

# Strategic and administrative evaluation of Save the Children Norway in Russia

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# Preface

This report evaluates the Save the Children Norway's country programme for Russia. Save the Children Norway in Russia (SCNiR) has been operating in Russia since 2002 and this is the first strategic and administrative evaluation of the country programme.

The evaluation was commissioned by Save the Children Norway and has been carried out as a learning process in which the Evaluation Team did not only consist of the external evaluator (the Consultant) but also the Country Director and the Senior Programme Co-ordinator. The SCNiR staff has taken actively part in the process. The report was written by the Consultant (Dr. Jørn Holm-Hansen) within the framework of 200 hours.

The Consultant would like to thank all interviewees for the time, information and insights they shared with him. He is also very grateful to the SCNiR staff for their organisation of the field trips and the two one-day seminars. Secretary Inger Balberg at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) deserves thanks for her contribution to the technical editing of the report.

Oslo, August 2008

Marit Haug,

Research Director

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# Summary

*Jørn Holm-Hansen*

## **Strategic and administrative evaluation of Save the Children Norway in Russia**

NIBR Report 2008:

### **Background**

Save the Children Norway in Russia (SCNiR) has been operating in Russia since 2002. This report is the first strategic and administrative evaluation of the country programme.

### **Purpose/objective**

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide input on how to maximise the impact of SCNiR's work in North-West Russia. The evaluation identifies needs for adjustments and provides inputs to the next strategy for the SCNiR.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation has been conceived as a learning process in which the Evaluation Team did not only consist of the external evaluator (the Consultant) but also the Country Director and the Senior Programme Co-ordinator. The SCNiR staff has been taking actively part.

The study makes use of programme theory as a tool to help bring forth the assumed relations between the interventions (inputs) and their outputs and outcomes, and the relations between the outcomes and the solution of the problems that the intervention seeks to reduce or solve. One of the specific objectives of the

evaluation has been to assess the country programme's ability to operate in the context of contemporary Russia.

### **Key findings**

In Russia there is an acknowledged need to modernise several policy sectors, among them the sector of child welfare. In the field of child welfare the authorities emphasise the need for new attitudes, perspectives and working methods, in other words the core competence of Save the Children. *SCNiR is, therefore, needed in Russia because of the fact that the country is improving – not because it is miserable.*

SCNiR's partners are mainly public authorities and service-deliverers, which gives SCNiR direct access to the "duty-bearers". Projects have been established in all priority fields in a quite short time. Public institutions are being helped to offer the same services better, and partly to offer new services.

SCNiR has good links to centres of competence in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The country programme is well adapted to current priorities in Murmansk and Russia, and is in mesh with realities. However, good adaptation must be balanced with the need to press for innovation.

In sum the SCNiR is where it should be mid-term, but have to move and reorient itself somewhat in order to arrive where it wants by the end of the Four Year Plan in 2009.

### **Recommendations**

*Competence-raising is needed, not material support:* The country programme should take measures to avoid ending up as a fund for child-friendly refurbishments and procurement. In stead it should spend the remaining period of the Four Year Plan to cultivate its identity as a competence centre. Material support to partners should only be provided on a small scale and on the condition that it is really needed to improve attitudes, perspectives and competence.

*Handling the Russian Sonderfall:* The HO's capacity to follow-up the Russian country programme should be strengthened personnel-wise (e.g. by a position as regional co-ordinator to the Europe and

Middle East Section). The possibility to establish closer links to SCN's Domestic Programme should be considered.

*Scaling up:* On the condition that it is financially viable, SCNiR should scale up its activities and establish projects in other regions of Russia. Also, it is necessary to strengthen SCNiR's presence in Moscow, preferably by some sort of representation.

*Reporting should be improved:* There is a need to work on project descriptions to distinguish between objectives, activities and expected results. Objectives should be formulated briefly and concisely and not just be a mere listing of the activities planned. There should be fewer activities (objectives) under each project, and activities should be on issues where SCNiR can contribute with "value added". The SCN should go through and streamline its definitions of direct and indirect effects.

*More precise identification of "value added":* The HO and the country programme should start a discussion on how to measure "value added".

*Link Norwegian and Russian expertise:* The co-operation with Russian experts in Moscow and St. Petersburg is very important for competence-building and programme implementation. This should be combined with similar contacts with Norwegian expertise.

# Sammendrag

*Jørn Holm-Hansen*

## **Strategic and administrative evaluation of Save the Children Norway in Russia**

NIBR Report 2008:

### **Bakgrunn**

Redd Barna Norge i Russland (Save the Children Norway in Russia – SCNiR) har arbeidet i Russland siden 2002. Den foreliggende rapporten er den første strategiske og administrative evalueringen av landprogrammet.

### **Formål**

Hovedformålet med evalueringen er å framskaffe innsikt som kan bidra til å øke virkningen av SCNiR's virksomhet i Nordvest-Russland. Evalueringen finner punkter der justeringer trengs, og legger fram forslag til bruk i neste strategiperiode.

### **Metode**

Evalueringen har vært lagt opp som en læringsprosess, der den eksterne evaluatoren sammen med *country director* og *senior programme coordinator* har utgjort et evalueringsteam. De øvrige ansatte ved SCNiR's kontor har tatt aktivt del.

Evalueringer tar programteori i bruk for å få fram den antatte forbindelsen mellom de konkrete tiltakene (inputs) og resultater (outputs) og utfall (outcome). Programteori gjør det videre mulig å undersøke sammenhengen mellom utfallene og den faktiske løsningen av de problemene tiltakene tar sikte på å løse. Videre undersøker evalueringen landprogrammets evne til å operere i den russiske virkeligheten.

## Hovedfunn

Russiske myndigheter er opptatt av å modernisere en rekke politikkområder, blant dem barns velferd. På dette området er det allment erkjent at det trengs nye holdninger, perspektiver og arbeidsmåter. Dette er samtidig områdene der Redd Barnas har sin kjernekompetanse. *Det er dermed behov for Redd Barna i Russland. Og vel å merke: Grunnen er at Russland forbedrer seg, ikke at landet er fattig.*

SCNiR's partnere er i all hovedsak offentlige myndigheter og tjenesteytere, noe som gir organisasjonen direkte tilgang til "ansvarshaverne". SCNiR har satt i gang prosjekter innen alle de prioriterte feltene i løpet av ganske kort tid. Offentlige myndigheter og institusjoner har fått en håndrekning sånn at de har kunnet tilby bedre tjenester enn før, og i noen tilfeller også kunnet tilby nye tjenester.

SCNiR har et godt kontaktnett med kompetansemiljøer i Moskva og Petersburg.

Landprogrammet er godt tilpasset de prioriteringene som ellers gjelder innenfor barns velferd både i Murmansk og for Russland på føderasjonsnivå. Programmet er i godt inngrep med de russiske realitetene, men det er viktig å sørge for at kravene til tilpasning balanseres opp mot behovet for at programmet bidrar til innovasjon.

Midtveis i strategiperioden er landprogrammet der det bør være, men innen utgangen av perioden må det gjøres noen justeringer dersom målene fra Fireårsplanen skal nås.

## Anbefalinger

*Det er kompetanseheving som trengs, ikke materiell bistand.*

Landprogrammet må ta noen grep for å unngå å ende opp som et fond for barnevennlig oppussing og anskaffelse. Det som gjenstår av tid under inneværende Fireårsplan må brukes til å styrke SCNiR som kompetansesenter. Materiell bistand bør bare ytes i lite omfang og på den betingelsen at den er strengt nødvendig for å bedre holdninger, perspektiver og kompetanse.

*Håndtering av det russiske særtilfellet.* Hovedkontorets kapasitet når det gjelder oppfølging av det russiske landprogrammet bør styrkes personellmessig. Dette kan skje for eksempel ved at det opprettes en stilling som regionalkoordinator til Seksjonen for Europa og

Midtøsten. Muligheten for tettere kobling til Redd Barnas Norgesprogram bør vurderes.

*Utvidelse av landprogrammet.* Under forutsening at det lar seg finansiere, bør SCNiR utvide aktivitetene og etablere prosjekter i andre regioner av Russland. Det er også nødvendig å styrke SCNiR's tilstedeværelse i Moskva, aller helst ved en eller annen form for representasjon.

*Rapporteringen bør bedres.* Prosjektbeskrivelsene må jobbes med slik at det kommer tydelig fram hva som er målsetninger, aktiviteter og forventede resultater. Målsetningen bør formuleres kort og konsist og ikke bare være en opplisting av planlaget aktiviteter. Det bør være færre aktiviteter (og målsetninger) under hvert prosjekt. Aktivitetene bør skje på områder der SCNiR kan bidra med faglig "merverdi". Redd Barna bør gå gjennom og standardisere definisjonene av direkte og indirekte resultater.

*Mer presis definisjon av "merverdi".* Hovedkontoret og SCNiR bør påbegynne en diskusjon om hvordan "merverdi" skal måles.

*Koble russisk og norsk kompetanse.* Samarbeidet med russiske eksperter i Moskva og Petersburg er viktig for kompetansehevingen og programgjennomføringen. Dette bør kombineres med tilsvarende kontakter med norsk ekspertise.

# 1 Introduction

This chapter presents the purpose and scope of the evaluation as well as the methods applied to reach its conclusions.

## **The purpose and scope of the evaluation**

SCNiR has been operating in Russia since 2002 and this is the first strategic and administrative evaluation of the country programme. The main purpose of the evaluation of the Country Programme/ Save the Children Norway in Russia (SCNiR) is to provide input on how to maximise the impact of SCNiR's work in North-West Russia. The evaluation identifies needs for adjusting the current strategies and provides inputs to the next strategy for the SCNiR.

## **The evaluation as a learning and participatory process**

In order to ensure that the evaluation have an impact, it has been conceived as a *learning process* in which the Evaluation Team did not only consist of the external evaluator (the Consultant) but also the Country Director and the Senior Programme Co-ordinator. The SCNiR staff has been taking actively part in the evaluation. A thorough discussion of the Inception Report was carried out at a start-up seminar in late April in which the entire staff took actively part and provided inputs.

During field visits the programme co-ordinators in charge of the project in question joined the Consultant, but did not take part in the interviews.

The draft report was commented upon by the HO and Reference Group in a written document, and the draft report and the comments were discussed with the Consultant by the staff and Regional Director in a one-day wrap-up seminar in Murmansk 4

August. The seminar produced valuable input to the final version of the text.

