022. The report should be kept clear, concise, and consistent.

The report must follow writing instructions and template provided by MFA and it should contain inter alia the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The logic between these elements should be clear and based on evidence.

The final draft report will be sent for a round of comments by the parties concerned. The purpose of the comments is only to correct any misunderstandings or factual errors. The time needed for commenting is 2 weeks.

The final draft report must include abstract and summaries (including the table on main findings, conclusions and recommendations). It must be of high and publishable quality. It must be ensured that the translations use commonly used terms in development cooperation. The consultant is responsible for the editing, proof-reading and quality control of the content and language.

The report will be finalised based on comments received and must be ready by the beginning of March 20223. The final report must include abstract and summaries (including the table on main findings, conclusions and recommendations) in Finnish, Swedish and English. The Finnish speaking senior evaluator will be responsible for Finnish translations of good quality. The final report will be delivered in Word-format with all the tables and pictures also separately in their original formats.

In addition, the MFA requires access to the evaluation team's interim evidence documents, e.g. completed matrices, although it is not expected that these should be of publishable quality. The MFA treats these documents as confidential if needed.

Deliverables: Final report (draft final report and final report) and methodological note by the quality assurance expert. A management meeting on the final results will be organized in Helsinki tentatively in March 2022 and the Team Leader and the EMS Coordinator must be present in person.

A public presentation on the results will be organized on the same visit as the final management meeting. It is expected that at least the Team leader is present. It will be agreed later which other team members will participate.

Team leader and other team members will give a presentation of the findings in a public Webinar. Presentation can be delivered from distance. Only a sufficient internet connection is required. The MFA will prepare a management response to the recommendations.

7. Expertise Required

One Team Leader level expert will be identified as the Team Leader of the whole evaluation. The Team Leader will lead the work and will be ultimately responsible for the deliverables. The evaluation team will work under the leadership of the Team Leader who carries the final responsibility of completing the evaluation

Besides complying with the requirements mentioned in the framework agreement for Evaluation Management Services contract (2020), the team of experts should demonstrate the following:

- Experts familiar with global education and development communications either in Finland or at the European level.

- Knowledge of various channels of communications and related ethical principles.

- Knowledge of data science and experience from the use of digital tools such as web-scraping (could be in the form of an outsourced service package).

- The team should include at least one key member who is fluent in Finnish language.

- The team should include knowledge and understanding of Finland's development policy, its priority areas, HRBA and crosscutting objectives.

Tentative composition of the evaluation team:

- Team Leader with relevant skills and experience. Considering that the subject for evaluation manager is very special, a person that matches the requirements of a senior evaluator can be proposed, observing the SE rates of the framework agreement.

- 2 evaluators with different backgrounds (media analysis / development cooperation and CSO communication).

- Emerging evaluator.

For the data science exercise, an external company will be hired for a consultancy. A separate ToR will be drawn for the task.

The Team Leader and the team must be available until the reports have been approved by the Evaluation Manager, even when timetables change.

The evaluation team should consist of three senior evaluators and an emerging evaluator.

8. Quality assurance of the Consultant

8.1. Internal quality assurance

The consortium implementing this evaluation will put in place a three-layer system of quality assurance for all products/reports: at the level of the Team Leader, through the EMSC&D, and in-house senior QA advisors.

The Consultant is in charge of the impeccable quality of English, Swedish and Finnish texts of the reports and related proofreading. The EMSC will be responsible for the good quality translations in Finnish. All deliverables shall be of publishable quality.

The evaluation team should do their best not to exceed the total length of 80 pages for the main evaluation report and prepare an executive summary that is publishable as a stand-alone document and that includes visualizations. A separate volume on annexes may be produced. It will be agreed upon during the inception phase which of the final deliverables are to be published. The inception report should also outline the structure of the main report and the planned contents of the annex(es).

The report should be kept clear, concise, and consistent. The report must follow the writing instructions and template provided by the MFA, and it should contain, among other things, the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The logic between those should be clear and based on evidence. The final draft report(s) will be sent for a round of comments by EVA-11. The purpose of the comments is only to correct any misunderstandings or factual errors.

8.2 External quality assurance

It should be noted that EVA-11 has contracted an internationally recognised expert as a Critical Friend (external peer reviewer) for the whole process. The person interacts directly with EVA-11 and provides expert opinions on the planning and implementation of the evaluations. EVA-11 may or may not integrate any such external advice as part of their overall feedback and management responses to the evaluation.

9. Management of the evaluation

The evaluation is commissioned by the EVA-11. The Evaluation Manager of EVA-11 will be responsible for the overall management of the process. The Evaluation Manager will work closely with other units/departments of the MFA and other stakeholders in Finland and abroad.

This evaluation is managed through the EMS, and it will be conducted by an independent evaluation team recruited by the EMS service provider (Particip GmbH – Niras Finland Oy).

There will be one Management Team responsible for the overall coordination of the evaluation. This consists of the EVA-11 Evaluation Manager, the Team Leader, and the EMS Service Coordinator and/or Deputy Service Coordinator (EMSC&D).

A reference group for the evaluation will be established and chaired by the Evaluation Manager. The reference group is constituted to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scoping of the evaluation, informing others about the progress of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process, and using and disseminating the evaluation results.

The mandate of the reference group is to provide quality assurance, advisory support, and inputs to the evaluation, e.g., through participating in the planning of the evaluation and commenting on deliverables of the Consultant. The reference group is critical in guaranteeing transparency, accountability, and credibility, as well as the use of the evaluation and validating the results.

The Team Leader will manage the evaluation team. This requires careful planning to ensure that a common, consistent approach is used to achieve comparability of the data gathered and the approach used in the analysis.

The Team Leader will develop a set of clear protocols for the team to use and will convene regular online team meetings to discuss the approach. Particular attention should be paid to strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team during the process.

The evaluation team is responsible for identifying relevant stakeholders to be interviewed and organising the interviews. The MFA and embassies will not organize these interviews or meetings on behalf of the evaluation team but will assist in identifying people and organizations to be included in the evaluation.

10. Budget

The estimated maximum budget for this evaluation is EUR 260,000 including the contingency. The final budget will be decided during the Inception Phase.

11. Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland or the Ministry. The evaluation team does not represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in any capacity.

All intellectual property rights to the result of the Service referred to in the Contract will be the exclusive property of the Ministry, including the right to make modifications and hand over material to a third party. The Ministry may publish the result under Creative Commons license to promote openness and public use of evaluation results.