### **Programme theory**

The evaluation documents and evaluates the *outputs* and *impact* of SCNiR's work. Having the potentials for improvements as its main objective, the evaluation also goes through, document and assess the *ways in which the SCNiR is working*. In other words, the evaluation both identifies and documents *results/impacts* and describes and analyses *process*. In order to link the two, the Consultant makes use of *programme theory*.

Programme theory is a practical tool to help bring forth the assumed relations between the interventions (inputs) and their outputs and outcomes, and the relations between the outcomes and the solution of the problems that the intervention seeks to reduce or solve. Programme theory, like other theory, suggests links between causes and effects. One could also think in terms of configurations of context, mechanisms and outcome (CMO): What outcomes are results of what mechanisms under what preconditions?

### **Contextual factors**

The use of programme theory is combined with an open attitude to real-life complexities that is accounted for in the report. In real life, processes of change are less linear than usually envisaged in project planning and reporting. In order to account for change, therefore, the analysis has been based on attention to *actors* (i.e. SCNiR and its partners) in the processes of change as well as their *activities*, and not least seeing these activities in their institutional context. This requires going in-depth. Therefore, we have chosen to treat each of the projects selected for field visits as *case studies*.

One of the specific objectives of the evaluation has been to assess the country programme's ability to operate in the actual context and to present recommendations on how to improve this ability. The ability to operate in the given institutional and political surroundings and to link up with on-going processes is pivotal. Without this ability a programme will not be able to make itself relevant.

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Taking contextual conditions into consideration in Russia today implies being sensitive to the effects of rapid change. During the period of SCN's presence in Russia, the country has changed significantly. The institutions are more stable, the economy more robust and spending on health and social development has increased. Russian partners in international projects operate more self-consciously. The political regime is one of centrally structured modernisation.

The evaluation has analysed the Country Programme in the context of Russia's current child and family policies to see in what ways it links up with and strengthens ongoing processes that lead towards creating a better life and a better future for children, notably the efforts to adopt policies to implement the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

### **Methodological challenges**

To really go in-depth on effects and impacts requires studies of a scope and intensity not allowed for within the framework of an evaluation. One simple, yet important, problem arises from the fact that most interviewees may have a self-interest (material as well as professional) in portraying activities as being successful. At least they may be reluctant to air dilemmas and problems with an interviewer they do not know and who is just making one short visit.

A similar self-interest is, of course, held by the SCNiR staff. Potentially this hampers objectivity, and particularly so in this evaluation which is conceived as a learning and participatory process.

To counterbalance bias the external member of the Evaluation Team (the Consultant), who is "neutral" and has no stake in the result of the findings, has drawn on insight gained from other assignments on child welfare in Russia. His general knowledge of Russian realities has been of use in assessing the relevance and possible outcomes of the interventions evaluated.

## 2 Child welfare in Russia

This chapter will describe the context, and forms a background for the discussion in the subsequent chapters. The chapter includes a discussion of child welfare policies in Russia (baseline as to the welfare situation and institutional set-up). What have been the recent changes in the level of child welfare with relevance to the Four Year Plan? Child welfare policies in Russia are far from static, and due attention must be paid to the dynamics of the policy field. It is also important to gain an understanding on *how* child welfare issues are addressed in Russia in order to gain legitimacy. What actions are considered appropriate? Should measures be rights-based, should they refer to sentimental justifications or be purely formal? Should they link up to the demography policies, social welfare or human rights?

### 2.1 The situation of children in Russia

#### 2.1.1 The general economic situation in Russia

The Russian economy has improved considerably over the last few years. The growth in GNP has been high, around 7 percent since 2003. An even higher growth has been registered in real wages and disposable income (World Bank 2007):

Table 2.1 *General social indicators*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Real disposable income growth, %	14.9	9.9	8.8	10.2	12.4
Real wage growth, %	10.9	10.6	10.0	13.4	16.2
Unemployment (ILO definition), %	8.6	8.2	7.6	7.1	6.3

*\*first nine months*

*(source: Word Bank 2007)*

As the table above shows, the economic situation has improved. The improvements have been accompanied by a significant reduction in the number of poor people. In fact, there is a significant reduction of the percentage of inhabitants having an income below the stipulated minimum “basket” of food, commodities and services needed to uphold health and life functions.

Table 2.2 *Inhabitants with incomes below subsistence minimum level, year and %*

1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
24.8	29.0	27.5	24.6	20.3	17.6	17.7	15.3

*(source: Rosstat at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b07\\_13/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d02/06-25.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b07_13/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d02/06-25.htm))*

### 2.1.2 The economic conditions for children

Although the general economic situation in Russia has improved, poverty is still a reality for many inhabitants. Unfortunately, poverty in Russia tends to strike children. Being poor and being – or having – a child are correlated. At the end of 2006, the poverty risk for children was twice as high as for the general population, 21.4 per cent versus 12.8 percent (Ovcharova, Pishniak and Popova 2007; Burdniak and Popova 2007).

In 2007, there were altogether 29 million children in Russia, of which 731.000 were deprived of parental care, 676.000 were classified as living under socially dangerous conditions, and 587.000 disabled. These categories of children are considered being in need of adaptation and integration into society, among others through the Federal Target Programme “Children of Russia” (see below).

According to UNICEF’s state of the children in Russia (2007) some of the most basic child rights remain unfulfilled in Russia. The unfulfilled child rights are results of general phenomena, like poverty and declining health, e.g. due to HIV/AIDS and well-being of the population as a whole, but also specific phenomena like parental neglect and child abuse. Although there is considerable progress in alternative placement of orphans (“biological” as well as “social” orphans as the distinction goes in Russia) too many children still live in large-scale institutions.

## 2.2 The institutional set-up of child welfare in Russia

The correlation between being member of a household including children and being poor makes effective child and family politics crucial. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990’s, among others, led to the reduction or privatisation, and even abolishment of several social and educational services that were of great importance for households with children.

### 2.2.1 The UN CRC in Russia

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and is today the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. Only Somalia and the USA are non-parties to the convention. Russia ratified the Convention in 1990. Russia reports actively to the CRC and the reports are subjects to a critical review from the child-friendly lobby in Russia, thus contributing to the visibility of the issue. SCNiR made the review of the Russian report the basis of its own priorities in the current Four Year Plan.

## 2.2.2 The federal programme “Children of Russia”

The federal target programme “Children of Russia 2007 - 2010” structures much of the country’s child policies, and is a follow up of “Children of Russia 2003 – 2006”. The federal programme includes such sub-programmes, as “The Healthy Generation”, “The Gifted Children”, “The Children and Family” as well as “Children of the North”, which is of particular relevance for SCNiR. The coordinator of the programme is the Russian Ministry for Health Care and Social Development. The measures under the programme may be financed by the federal authorities, regional authorities as well as local self-governments and other actors. Each Russian federation subject (region or republic) set up their own programme.

## 2.2.3 National Priority Projects

Public services in Russia are under a positive pressure to modernise and innovate. This also holds true for the sector of child protection.

In 2005 president Vladimir Putin announced a great lift to strengthen “human capital” in Russia. The programme that started in 2006 is divided into four National Priority Projects, on health, education, agriculture and housing respectively. All of them are relevant for vulnerable children, and given SCNiR’s profile the national projects on health and education are of particular importance. Demography politics, including material support to households with families are among the main priorities under the national project on health.

The National Project on Education supports innovative methods within schools, among other through the financing of projects. Each year no less than 3000 schools received funds for innovative projects on the basis of a competition. In 2006 no less than 3,000 million rubles were distributed through this competition. One of the aims of the National Priority Project on Education is to equip all schools with access to internet. In 2006, one thousand million RUR were set aside for this purpose, and in 2007 two thousand million RUR were assigned, according to the web-site of the Priority Project.

### 2.2.4 Demographical crisis and policies

A salient feature of Russian child policies is their close links to the country's policies to solve the demographic crisis (presidential ukaz 2007). The demographic crisis is considered a threat to Russia's future economic growth and stability, and even survival (Ovcharova, Pishnyak and Popova 2007). Not only the low birth rate, but also the fact that a relatively large number of children grow up under conditions that may reduce their ability to be active and "positive citizens" and create social stability in the future, give rise to concern. This way, Russia's child and family policies get an additional pillar and is not solely dependent upon a pro-social political climate. In fact, the living conditions of children are being linked to security issues, which is beneficial to the status of the policy field.

In May 2006, president Vladimir Putin made an important speech to the Federal Assembly, in which he launched a set of actions to strengthen maternal health and children's well-being. It is a well-documented fact that having children in Russia enhances the risk of being or becoming poor. Therefore, the measures to encourage child birth focus on the targets groups' private economy. Childcare benefits were increased, expenditures for pre-school attendance were compensated and material support to guardians and foster parents were raised.

The most spectacular improvement, however, was the introduction of the Maternity Capital Programme, according to which mothers are entitled to 250.000 RUR when they give birth to or adopt a second or third child. The sum is going to be paid only once and must be used for housing, education or pension. The sum, which is considerable for many households, is adjusted to inflation on an annual basis.

## 2.3 Conclusion

There is reason to revise the picture of Russia as a "poor country" that needs material help from outside to take care of its children. Russia is recovering economically from the collapse of the 1990's. Moreover, the country's authorities are linking child and family policies to the strategic issue of demography, and there is a wide-

spread understanding that without spending more money on children and families the demographic situation will be threatening. Although one might still complain that not enough is being spent on this priority field, there is reason to ask whether material assistance is the most needed and efficient way for outside actors, like foreign NGO's, to contribute to the up-dating of Russian child welfare policies. Given the urge to modernise within the Russian public sector, the relevant authorities see the need for professional support of the kind offered by organisations like SCNiR.

### 3 The relevance and scope of the current strategy

This chapter will assess the relevance and scope of the current strategy and provide recommendations on whether and how it should be adjusted to better correspond to the actual context. This has to do with SCNiR's adaptation to Russian realities. Are the interventions made as part of the Four Year Plan? Are there potentials to make the interventions interact in more efficient ways with ongoing processes to improve the life of children in the region? Is it possible to identify an advocacy coalition for more child-friendly policies? All this has to do with the aim of the country programme to "influence causes".