12. Authorisation

Annex 3. Data collection methods and their use

DATA COLLECTION METHOD	HOW THE METHOD WAS USED
Media analysis	The team used the media analysis to understand what the public image of development policy and development co-operation in Finnish digital media was in 2015-22 and in Twitter during a 15-month period as well as to understand how visible the MFA was in the media coverage concerning development co-operation.
Desk study of documents and other VIE-30 and MFA materials	The team made a systematic desk review of e.g. annual operative and financial plans and reports; MFA strategic documents; documents related to outsourced services; reports of special activities e.g. development academy; monitoring data from webpages and different campaigns; annual and other reports of CSOs who have received programme, project or communication and global education support; reports of United Nations (UN) organisations active in Finland; annual development co-operation polls results by Taloustutkimus and the related target group study; and report on the evaluation of the decision-makers' academy.
Key informant interviews (KII)	The team conducted key informant interviews with • 30 MFA directors of units and departments as well as embassy staff that work on development policy and co-operation. Their interviews focused on their understanding of and opinions on the functions of VIE-30, the contents of development communication and efficiency of internal and external collaboration and communication processes. • 30 external stakeholders including Development Policy Committee members from political parties and ministries, researchers, companies and organisations receiving development funding, UN organisations working in Finland and media agencies working with VIE-30; Business Finland; representatives of national commission on sustainable development and climate communicators network. The interviews collected information about their views on MFA development communications, its effectiveness and mutual collaboration. • Nine journalists, who have participated in Development Academy in 2015-22 and three editor-in-chiefs and heads of foreign news of media outlets that have been represented in the Development Academy. In addition, three other journalists who have covered global development issues in the media during the evaluation period were interviewed. The case study looked at the efficiency of MFA in creating and maintaining relations with the national media and the opinions of the interviewees on the visibility of development communication. • 10 persons from eight CSOs were interviewed focusing on the relevance of MFA's development communication and external coherence. • Danida (Danish international development agency) and Sida (Swedish international co-operation agency) staff working on development communications. Their interviews focused on the organisation of their work and the ways to better reach the target groups of communication.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD	HOW THE METHOD WAS USED
Focus group discussions	The team organised a three-hour face-to-face focus group discussion with six VIE-30 staff during the implementation phase, in addition to the inception phase workshop on the draft logic chain. In the second discussion the VIE-30 staff further developed and modified the logic chain and elaborated assumptions behind the changes to be achieved. Two focus group discussions were organised with CSOs. A half-day workshop was organised for communications experts of eight selected CSOs in relation of the CSO case study. The workshop focused on the communication strategies, the organisation of communications, lessons learnt and best practices of development communications. Another focus group discussion was organised with organisations receiving global education funding.
Analysis of MFA web materials	The evaluation team used the web analytics of MFA to collect and analyse data on the trends in the use of MFA web sites (um.fi, maailma2030.fi, teemapaivat.maailma2030.fi, openaid.fi, and Kehityslehti.fi).
Online surveys	The evaluation included two online surveys that were conducted by using the tool Alchemer. They were used to collect feedback on the issues related to evaluation sub-questions. The first online survey was conducted for MFA staff in headquarters (HQ) and embassies up to the level of unit directors. The survey focused on the efficiency of development communication, the internal organisation and coherence of MFA communication. The survey was in Finnish language, and it was sent to 203 MFA staff. A total of 40 responses were received, a 20% overall response rate. The second online survey was part of the CSO case study. It was sent to 99 CSOs, of which 36 CSOs responded. Making the overall response rate 36%. The survey was sent to all organisations receiving support from 2015 onwards, but not all were currently running projects.
Case studies: Development Academy and CSO development communication	The aim of the Development Academy case study was to understand to what extent the MFA has been able to inform and influence the knowledge of participating journalists and what the overall outcome of their participation in the academy has been. Simultaneously, the study assessed the external factors influencing the coverage of global and development issues covered in the media. The CSO case study focused on the scope and nature of CSO development communications to understand the variety of target groups, channels, themes and main messages, and on the extent to which the development communications of MFA and other stakeholders such as CSOs complement each other. It also examined the co-operation and co-ordination of activities between CSOs and MFA and gathered views on how CSOs perceive the development communications of the MFA. The case study collected the best practices and lessons learnt in development communications from CSOs, to be shared with the MFA.
Peer country review	The evaluation team studied the development communication organisations and practices, including the best practices and challenges for learning purposes in two peer countries (Sweden and Denmark).

Annex 4. Evaluation matrix

SUB-QUESTIONS	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS OF EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	DATA SOURCES
Effectiveness: **EQ 1. To what extent has the ministry been able to contribute to the openness of government by increasing the public awareness and understanding about development policy and co-operation?**			
EQ 1.1. To what extent has MFA used development communications efforts strategically to promote Finland's objectives and inform the public about global development issues and related challenges and successes?	Criteria for working strategically: Result based management is in place (baseline data, planning, M&E...) Relevant target groups and appropriate communication channels for each of them have been defined VIE-30 is using the monitoring data for learning Outsourcing has been planned strategically	Media analysis Desk review KIIs	MFA / VIE-30 of plans and reports External stakeholders Media agencies VIE-30 communication materials
EQ 1.2. To what extent have the MFA's development communication efforts managed to reach the public?	Visibility of development co-operation in the media 2015-22: MFA communication on development co-operation and development policy is widely visible in Finnish media Monitoring data of Kehitys-lehti and social media campaigns show increasing trends MFA web sites on development issues show increasing visits Development communication materials are fact-based, easy to understand and show the complexity of development co-operation	Media analysis Analytics of MFA websites Case study on development academy KIIs	MFA websites Other monitoring data Meltwater and Kaskas monitoring Journalists who participated in the Development Academcy External stakeholders