### 3.1 The strategy's relevance in the current context

As shown in chapter 2 the context in which the SCNiR operates is changing to the better. Classical problems of poverty are less and less prevalent at the same time as the attention to child welfare is on the rise. Moreover, there is an urgent need to up-date, modernise and innovate the public services that makes working conditions for the country programme quite good. SCNiR is not working up against the trends, but contributes to strengthening ongoing tendencies.

On the other hand, making itself relevant is probably more difficult for a foreign NGO in Russia than in many other countries in which this type of organisations usually operate. Working conditions for an international NGO are qualitatively different in Russia as compared to most other places where the SCN is involved, where colonial traditions make foreign NGO's activities run with less "resistance".

When compared to most other countries where SCN is active, Russia is a well-structured country, with a more elaborated legal framework, stronger and more self-confident administrative institutions, financial mechanisms and professional traditions. There is certain unfamiliarity with the idea that receiving "lessons" or "aid" from outside is conducive to the solution of domestic challenges. In this respect Russia offers diametrically opposite working conditions than those offered in sub-Saharan Africa, or even in parts of the Western Balkans.

### 3.2 The Four Year Plan

Save the Children Norway in Russia (SCNiR) operates according to a Four Year Plan for the period 2006-2009. The final version of the Four Year Plan was the result of thorough discussions and revisions. The revisions aimed at making the plan as concrete and concentrated as possible.

The Plan identifies the priority areas (strategic objectives) for the four year period, presents key working principles, outlines methods of registering results. The Plan provides a scheme for the

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organisation's management and a budget and funding plan for the 2006 – 2009.

### 3.2.1 Strategic objectives

The Plan states that the most relevant of SCN's global objectives for the country programme "is possibly to fulfil the rights of children to protection against physical and psychological violence and abuse".

The Four Year Plan's priority areas have been selected to be as relevant as possible in the Russian context, among others by having an eye on the conclusion on the UNICEF Report on the CRC in Russia. Of course, also considerations of SCNiR competence and financing opportunities form input to the choice of priorities. The Plan reflects four of the seven strategic objectives of the SCN. SCN's objectives are:

1. to fulfil children's right to education
2. to fulfil the rights of children affected by armed conflict and disaster
3. to fulfil the rights of the children to protection against physical and psychological violence and sexual abuse
4. to fulfil the right of the children to protection against the impact of HIV and AIDS
5. to achieve better results for children through a stronger Save the Children
6. to strengthen implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
7. to combat economic and political structures and systems that violate children's rights

SCNiR focuses mainly on objectives 1, 3, 5 and 6, but also objectives 4 and 7 are given priority since they are cross-cutting in relation to the target groups identified. In addition two country specific objectives have been identified:

- a) to fulfil the rights of children in conflict with the law to be treated with dignity and worth, and contribute to their social integration

- b) to fulfil the rights of marginalised children to social protection and reintegration

SCNiR's six priority areas (rendered in bold above) is a combination of Save the Children's core priorities globally and specific priorities emerging from the particular Russian circumstances.

### 3.2.2 The relevance of the priority areas

Although in Russia all children get basic education and the entire population knows how to read and write, education is a relevant priority area because the access to education is not equal to all children. Socially marginalised children and children in conflict with the law are among those in need of better access to good schooling. Likewise, anti-violence is relevant due to a sad prevalence of brutality towards children, in particular as a result of alcohol abuse. There is a need to put the issue on the public agenda since it still seems to be somewhat controversial in Russia. In particular this is the case for sexual abuse.

The objective of strengthening the SCNiR is pertinent because it is a small office in a peripheral region of Russia and it is very much dependent on its Norwegian links. However, referring to means rather than ends, this priority field belongs analytically to another category than the other priority fields.

Strengthening and monitoring the CRC justifies its position among SCNiR's priority areas. This is an activity that links SCNiR to other child-friendly groups and contributes to a much-needed pressure from below.

Fulfilling the rights of children in conflict with the law to be treated with dignity must be said to be of great relevance since it concerns a relatively large number of Russian children and Russia has lagged behind most other large European countries in providing adequate conditions for this category of children. Moreover, it coincides with ongoing Russian reforms aiming at the humanisation of the penitentiary system.

Likewise, fulfilling the rights of marginalised children is pertinent not least because the profession of social workers is new in Russia

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(about ten years old) and in a formative phase. Competence in dealing with child-related issues needs to be strengthened.

Among foreign NGO's and donors much attention is being paid to the situation of children growing up in orphanages or in various forms of alternative placement. Interestingly, orphans are not a particular target group of the country programme's activities. This way SCNiR avoids overlap with other foreign organisations, like the Barents Region Public Competence Centre on Family Based Care in Murmansk.

From what has been said above, there is little doubt that the priority areas are relevant in the Russian context. Nevertheless, there is reason to ask whether the number of priority areas could be reduced. In fact this issue was discussed thoroughly at the wrap-up seminar in Murmansk.

The existing priorities could be subsumed under, e.g. the broader headings of child protection and promoting children's rights. This would allow for stronger dynamic in the team of project co-ordinators because they could work in larger teams. Moreover, it would better reflect realities in the field of child welfare policies in which issues are intertwined. In fact, priority areas like the one on the right to education, on the CRC and on strengthening the Save the Children organisation are cross-cutting by nature, and are at their most relevant when linked to concrete cases (like fulfilling the rights of marginalised children, protection against violence, the right to education or to be treated with dignity even after having come into conflict with the law.).

On the other hand, in case a concentration of the priority areas is done it is important to make sure important objectives are not neglected. For instance, if the priority area on strengthening the CRC is made cross-cutting, the efforts to promote the dissemination of the ombudsman institution should be kept up.

### 3.3 The working methods and the local political context

#### 3.3.1 Key working principles

Three principles have been singled out. Firstly, *child participation* is to be integrated as a basic principle in all projects. In fact, it is a core value of Save the Children, which helps facilitate the empowerment of the target group. On the paper the principle is clear, but in practical project implementation it may be more complicated. As the Four Year Plan points at children's views and ideas concerning their educational needs can be collected and analysed. In particular in the work with victims of violence and sexual abuse, and children in detention the principle of participation should be applied with finesse in order not to stress the children.

*Partner-managed projects* is the second basic principle established by the Four Year Plan. In the previous strategy period, with one exception, the projects had been carried out by the CP itself. The model of partner managed projects is likely to facilitate the "rooting" of the projects in the real-life context of Russian child welfare. On the other hand, it means that "control" of the project implementation's compliance with the Four Year Plan will be more difficult than it would have been if SCNiR itself managed the projects.

The third principle on which the Four Year Plan is based has to do with the overall approach applied. The activities will be directed at *influencing causes*. The remedies singled out by the Plan to influence causes can be summed up as "advocacy for children's rights".

#### 3.3.2 Partners

SCNiR's partners are mainly authorities and organs of public service-delivery in fields relevant for the priority areas (education, social protection, prison administration). Partners are non-governmental only in very few cases the (the NGO Novoe Nachalo and a shelter). Within SCNiR's right-based framework, authorities are considered "duty-bearers". In Russia, SCNiR works together with the duty-bearers as partners. Having the duty-bearer

and implementing organs as partners makes SCNiR reach out directly to the children through the agencies that do the real-life service-provision. Moreover, it enables SCNiR to communicate directly in operational situations about its strategic objectives and principles with the institutions in charge.

As compared to most other European countries, the number and size of Russia's voluntary, community-based or non-governmental organisations is relatively small. Strengthening civil society is one of Save the Children's objectives world-wide. In Russia the SCNiR has chosen to support civil society in other ways than making voluntary organisations and NGO's SCNiR partners. The support to child and youth self-organisation is support to the development of civil society. Moreover, the SCNiR co-operates closely with the all-Russian union of public associations "Civil Society for Children".

### 3.4 The rights-based approach and the current political context of North West Russia

A rights based approach includes i) an expressed linkage to rights ii) raising levels of accountability by identifying claim holders and duty holders iii) an explicit focus on empowerment and iv) a high level of participation<sup>1</sup>.

In the regional youth policies of Murmansk "civic-legal" training is given priority. In the region more than 30,000 pupils and students take part in programmes like "Young Leaders", "School Councils" and "I – myself". In no less than 187 educational institutions associations have been established, and in 217 schools there are organs of student self-government, according to the regional Committee on Labour and Social Development (Komitet 2008:23). In other words, there are a lot of ongoing activities for SCNiR to link up to.

The approach chosen by SCNiR on rights is low-key. It concentrates on informing about and raising the consciousness about the concept of child rights in general and the CRC in

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<sup>1</sup> Beall, J. et al (undated): *Supporting human rights and governance: a background paper on conceptual and operational approaches*, London School of Economics.

particular. Direct pointing at duty-bearers with accusations of poor performance does not happen. Most likely this is a wise strategy since most Russians, and certainly not only the authorities, are wary of foreign organisations meddling in Russian everyday politics and practices. Being too meddlesome would be detrimental to SCNiR's ability to actually strengthen children rights.

On the other hand, some of the activities carried out as part of the projects, are fairly "toothless". Some of the self-organised groups tend to concentrate on a mixture of handwork and charity combined with some general information campaigns on the UN CRC. This does not differ much from the "uplifting" activities already organised by youth groups in Russia (arranging camps for younger children, helping elderly citizens).

The youth club in Murmansk city district of Abram-Mys emerged as an interesting exception when it arranged a campaign against the cutbacks on the ferry line linking the district to the rest of Murmansk. This was civil society self-organisation combined with a child-rights approach.

Given the fact that SCNiR has become fairly russianised as to its staff and the "stable" of experts drawn on, one could probably try out some more outspoken communication on child rights and some more innovative methods in child self-organisation. Here the organisation could draw on experiences from Norway and other countries.

### 3.5 Using windows of opportunities to put children's issues on the agenda

To what extent is SCNiR able to relate to windows of opportunities to put children's issues on the agenda? Being in an everyday contact with the organs and institutions answering for child welfare, education and penitentiary issues the SCNiR has privileged access to "windows of opportunities". SCNiR keeps a keen eye on the development of relevant policies at local, regional and federal level, which among others is reflected in the Four Year Plan's overview and analysis of the "policy field". SCNiR's close interaction and overview of the field is one of the organisation's

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stronger sides, which give the organisation a good starting-point for contributing stronger for competence-building.

The scope of SCNiR's influence, however, is limited to the regional level of Murmansk and to local level in municipalities where the organisation has projects.

### 3.6 Conclusions

The priority areas are relevant in the contemporary Russian context but could be subsumed under two wider headings, protection and rights of children respectively.

SCNiR works with – not against – the current. This is an insight that should be emphasised since there is a tendency in most “aid” activity to depict a situation in which everything is to the worse and the only (or at least most significant) actor working to improve the situation is the actual NGO in question. Often, within these depictions the bad situation is what makes the intervention relevant. This way of presenting things aims at convincing donors. Norwegian mass media's presentation of children in Russia reflects the picture often provided by the NGO's.

In the case of child welfare support to Russia the justification should be opposite of the one often given. One could argue that SCNiR's work is relevant because the programme is operating in a context where things are changing, where there is a real will to improve. Therefore, the argument could have gone, contributions will make a change.

SCNiR has chosen authorities and public service-deliverers as their partners. In addition SCNiR have two small voluntary organisations as partners and is co-operating with a federation-wide “lobby group” for the diffusion of the Ombudsman institution and an all-Russian union for child-friendly organisations. This combination is well adapted to Russian realities and is conducive to reaching out to the children through the organs and organisations that actually work with children. At the same time civil society institutions are being involved with the SCNiR.

## 4 Results and impacts from the Four Year Plan

This chapter provides an assessment of the implementation of SCNiR's Four Year Plan. What are the results and impacts discernible at this (early) stage? In other words, the focus in this chapter is on results rather than processes. For a more qualitative discussion of results, please see items vi) and vii) in Appendix 1.

### **Methods of registering results**

Results are being registered mainly through SCNiR's own monitoring of activities and documentation of results (more on this in chapter 5). Internal evaluations and public statistics are also being used. The present strategic and administrative evaluation is the first external evaluation of the country programme.

### **The SCNiR's management**

At the beginning of the 2006 – 2009 strategic period, the SCNiR was working on putting adequate administrative structures in place and to put activities in line with SCN's procedures and guidelines.

As outlined in the Four Year Plan, the SCNiR is managed by the Country Director. The work is organised in two departments, for programme activity and administration/finance respectively. Led by the Senior Programme Co-ordinator, four programme co-ordinators together with the assistant/translator are working in a team to develop the programme and the strategic objectives in close co-operation with the Country Director. The management team consists of the Country Director, the Senior Programme Co-ordinator and the Head of Finance.

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## Budget and funding plan for 2006 – 2009

The Four Year Plan envisages a management share of total costs at 29 percent for the period. The foreseen distribution of the budget on each individual strategic objective is as follows: Education 10 percent, Violence and sexual abuse 23 percent, stronger Save the Children 3 percent, children's rights 14 percent, socially marginalised children 31 percent, juvenile justice 18 percent.

### 4.1 How to assess results?

In the following, we will use a simple scheme inspired by Logical Framework Analysis to identify how the causal links are being perceived within the Four Year Plan. Is there a programme theory of the Four Year Plan or intervention logic for each of the individual projects?

#### 4.1.1 Effects and impacts

The objective is to identify the *effects* of the project interventions and possibly also the *impact*. As the Four Year Plan is only two years old at the time of evaluation, looking for impacts on a large scale would be premature. Direct results (output), however, will be identified. Through the case studies (see Appendix 1) possible links from the outputs to outcomes will be sought: How do target groups make use of what they learn/receive through projects? Of course, this will be no more than a model to clarify the mind, and to identify as many steps as possible in the programme's "theory of change". While dealing with the empirical findings we will account for the "chaotic" and unpredictable picture of the real-life programme implementation. The ability to analyse the surroundings and relate to them by influencing or adapting to them is a major quality for good programme and project leaders.

#### 4.1.2 Direct and indirect results

In the reporting systems of Save the Children there is a distinction between direct and indirect results. Operationalising the two concepts is difficult. The SCNiR uses the following logic for calculation of children reached: If a child gets recurrent social services (rehabilitation activities, psychological and social follow-

up services), the child is counted as reached directly. However, as soon as the child has taken part in the awareness-raising activities (workshop, distribution of prevention and awareness brochures), the picture is not that clear. The SCNiR asks itself whether it should be classified as a direct or an indirect result, and what about the effects on the child's siblings? Another example: SCNiR organises a big training course for several social workers from different social centres in the Murmansk region. Should it count vulnerable children that the trained specialist will follow-up better after the received training, as reached indirectly?

## 4.2 The role of the strategy in the daily work of SCNiR

Although this chapter is mainly on results there is nevertheless reason to give some information on process. To what extent has implementation of the Four Year Plan structured the daily work of SCNiR?

There is a project portfolio for each of SCNiR's objectives. All projects relate primarily to one of the objectives, although often they contribute to several of the Four Year Plan's objectives. Each of the project portfolios is handled by one programme co-ordinator. The project co-ordinators are linked up to the thematic advisers in the Head Office, and take part in thematic conferences taking place every other year. In all, the country programme takes part in four thematic networks (violence, child participation, CRC and education). All this contributes to bolstering the identification with the objectives, and leads to specialisation.

Planning and reporting are structured in a logical way following the Four Year Plan. Results are rendered according to the individual strategic objectives. The programme co-ordinators put much emphasis on quantifying results/outputs of the projects they co-ordinate with the partners.

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## 4.3 The results achieved within each of the strategic priorities

As this evaluation is being made mid-term, results are preliminary and “on the way”. It will not, however, be too early to look for outputs and to start investigating the possible effects of the outputs.

### 4.3.1 Fulfilling children’s right to education

Among these projects is a project that provides and upgrades educational facilities and infrastructure for minors in the region’s two detention centres (an example of the crosscutting character shared by many projects, in this case between education and the rights of children in conflict with the law). Another project aims at improving the quality of education for children in a vulnerable suburb of Murmansk, Abram-Mys. Here the quality of education has been improved for more than 120 children, among them a large share of “vulnerable children”. In the town of Apatity a project assists the local authorities in providing quality education for vulnerable youth in an evening school. Altogether 90 children have been reached through this project.

Through the projects the SCNiR has been able to underline the importance of certain issues, that far from being unknown in Russia, nevertheless need some pressure to be taken into full account. SCNiR has contributed through communication on child rights with the teachers involved. The organisation also has underlined the importance of student participation in school affairs. Getting pupils, students, teachers and parents understand the meaning of “child participation” is a particular challenge.

### 4.3.2 Fulfilling the rights of the children to protection against physical and psychological violence and sexual abuse

The strategic objective on protection against physical and psychological violence and sexual abuse used to be self-implemented, i.e. by the SCNiR itself from the start in 2004, but became partner-managed in mid-2006. By mid-2008 SCNiR has six

partners in this strategic area, ranging from the regional Committee on Labour and Social Development to an NGO crisis centre for women.

The most striking output within the priority field is perhaps the large number of specialists that have been trained. The SCNiR has facilitated the training of no less than 1074 specialists in the period 2004-2007. In 2005 – 2007, 1482 children were reached directly, and in 2006 – 2007, altogether 2640 were reached indirectly. The distinction between “direct” and “indirect” in this respect is subtle. Reaching out directly is defined as receiving one phone call to the SOS phone, reintegrating one child, following up one family, offering one consultation or training one specialist. Reaching out indirectly includes for instance receiving a phone call from a parent. In addition, in the years 2006 and 2007 altogether 4308 leaflets or brochures on violence against children were distributed.

The level of precision on this issue is somewhat telling. Every year while making the Annual Report, one programme coordinator is responsible for counting children in cooperation with the programme coordinator in charge of the given project. A decision must be made on what is a direct and indirect result, and what to do when one child take part in more than one activity. For instance, one poster is counted as one measure for one child.

#### 4.3.3 Achieving better results for children through a stronger Save the Children

The administrative streamlining and training of programme coordinators and administrative staff in the country programme have resulted in an organisation that has a solid potential for achieving results. Whereas in many other countries strengthening the organisation means joining forces with other Save the Children programmes in the same country, SCNiR has a strategy of co-ordination with the activities of Swedish and Finnish Save the Children, who do not have offices in Russia. The project activities in Abram-Mys are being supported by Save the Children in Luleå, Sweden as well as by Save the Children in Northern Norway. There are indications that the organisation is perceived as important. The facts that SCNiR is invited in as representatives in advisory councils (see 4.4. below) and that the staff is used as trainers at national conferences are such indications.

#### 4.3.4 Strengthening implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The main aim of this priority area is to strengthen and monitor children's rights in Russia.

The activities have been partly aimed at informing the population, partly at linking the SCNiR up with processes (high-scale workshops and conferences) on children's rights in Russia.

SCNiR has established consultative centres for children and parents with one of their main aims to promote the CRC. The two centres are located in the towns of Monchegorsk and one in Kandalaksha. Informational campaigns have been carried out. 2000 brochures on the UN CRC have been distributed and posters have been published on alcohol-related abuse and violence against children. Child-friendly versions of the CRC have been distributed, and, among others, presented at national conferences in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In 2007 the SCNiR formalised its partnership with the Association of Ombudsmen for Children's Rights. The campaign to establish the Ombudsman institution at regional level is considered by SCNiR to be of strategic importance. Also the All-Russian National Union of Public Associations "Civil Society to children of Russia" has invited SCNiR for closer co-operation.

#### 4.3.5 Fulfilling the rights of children in conflict with the law

The main aim of this priority area is to make sure young people in conflict with the law are treated with dignity and worth, and contribute to their social integration. This is in line with federation level policies to humanise the penitentiary system.

Working with the penitentiary authorities and institutions is challenging for various reasons. One of them is that the penitentiary field almost by definition is "closed" and not always is open to the outside world. Also, promoting the rights and dignity of criminals and suspects must be done with sensitivity to the prevailing attitudes in the penitentiary sector.

Given the challenging character of the priority area, the December 2006 Agreement on cooperation between the SCNiR and the regional Administration of Penalty Execution System must be considered a significant achievement. The agreement makes it possible to carry out concrete activities (see appendix I) among young inmates in the Murmansk region's two pre-trial detention centres.

#### 4.3.6 Fulfilling the rights of marginalised children to social protection and reintegration

In all, in this area 4295 children benefitted from the SCNiR activities in 2006-2007. Reaching out directly here means for instance, providing food, support for doing homework, placing a child in a shelter, treatment against alcohol or drug abuse or to send a child to the soup kitchens run by the Red Cross.