SUB-QUESTIONS	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS OF EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	DATA SOURCES
EQ 1.3. Whether and to what extent have the development communications efforts influenced public discussion on development policy and co-operation? To what extent has the discussion been interactive?	MFA has regularly organised opportunities for dialogue on development policy MFA participates in the public discussion and dialogue on development issues Journalists use MFA and other relevant stakeholders as a source of articles about development co-operation The 2018 and 2022 results reports are visible in media and there is public discussion about the results.	Desk review Media analysis KIIs Online survey CSOs Case study on development academy	Results report campaign and monitoring materials Journalists Kehitys-lehti website External stakeholders CSOs
EQ 1.4. What can MFA learn from peer countries in terms of effectively communicating about development issues?	Best practices on achieving results and measuring the effectiveness	Case study on peer country development communication Desk review KIIs	Key staff of development communication units in Sweden and Denmark Policy papers, strategies, reports, evaluations
Efficiency and coherence (internal): **EQ2. Is the development communication organised in an efficient way?**			
EQ 2.1. To what extent has MFA made use of the synergies and interlinkages between its development communication and development co-operation (internal coherence)?	Operational structure and roles/responsibilities are clear Staff expertise and skills match with the MFA communications strategy, annual workplans and job requirements Planning, reporting and monitoring are timely and documents are available to all Development communication planning is adopted and appreciated by MFA staff	KIIs Online survey MFA Desk review	VIE-30 and MFA staff (HQ and embassies) MFA reports DevCom standards and criteria
EQ 2.2. To what extent has the unit in charge of development communications been able to adjust (prioritise and de-prioritise activities) to changes in the resources?	MFA leadership and staff are satisfied on services provided by VIE-30 Adequate resources are available (human resources, funds) for conducting the work of VIE-30, also in the future	KIIs Online survey MFA Desk review	VIE-30 staff MFA staff (HQ and embassies) MFA and VIE-30 reports, strategies

SUB-QUESTIONS	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS OF EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	DATA SOURCES
EQ 2.3. To what extent has MFA been able to maintain and proactively develop media relations?	Development academy participants are satisfied with the courses and they think that they have been able to use the information in their work VIE-30 organises regular events and communicates proactively with journalists The journalists in the network have produced independent media content on development issues	KIIs Case study of development academy	VIE-30 staff Development academy reports Journalists and development academy participants
EQ 2.4. What can MFA learn from CSOs and peer countries in terms of organisation of development communications?	CSOs and peer countries provide best practices on organising the development communications	Review of development communication in two peer countries through interviews and desk review CSO case study (Focus group discussions / workshop, interviews, desk review)	Peer country policy papers, strategies, reports, evaluations Peer country key communication staff CSO plans and reports, key communication staff
Coherence (external): **EQ3. What is the external coherence of MFA development communications?**			
EQ 3.1. To what extent has MFA utilised the materials of relevant CSO and other partners involved in the production of the contents and vice versa?	Materials by CSOs and other actors have been used in MFA communication (result report, website) and vice versa	Desk review Focus group discussion / workshop KIIs Online survey CSOs	Development communication materials (webpage, results reports, global education materials) VIE-30, MFA staff, consultants, Kaskas media and CSOs Media analysis
EQ 3.2. To what extent do the development communications of MFA and other stakeholders such as CSOs complement each other?	MFA development communication is coordinated and complimentary with that of other actors funded by MFA There are strategies / structures / networks used for partnering with external actors Global education is adequately supported and monitored by MFA	CSO case study KIIs	External stakeholders MFA staff Development communication materials (videos, webpages, tweets) Media analysis