SCNiR's Mobile Street Work (MSW) projects have been incorporated into the Murmansk region's programme "Children of the Kola Far North 2007 – 2010". The MSW project in Arkhangelsk has been supported financially by the city authorities. The MSW projects in the districts of Pechenga and Kola got the status of special departments within the respective Complex Centres for social assistance. This status was awarded them by the regional Committee on Labour and Social Development. Also in Arkhangelsk the MSW project has been made a department within the Centre for Protection of the Rights of Minors. Having the projects incorporated into the permanent structures working with children is an important achievement. On the one hand, it shows the perceived relevance of the project, on the other it secures sustainability and make continuation after the project period more likely.

#### 4.4 Results in the light of the case studies

The case studies presented in Appendix 1 are concurrent to the picture given above, and show that project activities lead to results. There are outputs, and in several cases these outputs are beginning to make an impact. The project activities contribute to raising consciousness about issues that have been somewhat controversial

or under-communicated in the Russian context, like sexual violence against children and the conditions of young people in conflict with the law. In two cases project activities have been made permanent by the authorities, who have established new units within the existing institutional set-up to cover Mobile Street Work.

However, despite the fact there are outputs and even some impacts to be traced mid-term, the close-up case studies give reason to some concern. The interview technique of asking for *the most significant change* (outlined in the bid and Inception Report) proved not to fit very well to this evaluation. Interviewees had difficulties in getting beyond the immediate material improvements that had resulted from the projects. In other words, results as perceived by SCNiR's partners mainly consist in concrete improvement of the material standard. This should give rise to concern for the programme theory of the country programme. Has it really been understood by the partners?

Despite the focus on refurbishment and procurement, the case studies show that project activities have reached out to professionals as well as direct and indirect target groups (e.g. children and parents) in ways that have exposed them to new standards. In order for these outcomes to have an impact, the partners' focus must shift from refurbishment and equipment to raising skills, strengthening attitudes and promoting the principle of child rights.

#### 4.5 SCNiR's position in the Russian policy field of child welfare

The fact that the SCNiR (like the Norwegian People Aid and SOS Children's Village Norway) has been registered with the Ministry of Justice as a foreign NGO in the field of child rights is a sign that it is being considered reliable by the authorities.

The SCNiR staff members have been invited as trainers at the national level seminars arranged by the Association for Ombudsmen, and in fact they are training ombudsmen. SCNiR is in dialogue with UNICEF Russia to whom it provides information. Also the fact that the SCNiR is the only foreign

organisation in the umbrella organisation “Civil Society of Children” should be mentioned.

The SCNiR has been invited to sit in three important advisory councils at regional level:

- Murmansk Regional Public Council under the Government of the Murmansk region
- Public Council under the Police (UVD) of the Murmansk region
- Public Council under the Federal Penalty Execution Service of Russia in the Murmansk region

This offers an opportunity to influence on policy formulation, which complements the organisation’s influence on implementation through the project activities.

## 4.6 Summing up

The meticulous registration of outputs (number of leaflets distributed, number of children in shelter, number of calls to the SOS phone etc) shows that real activities are going on within each of the priority fields. Within a short period of time SCNiR’s partners have been enabled to improve their physical working conditions thanks to SCNiR funding the refurbishing of premises and updating the equipment. This stands out as the main result so far, in particular in the eyes of the partners. In their opinion, as expressed in the interviews, this is the most significant change brought about by the programme.

In addition many practitioners have been trained (trips to seminars elsewhere in Russia have been financed over the programme). Activities in the premises refurbished thanks to SCNiR are in line with the stated objectives. It is therefore possible to conclude that the SCNiR has managed to establish itself firmly project-wise. This holds true for all priority fields. The fact that in some cases new municipal departments and positions have been established much as a result of SCNiR project activities (see Appendix 1) should also be mentioned as a significant result.

Three basic principles stand out in the Four Year Plan. As for the first principle, which is child participation, the SCNiR has been

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able to integrate it into much of its activities and to familiarise its partners with the concept. The inclusion of elements of child participation in many projects is an achievement although it will take time to establish the principle in everyday practices. Some of the activities subsumed under “child participation” could as well have been categorised as “child self-organisation”. Among SCNiR’s many objectives, child participation is probably the one which is most novel to the Russian audience.

The second principle underlying the Four Year Plan – partner-managed projects – will be dealt with in chapter 7 below. The fact that most of SCNiR’s partners are public institutions and authorities facilitates partner-management.

The third basic principle – seeking to influence causes – implies a “political” and analytical approach. SCNiR has been able to position itself among the organisations and institutions pushing for the child right approach in Russia. “Anchoring” and giving legitimacy to the principle and practice of child participation require a lot of ground work in co-operation with like-minded “forces” in Russia. The Four Year Plan offers an extensive and well-written overview of the policy field of Russian child welfare.

Mid-term the results are clearly acceptable and form a firm fundament for the remaining years of the programme period. The results achieved by the SCNiR are as they should be at the current – mid-term – stage. In other words, so far the SCNiR has been preparing the ground for reaching the stated objectives. However, mid-term most of the programme’s results are outputs. This is natural, but mid-term there is a need for the SCNiR to direct its attention to outcomes. The registration of outputs should be routinised, and attention focused on outcomes.

The Four Year Plan is an extensive, but well-organised and well-written document in which challenges are clearly identified and reflected upon. This makes it a potentially very useful document.

## 5 SCNiR's professional and administrative capacity and systems

This chapter will discuss whether SCNiR's administrative and technical capacity and systems are at level with the organisation's strategic ambitions. Are there needs for capacity building?

### 5.1 Professional competence

The staff is predominantly young and with a few exceptions have little practical or theoretical experience prior to the employment by SCNiR. Nevertheless, the coordinators clearly have a firm grasp of what is going on in policy sectors relevant for the priority areas. As for professional skills, the coordinators are willing to learn, but are not themselves leading specialists in their fields. The close contacts with the thematic advisers in the HO also are of great use, but most of the learning is from reading guidelines and booklets from the SCN.

The coordinators' main strength lies in their communicative skills. Communication with partners and target groups is good. Innovative methods and new perspectives are being diffused through the projects by the coordinators, but in doing this they very much have to rely on the professional authority of external specialists. The programme has entered into close co-operation with good professional milieux in St.Petersburg and Moscow for this purpose. The Country Programmes has got a quite good overview of the "child-friendly lobby" of Russia, and has entered into contact with members of this lobby.

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On the whole the Country Programme staff has the necessary skills to operate the projects with the partners, but the coordinators should focus more on conveying competence to the partners.

## 5.2 Administrative capacity

The administrative capacity is satisfactory, and even very good. Operating according to Russian standards is demanding, and the requirements of the HO are no less demanding, but mid-term the administrative staff is managing well. Some training in the Russian Labour Code is needed.

## 5.3 Planning, monitoring and evaluation

By the time of the evaluation planning, monitoring has been put into use although there are some uncertainties as to how to operationalise some of the concepts (see chapter 4.1). There is a relatively clear understanding among the staff of the need to clarify expectations and define indicators at the outset of the projects. SCNiR has improved its ability to distinguish between different types and levels of results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) although the reporting still shows that more could be done to improve precision.

In order to monitor – and improve – performance indicators may be of use. This, however, is relatively complicated in practice. Mid-term the SCNiR staff clearly takes output indicators seriously and take extra trouble to provide precise numbers and figures to the HO. The indicators are clearly operationalised, and the degree of precision is high while “counting children” (expression from SCN’s Handbook).

While counting there is an inherent danger of focusing on aspects that are “countable”. This way there is a danger one starts to count the *number* of children that have received assistance, e.g. from an SOS phone, while it might well have been wise to look into the *quality* of the assistance rendered. After all, this lies at the heart of the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods.

Thinking of interventions as having an equal “weight” might make reporting easy, but is not corresponding with realities. At worst, it might divert the attention and activities towards easy targets: “Why spend time on a difficult case while I could have ticked off three easy cases in stead?” How to “count” a break-through like having the MSW project included into the regional Children of the Kola North Programme? At present, however, there are no signs that the SCNiR staff let their attention be diverted by the current methods of counting.

The assessment of the MSW in 2006 was the SCNiR’s first experience with participatory assessment.

## 5.4 Fund raising

The SCNiR has gradually acquired skills in fund-raising. In 2007 about 50 percent of funds raised were raised by the Country Programme itself. The funds acquired by the Country Programme are additional to the core budget provided by SCN.

The SCNiR communicated directly with the big funding sources, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Barents Secretariat and the Norwegian Ministry of Justice. Unlike other country programmes, the SCNiR does not raise money at home. This is intentional and motivated by a wish not to hamper weaker, domestic associations in their efforts to raise local funds.

In the case of Russia the Country Programme’s ability to approach donors, read their wishes and develop relevant project proposals is perhaps more important than for most other country programmes. The reason is that SCNiR’s donors do not belong to the sector of developmental aid that both SCN and its major donors belong to. In the HO it seems that SCNiR’s donors are relatively unknown except for those directly working with the European projects.

The fact that representatives of the donors tend to visit SCNiR quite often, enables trust and direct communication.

## 5.5 Up-scaling of SCN's activities in Russia?

The Russian Country Programme is relatively small as compared to SCN's country programmes elsewhere. Russia is huge and the programme has been operating almost exclusively in one, peripheral, region of the federation. In this perspective the idea of scaling up has been discussed.

Scaling up should consist in replication of core elements of projects that have been "tried out" in the Murmansk region. Given the arguments presented elsewhere in this report, focus should primarily be on the project components on competence-building.

There are some strong arguments in favour of scaling up. Firstly, as argued above, this is a period of time with particular opportunities to reach Save the Children's objectives. Russia is a country on the move institutionally, and there is an acknowledged need for up-dating skills and competencies in the field of child welfare. Secondly, there is the basic argument based on the principle of economy of scale. Due to the fact that the administrative and professional "apparatus" is in place and experiences have been gained, the costs of establishing new projects will be lower than they were for the initial projects.

Thirdly, the politico-administrative structure of Russia (federation-like) paves the way for horizontal expansion. So far, with a few exceptions concerning Arkhangelsk city, the activities have taken place in Murmansk region. SCNiR's activities are of no less relevance in the remaining 82 Russian federation subjects (regions; republics; federal cities, autonomous districts). Moreover, the federal subjects are quite similar as to institutional set up and regional level legislation. This enables relatively easy replication ("*transliatsiia*") of projects.

Fourthly, there is a need to scale up in order to compensate for the peripheral location of SCNiR. The most efficient way of doing this would probably be to establish some sort of representation in Moscow.

On the condition of secure funding, core activities and projects from the Murmansk region could be replicated elsewhere, e.g. in other federation subjects of the Barents Region. The

administrative capacities of the office in Murmansk are good enough to allow for an up-scaling beyond the region of Murmansk.

In the new federation subjects possibly included in the programme, local co-ordinators should be employed. For administrative matters they would relate to the Murmansk office. For basic professional matters, however, they would need direct access to the thematic advisers in the Oslo HO. Training should be provided from Norway. The co-ordinators in Murmansk would then primarily be advisers on how apply the general principles and to carry out the projects in Russia.

In order to be able to scale up, it would be a good idea to strengthen the ongoing co-operation with Swedish and Finnish Save the Children.

## 5.6 Conclusions

SCNiR is working to follow up on SCN's procedures and guidelines. While trying to harmonise the work in Murmansk with that of SCN as a whole, it is important to find a balance between streamlining with the HO on the one hand and operating appropriately and efficiently in the Murmansk context on the other. SCNiR has managed to strike this difficult balance.

Norwegian financing sources encourage the use of Norwegian specialists for seminars, trainings and exchanges. Although not very cost-efficient due to the costly need for linguistic and institutional translation in this type of settings, this offers good opportunities for professional updating. Inviting the Moscow and St.Petersburg-based specialists already involved into seminars and exchanges with the Norwegians would probably be fruitful and more cost-efficient.

In order to dimension the staff to the programme's level of complexity it might be considered to reduce the number of priority areas. Fewer, but more broadly defined priority areas would make the coordinators work together in bigger teams than today. This would possibly benefit the professional dynamics in the staff. As of now, the "value-added" by the coordinators in each of the priority fields is very much dependent upon the one individual coordinator in charge of the priority.

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There are several reasons why scaling-up might be a good idea, but financial viability should be a precondition.

## 6 The quality of the support from the HO

The Head Office renders quite substantial support and assistance to the country programmes. The ambition is to give support that is sufficient, relevant, systematic, structured and of high quality. This chapter will discuss whether this is the case for the support given to the Country Programme in Russia.

### 6.1 Background

The Country Programme so far has passed through two phases, and it experiences its third phase. The first phase (2002-2004) consisted in gaining entry. This difficult mission was accomplished under the leadership of Bjørg Besteland almost from scratch with sustainable results in a surprisingly short time. When the Country Programme finally was formally established in December 2004 it was standing on quite firm ground in the sense that it was genuinely respected by important duty-bearers in the Murmansk region. The pioneering work (2002-2004) was carried out less tightly supervised and co-ordinated with the HO than what has been the case since.

If 2002-2004 was the period of pioneering work, the next period (2004-2007) was one of consolidation and development of projects, and the staff expanded significantly. This period the

Country Programme was headed by Markus Aksland, who came from the SCN organisation. During this period, streamlining of the Russian activities with the overall SCN activities and modes of operation was given priority. The Four Year Plan was established late 2006.

The third period (2007-2009) is one of implementing the Four Year Plan. This period the Country Programme has been headed by Evgeniia Kamenetskaia, who apart from having worked in the Country Programme had no background from the SCN. The ambitions of the Country Programme and Head Office alike is to communicate and co-ordinate tightly.

As argued in this evaluation, the success of SCNiR hinges on its ability to stimulate professional updating and innovation within the region's child protection sector. Since the Country Programme's staff is in need of training and constant updating to be ahead in the sector, its co-operation with the HO and the thematic advisers in particular is pivotal.

## 6.2 HO's attention to Russia

Apart from the regional director and other staff with a background from the country programme in Russia, the HO is not very much attentive to the Russian case. Save the Children Norway forms part of two strong policy sectors in the Norwegian context, the child protection sector and the sector of developmental aid. As for the international activities, the attention is directed towards the Norad system, which has practically no overlaps with the financing sources of SCNiR (the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Secretariat, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Justice). Most senior staff in the HO knows whom to call in the developmental aid sector to get information or to explain a matter, whereas the Murmansk office would have to explain whom to call (or call themselves).

## 6.3 HO's follow-up of the Murmansk office

The country programme in Russia is a small programme in a huge country. Moreover, the programme is located in the peripheries of

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the country. With its 318, 000 inhabitants Murmansk ranks as number 56 among Russia's cities size-wise. The Murmansk region has 847,000 inhabitants (92,2 percent live in towns).

The SCNiR country director is very young compared to the decision-makers she has to deal with in Murmansk and at federation level. Moreover, she does not have a background from the Russian policy sector of child protection. Although doing her job very competently, the Russian focus on "weight" and status makes her need institutional backing from the HO on special occasions.

SCN's European projects have no regional co-ordinator as it used to have. In stead one person combines the functions as regional director (RD) and regional co-ordinator (RC), from May 2008 also covering the Middle East. The Regional Director has a heavy workload, and at times does not have the time to follow up as much as needed.

The Country Director has much delegated responsibility from the HO, but keeps in contact through an average of 2-3 e-mails a day. The communication between the Regional Director and Country Director is relaxed, open and frank.

The Country Director can draw on weekly "phone meetings" usually lasting approximately one hour. The Country Director then makes a report of the preceding week's work and presents the plans for the upcoming week. Every month there is a phone conference between all regional coordinators in Europe and the Regional Director. Every quarter there is a phone conference involving the Heads of Finance (HO and SCNiR) and advisers from the HO in addition to the regional director and country director. This latter meeting is formalised (forms have been filled in on beforehand), and lasts for one to two hours.

The administrative tools offered by the SCN HO, like guidelines and the Programme Handbook are taken very seriously in the Russian country programme. For that reason the programme staff has discovered some formulations in the text that are not fully comprehensible (e.g. on "How to count children"). In fact, the staff would have liked to see a standardisation and streamlining of the criteria for result registration in order to enable comparison between country programmes (see chapter 4.1.2).

The country programme submits monthly financial reports and quarterly prognoses, and the Agresso software makes it possible for the HO to monitor the country programme's transactions. In addition to all this, the HO has access to the everyday activities of the country programme through memos from trips and even work-related lunches. In other words, the administrative follow-up and "control" aspects of the relationship between Oslo and Murmansk are satisfactory.

#### 6.4 HO support to capacity-building

The SCNiR staff takes part in four thematic networks within SCN (violence; child participation; UN CRS; education). Through the thematic networks the staff working in one of the four specific thematic areas gets access to the HO's thematic advisers and to colleagues in country programmes elsewhere. The Russian programme coordinators have benefitted professionally from these contacts. In 2007 a new appendix was introduced in the Annual Plans indicating what thematic support the country programme would need from the HO the next year (why and when).

There are, however, some particular challenges for the HO in offering adequate assistance to building capacities in the Russian country programme. This is mainly due to two factors. First, due to its lack of familiarity with the Russian context, the HO is not fully able to make its own, independent assessment of the professional capacity of the Russian programme coordinators. Second, the thematic advisers are attuned to the discourse and institutional set-up of developing countries, and at times, wisely, seem to hesitate somewhat when confronted with the Russian context. Therefore, the HO seems to have difficulties in taking a pro-active role in building professional capacities of the Russian programme coordinators.

#### 6.5 The role of SCN Northern Norway in Russia

Traditionally, the commitment to co-operation with Russia has been stronger in Northern Norway than in other parts of Norway.

This tendency was perhaps most prevalent during the Russian crisis of the 1990's. Still today, local members of SCN in Northern Norway show strong interest in Russian developments. Teachers are strongly represented among the members, and through contacts with Russian immigrant parents and children they keep up the interest in Russian matters. The youth club project in Abram-Mys (see Appendix I) is financed through funds raised by the members from Northern Norway. An exchange project between pupils and teachers in Abram-Mys and Hadsel (Northern Norway) is being planned.

In the North the conditions are favourable for co-operation with Russia. The Norwegian Barents Secretariat encourages (and supports financially) organisations and milieux in the Norwegian part of the Barents Region co-operating with counterparts in the Russian areas of the Barents Region.

Nevertheless, traditional people-to-people and get-to-know-each-other-across-the-border activities are not what the Russian country programme needs now. The SCN office in Tromsø should concentrate on assisting the Russian programme co-ordinators getting even more competent professionally. Given SCN's membership profile, members clearly could play an important role in building competence together with the SCNiR staff. Also as fund-raisers of projects in Russia members are important.

## 6.6 Conclusion

Being a small programme located in the periphery of an enormous country without traditions for receiving aid, SCNiR stands out as a "strange bird" in the SCN organisation. Apart from those directly involved with European programmes, the HO staff lacks competence in working with Russia comparable to their competence in working with developing countries in the South. Nonetheless, administratively the assistance rendered from the HO is adequate. Communication on administrative matters is good.

In order to fulfil its mission the SCNiR must take the position as a professional leading milieu on child welfare and child rights in the Murmansk region. In order to help the country programme achieve this position, the HO must intensify the thematic

competence-building of the Russian programme co-ordinators. Direct co-operation with Northern Norwegian professionals could form part of this.

In fact, there is reason to consider linking the Russian country programme closer to SCN's Domestic Programme. This would link the country programme to stronger professional milieux. Also, closer contacts with SCN's Norwegian youth organisation, PRESS, could prove to be useful given SCNiR's focus on participation, advocacy and empowerment.

## 7 The quality of the partner co-operation

This chapter will assess the current mode of partner co-operation. Are there lessons to learn from? How can the collaboration with partners and key national actors be improved?

### 7.1 Work with the partners

Working through partners is relatively new with the country programme. The actual partners are the result of a screening process with the aim of finding the more energetic centres and institutions in the region. Input from the regional administration was taken into account. The selection process started in 2006. Until then only one project had been partner managed.

The activities carried out by SCNiR and the partners are all listed in the Activity Plan that is set up for all projects. Each activity is defined with a timeframe and responsible person. All partners

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submit the Activity Plan at the same time annually in time to form part of the country programme's Annual Plan that must be approved by the HO.

The partners set up a draft budget in co-operation with the project's programme co-ordinator. All partner accountants are trained by the country programme's Head of Finance. The auditing is made by a St. Petersburg-based firm with field office in Murmansk.

In the project implementation phase, the partner is responsible. But the programme co-ordinator follows up, among others by going to all major events within the given project.

Partners report quarterly according to a specific format developed on the basis of the funding agencies' forms.