Annex 5. List of stakeholders interviewed

MFA STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION
Administrative services	Counsellor, Desk Officer
	Desk officer
	Team leader
Department for Africa and the Middle East	Deputy Director General
	Director
	Director general
	Director
	Director
The Department for the Americas and Asia	Director
	Director general
	Specialist
Department for communications	Director
	Communications Officer
	Communications coordinator, adviser to DG, coordination of staff training
	Director general of communications
	Communications coordinator
	Director
	Content and Communications Specialist
	Communications Coordinator
	Communications Officer
	Editor in Chief, Kehitys-Utveckling magazine
	Communications Officer
	Deputy Director

MFA STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION
Department for development policy	Director
	Director
	Director general
	Director
	Director
	Director
	Team leader, Deputy director
	Director
	Director
	Deputy Director General
Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Deputy Director General
	Senior Adviser, Development Policy
Embassy of Finland, Zambia	Counsellor
Political department	Director
Under-Secretary of State (Internal and External Services)	Under-secretary of State - Internal and External Services
Unit for Internal Audit	Senior Officer
Under-secretary of State (Development Policy)	Under-secretary of State - Development Policy

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION
Green party	Parlamentarian
MFA Denmark	Department for Public Diplomacy, Press and Communications
	Team Leader Engagement – Head of Engagement
	Engagement Team
	Engagement Team
Ministry of Environment	Ministerial advisor
	Head of communications
Prime-Minister's Office	Deputy Secretary General of Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development
Swedish People's Party	Parlamentarian

CSOS & UN	POSITION
Development policy committee	Member
	Ex-chair
Fingo	Communications director
UN Association of Finland	Communications
UNDP	Communications and partnership
UNICEF	Senior expert
UNICEF	Communications expert
UN-Women	Communications

NEWS OUTLETS*	POSITION
Helsingin Sanomat	*3 interviewees*
Hufvudstadsbladet	
Iltalehti	
Iltasanomat	
Karjalainen	*2 interviewees*
Kauppalehti	
Maaseudun tulevaisuus	*2 interviewees*
YLE	*3 interviewees*
n/a	Freelance journalist

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION
Bob the Robot Communications	Project manager
Business Finland	Senior advisor
Ellun Kanat	Client director
Finnfund	Communication director
	Communication manager
Finnpartnership	Programme director
Kaskas media	Senior communications specialist
maailma.net	Editor-in-chief
Måndag media agency	Founder, creative director
Peikko Group	Managing director
University of Eastern Finland	Professor
University of Helsinki	Professor of Global Development Studies

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION
University of Helsinki	Academy of Finland Research Fellow
University of Jyväskylä	Associate professor
University of Turku	Professor
Vaisala Oy	Head of Meteorological Infrastructure & Capability Development
Videotiiviste	Project coordinator
Wärtsilä	Senior project manager

Annex 6. Bibliography

Aula Research. 2022a. *Kehitysviestinnän Kohderyhmäanalyysi 2022.* Helsinki, Finland: Aula Research Oy.

Aula Research. 2022b. *Tilastollinen Analyysi Kehitysyhteistyötä Koskevasta Kansalaiskyselystä 2022 Tiivistelmä Analyysin Tuloksista.* Helsinki, Finland: Aula Research Oy.

Breit, E. and Vaara, E. 2014. "Corruption and the Media: Infotainment, Moralization, Dramatization, and Conversationalization." Pp. 48–61 in *Organizations and the media. Organizing in a mediatized world by Pallas, S. Jonsson och L. Strannegård (Eds.)*. London: Routledge.

Canel, M., and V. (Eds.). Luoma-aho. 2020. *The Handbook of Public Sector Communication.* Vol. 2020. John Wiley & Sons.

Fredriksson. 2020. "Public Sector Communication, Organizations, Stakeholders, and Employees." Pp. 97–100 in *The handbook of public sector communication, by Canel, M., & Luoma-aho, V. (editors)*. John Wiley & Sons.

Grafström, Maria, and Cecilia Strand. 2021. *Informerad Eller Kunnig? Utvärdering Av Insatser För Information Och Kommunikation Om Bistånd 2010–2020.* 2021:06. Stockholm: The Expert Group for Aid Studies.