The routinisation of the administrative co-operation with the partners makes it possible for the country programme to support an increasing number of partners as long as the new partners are of more or less the same type as the present one, i.e. authorities and institutions with a strong administrative capacity.

So far, phasing-out strategies have not been elaborated, but should be considered in the next strategy period.

## 7.2 Partner internalisation of objectives

Mid-term the attention of the partners was more on the material support they had received than on the objectives of the co-operation. While interviewed the partners in general were more eager to tell about the refurbishing and equipment brought in by SCNiR than on innovation and competence-building. In some cases this is fully understandable as the contributions are significant. In Apatity, the partner school got 4 times the annual operating budget from SCNiR and in Abram-Mys two times.

What happens in the next phase (2008-2009), therefore, is of utmost importance. In the worst case the next phase will consist in renewed demand for material support. Very much depends on the country programme's ability to make partners want the next phase to be one of competence-building and innovation.

### 7.3 Type of partners

SCNiR's partners are predominantly municipal and regional authorities and institutions responsible for child welfare issues, notably the regional committee of education, organ of guardianship, the regional committee of labour and social development, organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, municipalities, municipal departments of culture and youth, municipal organisations (i.e. institutions under the municipality), like youth social centre, a centre for minor's rights protection.

By choosing mainly the duty-bearers as partners, the country programme has avoided the pitfall of many foreign NGO's in Russia, consisting in insufficient co-ordination with the responsible authorities in a given policy field. Most likely, the key to results (implantation and diffusion of new methods and approaches) is close co-operation and adaptation to the relevant authorities. This way results for children are made both on short and long term, and sustainability is likely to be secured.

One of SCN's general objectives is to strengthen civil society. Several among the country programme's projects in Russia include elements of civil society strengthening, among other by support to child and youth self-organising and consciousness-raising on child rights.

### 7.4 Potential new partners

The country programme has a good overview of potential partners in the Murmansk, and has included many of them as partners. The personal factor is of importance. In each partner institution there must be at least one person who is ready to be a motive power for project implementation.

The fact that the partners are regional and municipal authorities and institutions enables smooth replication from municipality to municipality and region to region (e.g. from Murmansk to Arkhangelsk). The partners will be more or less identical, or at least very recognisable. In Arkhangelsk region several actors are interested in cooperation. The city authorities of Arkhangelsk are quite child-friendly and innovative.

## 7.5 Conclusion

SCNiR's partners are strategically important. Working through municipal and regional authorities and institutions is a short-cut to creating results for children because these institutions are duty-bearers and service-deliverers. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the partners find professional company with the SCNiR programme co-ordinators relevant. The development of administrative routines between the partners and the country programme seems to be well in hand.

## 8 Cost-efficiency

The aim of this chapter is to assess the cost-efficiency of SCNiR's operation comparing resources with achieved results, and to identify potential areas of improvements. Here, the question is not whether the project activities have effects or not, but whether the relation between effects and costs are reasonable. SCN does not have a unified method of assessing cost-efficiency.

### 8.1 Resources and ambitions

In 2007, the country programme had 5 million NOK at its disposal, of which the core budget was 2.5 million and another 2.5 million NOK was country-programme fund-raising (CPF). Given the ambitious objectives of the programme – among them bringing in new ways of thinking, innovating methods, and influencing causes – the sum is modest.

## 8.2 Costs and objectives

Cost-efficiency has to do with spending money on the things that cause most effect as compared to alternative ways of spending the money. It also has to do with having the right institutions do the things they are best at. Carrying out projects through international NGO's is costly compared to a situation in which, e.g. regional authorities initiated and financed projects. Therefore, strict demands must be made on international NGO's ability to bring about beneficial innovation – and make innovation strike roots and spread in the real-life professional and institutional context into which the NGO has been invited.

Let us take a look at how money was spent in 2007 within the projects described in Appendix 1 below. The figures are based on the audited financial report. The percentage spent on equipment will be identified.

### **Centre for minors' rights protection in Arkhangelsk city**

A total 1,095,445 rubles (242,000 NOK) was spent on this project in 2007. 287,000 rubles (63,500 NOK) were spent on seminars and training of the staff and 219,000 rubles (48,000 NOK) on trips, activities and food for the children. The rest of the expenditures was on equipment, like a multimedia projector, computers, equipment for the playground and the like.

### **Social and legal support for children in conflict with the law in Apatity city**

Due to delays in actual spending the figures here refer to the annual budget of the project. Here, the whole budget was on equipment. The water heating equipment made up 690,000 (152,000 NOK) rubles of the total 897,000 rubles (198,000 NOK). Given the fact that the whole pre-detention centre was under reconstruction, there is reason to ask whether material support was SCNiR's most cost-efficient niche.

### **The project on preventive and supportive measures against violence towards children in Monchegorsk town**

Out of a total 450,000 rubles (99,000) – 237,000 rubles (52,000 NOK) were spent on equipment, like a tape recorder, video equipment, a computer, a printer and a scanner. Interestingly, also

the expenditure for the software programme “Konsul’tant+” that gives updated access to all Russian legislation was paid for by the project.

### **School of equal opportunities in Apatity town**

Almost all expenditures in this project are on equipment and refurbishment. Out of a total 850,000 rubles (188,000 NOK) – 21,000 (4,600 NOK) is spent on cultural and educational activities and 40,000 (8,800 NOK) on training programmes of teachers. Like in other projects, money from SCNiR is spent on computers, printers and the like.

### **Promoting the UN CRC in Kandalaksha town:**

Out of a total 393,500 rubles (870,000 NOK) – 73,000 (16,000 NOK) was spent of “activities for children” and 15,000 (3,300 NOK) on “staff training”. The remaining rubles were spent on computers, a fax machine, stationery, a desk for the staff, and digital camera and the like.

### **Mobile Street Work in Kola town**

Out of the total expenditure of 1,511,000 rubles (334,000 NOK) – 194,000 rubles (43,000 NOK) were spent on activities for children and 30,000 (6,600 NOK) rubles on psychological and social support to children and families who had experienced a crisis or were in difficulties. The remaining sum was spent on a vehicle, a garage, fuel, stationery, and even uniforms of the staff.

### **Discussion**

Although, as shown in chapter 4 the preliminary results are satisfactory, there is reason to question the cost-efficiency of supplementing the authorities in equipping the local and regional service suppliers. When assessing cost-efficiency one must look for alternative uses of the funds. Alternative use of SCNiR’s 5 million NOK directly on competence-building would have been more cost-efficient simply because SCNiR is in a relatively better position to “compete” with the authorities on that issue than on provision. It is on competence-building that SCNiR has its comparative advantage.

The financing of computers, cameras, “Konsul’tant +”, stationery et cetera has been justified by SCN and SCNiR by referring to its

“door-opening” functions. This argument should be used with caution. The expressed need for “door-openers” is probably inversely proportional to the genuine interest of a partner in building his/her competence. Cost-efficient selection of partners should take this into account.

Moreover, if SCNiR continues its practice of massive material support to the partners, and to possible new partners in the future, there is a need to establish a water-proof system to assure donors that there is no “double financing” of equipment by the SCNiR and the authorities. It is highly questionable whether this would be a cost-efficient use of SCNiR’s scarce administrative resources.

### 8.3 Conclusion

Are resources managed in a cost-effective way in order to achieve the expected results? Having a staff of ten and a number of partners eager to use project funds on material refurbishing and equipment, the sum left for competence-building, innovation and activities to address causes is under pressure. The partners’ audited financial reports for 2007 shows that the expenses on equipment dominate among the items.

Mid-term the programme is not unambiguously cost-efficient. Cost-efficiency is related to comparative advantages. In the Russian context, other actors may easily fulfil the function of financing material refurbishing, excursions, computers and equipment. In fact, this is being done on a large scale by the relevant authorities already, although not as fast and unbureaucratic as SCNiR’s partners would have preferred. In order to become a fully cost-efficient operation by the end of the Four Year Plan period, the country programme should cultivate its niche, which is to operate as a bridgehead for the introduction and dissemination of the attitudes, perspectives, insights, skills and methods developed by the international Save the Children movement. The country programme makes use of Russian expertise from St. Petersburg and Moscow. This is certainly cost-efficient.

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## 9 Conclusions and recommendations

In a relatively short period of time, the country programme has established projects in all priority fields. The projects are generally highly replicable. SCNiR helps public institutions deliver better services. Partly the country programme helps them offer the same services better, partly to offer new types of services.

The partners have been linked up to centres of competence in Moscow and St. Petersburg, among others through participation in seminars and trainings. The use of good Russian expertise is very cost-efficient, and it allows for direct follow-up by project partners. Moreover, the country programme and its partners are connected to emerging pro-child advocacy coalitions.

In stead of inventing civil society organisations, SCNiR wisely have chosen municipal and regional authorities and institutions – duty-bearers – as their partners. This makes it likely that results for children will be achievable within the Four Year Plan period. Also sustainability is likely to develop thanks to the choice of partners. In a couple of cases, projects already have been made ordinary units within the municipal partner organisations.

In its concrete activities, the country programme is very well adapted to current policy priorities in Murmansk and Russia in general. It is also well harmonised with the actual working methods being used in Russia. This makes the SCNiR get “in mesh” with “realities”. This is very good. It is, however, necessary to make sure SCNiR “adds value” contributing to Save the Children’s (and Russian authorities’) stated objectives (child rights and participation, anti-violence etc).

In sum, the country programme is where it should be mid-term, but this certainly is not where is ought to be at the end of the Four

Year Plan. There are, in fact, several challenges ahead for the country programme.

### **Competence-raising is needed, not material support**

The country programme has a focus on economic misery which is sympathetic. Distress is still easily discernible in Russia. The economic boom of the last years has not reached out to all, and poverty is a reality for many inhabitants, not least in rural and semi-urban areas. Families with children are more likely to be poor than other households. Therefore, there is no doubt there is a need for material improvements targeting children.

However, at times, one can get the impression that the country programme is more motivated by the wish to relieve social suffering than stimulating development of the child welfare sector. We have argued that the mere fact that there is poverty does not necessarily make all material assistance from foreign NGOs conducive to sustainable improvements. The problem arises when the funding organisation's own competence – and potential “value added” – primarily is awareness-raising and competence-building.