Grafström, Maria, and Karolina Windell. 2019. *Skandaler, Opinioner Och Anseende: Biståndet i Ett Medialiserat Samhälle. Research report*. 2019:01. Stockholm: The Expert Group for Aid Studies.

Harcup, Tony and O'Neill, Deirdre. 2017. "What Is News? News Values Revisited (Again)." *Journalism Studies* 18(12):1470–88. doi: 10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193.

Heikkilä, R., A. Leguina, and S. Purhonen. 2022. "The Stratification of Media Usage in Finland, 2007–2018: Signs of Socio-Political Polarization?" *New Media & Society* 24(5):1053–75.

Hermida, Alfred and Mellado, Claudia. 2020. "Dimensions of Social Media Logics: Mapping Forms of Journalistic Norms and Practices on Twitter and Instagram." *Digital Journalism* 8(7):864–84. doi: 10.1080/21670811.2020.1805779.

Kalsnes, B., Falasca, K., &, Kammer, A. 2021. "Scandinavian Political Journalism in a Time of Fake News and Disinformation." Pp. 283–304 in *Power, communication, and politics in the Nordic countries*. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Kohvakka, R., and K. Saarenmaa. 2021. *Median Merkitys on Kasvanut Pandemian Aikana – Monet Ikäihmiset Ovat Ottaneet Melkoisen Digiloikan.*

Martens, B. 2005. "Why Do Aid Agencies Exist? Development Policy Review, 23(6), 643-663." *Development Policy Review* 23(6):643–63.

MFA. 2020. *Hakusanatutkimus: UM.Fi. Internal report*. Helsinki, Finland.

MFA. 2021. *Report on Development Policy Extending Across Parliamentary Terms*. Helsinki, Finland: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).

MFA. 2022. *Effective Communications through Collaboration. Communications Strategy of the Foreign Service. Strategy*. Helsinki, Finland: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).

Niemikari, Risto, Tapio Raunio, and Tom Moring. 2019. "Finland: Informal Interdependence and Occasional Clashes." Pp. 29–54 in *Close and distant: Political executive–media relations in four countries, Karl Magnus Johansson & Gunnar Nygren (editors)*. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Pensala Veera, Silfverberg Paul. 2020. *Ulkoministeriön Viestintä- Ja Globaalikasvatuksen (VGK) Tuen Evaluointi 2015-2020.* Helsinki, Finland: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).

Prime Minister´s Office, Finland. 2016. "Together, Boldly and Openly. Central Government Communication Guidelines."

Rahkonen, Juho. 2019. *Suomalaisten Mielipiteet Kehitysyhteistyöstä 2019. Tutkimusraportti.* Helsinki, Finland: Taloustutkimus.

Rahkonen, Juho. 2021. *Suomalaisten Mielipiteet Kehitysyhteistyöstä 2021. Kyselytutkimuksen Raportti.* Helsinki, Finland: Taloustutkimus.

Rahkonen, Juho. 2022. *Suomalaisten Mielipiteet Kehitysyhteistyöstä. Kyselytutkimuksen Raportti.* Helsinki, Finland.

Schibbye, M. 2015. "Nils Resare Om Blank Spot Projects Biståndsgranskning." *Blankspot*, December 15.

Strömbäck, Jesper. 2019. "Journalistikens nyhetsurval och nyhetsvärderingar [News selection and news evaluation in journalism]." Pp. 171–81 in *Handbok i journalistikforskning [Handbook in journalism research] by M. Karlsson & J. Strömbäck*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Strömbäck, Jesper and Karlsson, Michael; Hopmann, D. N. 2012. "Determinants of News Content: Comparing Journalists' Perceptions of the Normative and Actual Impact of Different Event Properties When Deciding What's News." *Journalism Studies* 13(5):718–28. doi: doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2012.664321.

Von Krogh, T. (Eds.). 2011. *Specialreportern: Framväxt, Funktion, Framtid.* Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier.

VOLUME 1 • MAIN EVALUATION REPORT