Material support is naturally welcome among receivers (partners and target groups), but also among givers because it is easy to give. Therefore, material assistance is rarely contested or challenged. This makes it necessary to adopt an external perspective on the phenomenon. On the one hand, material support is good because it reaches its target groups fast, and when it is well managed it benefits the target groups immediately, like in the case where SCNiR has provided hot water to the cells of a detention centre, pc's to a school or refurbishing the premises of a youth club.

On the other hand, assistance from outside often has some side-effects that are counterproductive to the objectives of the co-operation. In order to identify possible side-effects it is necessary to take a closer look at the processes that lead to the material assistance finally being given. First of all, as seen from the point of view of the receiver, the assistance is usually “easy come”. There is no mobilisation of pressure groups, institutional actors, representatives of particular professions – in short “advocacy coalitions” – behind it. Material improvements suddenly manifest themselves without any links to prior mobilisation of “pro-child” forces from below or inside the actual country or community in

which the assistance is received. Therefore, the incitements for people to organise, pressure and struggle within their own political and institutional context for child friendly politics may be weakened. What matters is to lobby foreign “donors” rather than to change policy priorities at home. This is certainly not conducive to sustainability, and even less so to the development of civil society.

Secondly, rendering material support has effects on the giving organisation’s capacity to give. While setting out to provide material support the giving organisation must expect the receiver’s attention to be on the material support and less on e.g. capacity-building elements of the co-operation. This is only natural as the mind tends to catch the concrete and immediately measurable more easily than more abstract phenomena, like awareness-raising and competence-building. This tendency seems to be strong even in cases when the receiver is of the opinion that competence-building is what they first of all need.

Nevertheless, Russia is in need of modernising several policy sectors, among them the sector of child welfare. Here there is an acknowledged need for new attitudes, perspectives and working methods, in other words the core competence of Save the Children. *SCNiR is, therefore, more needed in Russia because of the fact that the country is improving than because it is miserable.*

**Recommendation:** The country programme should take measures to avoid ending up as a fund for child-friendly refurbishments and procurement. In stead it should cultivate its identity as a competence-centre. The remaining period of the Four Year Plan must focus sharply on attitudes, perspectives and competence. Material support should only be provided on the condition that it is really needed to improve attitudes, perspectives and competence. In case similar material support is likely to come from Russian federal, regional or municipal sources – even at a smaller scale or later stage – partners should wait for this to happen.

### **Handling the Russian *Sonderfall***

Within the SCN context the Russian country programme is a particular case, not belonging either to the aid sector not to the Norwegian child protection sector. The programme has its own

financing sources separate from the sources financing developmental projects in the South.

Russia is a well-structured country, with an elaborated legal framework, strong and self-confident administrative institutions, financial mechanisms and professional traditions. Moreover, the Russian economy has improved considerably the last seven-eight years. Russia is an upper-middle income country, and member of G8. The country is an increasingly significant contributor to the multilateral aid system.

In this respect Russia offers diametrically opposite working conditions than those offered in sub-Saharan Africa, or even in parts of the Western Balkans. Russia is a country where Save the Children can expect results in the relatively short term.

An updated analysis of Russian realities is required. International NGO's dependent on fund-raising may have an inducement to paint a gloomy picture of the countries where they work.

Recommendation: The HO's capacity to follow-up the Russian country programme should be strengthened personnel-wise (e.g. by a position as regional co-ordinator to the Europe and Middle East Section). The possibility to establish closer links to SCN's Domestic Programme should be considered.

### **Scaling up**

The Russian Country Programme is a relatively small programme in an undoubtedly big country. Russia is in a period of professional and administrative modernisation, and there is a willingness to learn between regions. SCNiR has made considerable investments in establishing itself, and replication of projects is likely to be less costly. So far, the SCNiR has very good experiences from operating in the region of Arkhangelsk.

Recommendation: On the condition that it is financially viable, SCNiR should scale up its activities and establish projects in other regions of Russia. Also, it is necessary to strengthen SCNiR's presence in Moscow, preferably by some sort of representation.

### **Reporting should be improved**

Although there is a very positive development in the country programme when it comes to reporting skills, there is a need to emphasise a few aspects.

Recommendations: a) Objectives should be formulated briefly and concisely and not be a mere listing of the activities planned. And activities should be described in more precise terms. Calling them just “activities” or “carrying out work” without specifying or suggesting what kind of activities or work should not be considered satisfactory. This kind of formulations falls into the error of neglecting the importance of looking for the logics or mechanisms that change consist of.

b) There should be fewer activities (objectives) under each project, and activities should be on issues where SCNiR can contribute with “value added”. SCNiR’s character as a “financing source/foundation” should be de-emphasised and attention should be concentrated on its functions as a “competence pool”.

c) There is a need to work on project descriptions to distinguish between objectives, activities and expected results. In several project descriptions these are indistinguishable, in fact identical. The objective is A, the activity is “activities to reach A” and the expected results are “activities to reach A have been organised”. After having read this, the reader is none the wiser. What exactly is it that is going to be carried out? Luckily, by reading other (i.e. later) project documentation it is possible to put bits and pieces together and get a picture. However, the project description is the first eye of the needle and requirements here should not be lax. The whole point of a project description is to prove that the project holder is thinking straight about the future activities.

d) The SCN should go through its definitions of direct and indirect effects in order to make reporting less time-consuming for programme co-ordinators and to make reports comparable between country programmes.

### **More precise identification of “value added”**

Closely linked to the task of improving reporting there is a need to be more precise on what value the country programme actually is adding. On the one hand, it is very good that the country

programme's projects are closely interlinked with activities already going on in the partner organisations. On the other hand, this requires that the country programme elucidates what extra value it adds. As of now, in many cases the activities carried out would possibly have been carried out anyway only at a smaller scale, less well equipped and perhaps with fewer references to state-of-the-art. This makes the *number* of children that have received assistance or follow-up a very imprecise indicator of the effects of the country programme's contribution.

Recommendation: The HO and the country programme should start a discussion on how to measure "value added".

### **Link Norwegian and Russian expertise**

The fact that Russian experts are being used for project support is very positive. This is cost-efficient because experts, programme co-ordinators and partners can communicate directly, and they can contact each other on the phone or by e-mail for follow-up information. Moreover, Russian experts know how to suggest measures that are directly applicable in the Russian context.

Norwegian financing sources encourage the use of Norwegian specialists for seminars, trainings and exchanges. Although not very cost-efficient due to the costly need for linguistic and institutional translation in this type of settings, bringing in Norwegian experiences and skills has proved to be interesting.

Recommendation: The co-operation with Russian experts in Moscow and St. Petersburg is very important for competence-building and programme implementation. Therefore, co-operation with Russian expert milieux should be given priority in the future as well. This should be combined with similar contacts with Norwegian expertise. Russian and Norwegian experts should be brought together through SCNiR project seminars and other events in which partners and programme coordinators also take part.

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SCNiR: Mobile Street Work Final Evaluation Report March 2007

SCNiR: Opening Pandora's Box together in the Murmansk region  
– Final evaluation report on the project Child Sexual Abuse (by  
Elizabeth Jareg and Elena Kiryanova)

SCNiR: Various project descriptions

SCNiR: Various project-wise activity plans

SCNiR: Various project-wise audited financial reports

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# Appendix 1

## Case studies of selected projects

### **Mobile Street Work Arkhangelsk, Maiskaia Gorka city district (project 980171)**

#### i) The background of the project

The project is inspired by the MSW project in Murmansk.

The Centre for Minors' Rights Protection covers one of Arkhangelsk's city districts, and is one of four similar city district centres in the town (that has altogether 9 city districts). It has six departments, one of them for MSW. In addition to MSW, the centre is covering among others children's rights against violence, post-internat adaptation (18-23 years old youth from orphanages), and socialisation of children in conflict with the law. The centre also receives children in need of shelter and offers temporary stay. Altogether 32 children lived in the centre at the time of the field visit, and annually more than 1000 children are helped by the centre. The centre employs about 100 staff.

#### ii) The partners in the project

Municipality of Arkhangelsk and Centre for Minors' Rights Protection (municipal organisation).

#### iii) The objectives of the project

The MSW project is innovative in the sense that it brings outreach social work into the child welfare sector of Arkhangelsk. Earlier the social worker entered into contact with the children only after they had received information from school about skipping school

or from the police or committee on minors about behavioural problems or crimes. The project focuses on prevention and reaches out to children who have a home to go to, but who spend much time out in the streets in bad company. According to the project leader, the underlying objective of the project is to prevent “social orphanhood”, the Russian expression for children growing up with parents who have been deprived of parental rights.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The new approach brought in through the project is to be out in the streets with the children. Twice a week, mostly after school hours two social workers go together for a “raid”. They observe, assess and enter into contact with the children. The first step is to give them the phone number of the centre.

Earlier the social workers reached the children via their families. The attitudinal change is reflected in the fact that the social workers now talk about their help to the children as follow-up, and not patronage as they did earlier. The centre works closely with the commission on minors.

At the time of the field visit, the staff followed up 20 children. In all, the MSW department’s database had 163 registered children.

The material support rendered by the SCNiR has allowed for the acquisition of computers to be used by the children visiting the centre, the refurbishing and equipment of a washing room, sport equipment for outdoor activities.

The contacts with foreign and other Russian professional milieux working in the field of child welfare have been welcome among the staff (exchange of experience; learning; new energy).

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them

The main unexpected event was that some personnel left while the head of the project went on maternity leave. The staff is quite new and most of those who were involved from the start have quit the centre for jobs elsewhere. This is a recurrent problem for SCNiR activities. People who have been trained leave their positions.

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vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts

A basic result is the fact the city authorities are supportive of the MSW methodology, and have established a separate MSW unit in the Centre for Minors' Rights Protection.

According to the 2007 Annual Status Report, the direct result of the project is that 71 male street teenagers and 20 female street teenagers have been followed up by the centre. The centre now terms this follow-up (soprovozhdenie) in stead of patronazh. Also the principle of the children's consent to co-operate has been strengthened through the project.

The indirect results consist in 20 families having been reached and 9 university students majoring in social work. In addition 153 street teenagers have been reached through awareness raising and preventive activities.

In close co-operation with the municipal authorities, the centre has entered into contact with two other city districts in order to replicate basic elements of the project.

vii) Assessment

Experiences from the Murmansk region and Arkhangelsk shows that by now MSW is easily accepted by the authorities, it is moderately innovative and not too difficult to implement.

The project clearly brings in innovative working methods, although on a modest scale. The fact that it forms part of a "cluster" of MSW projects makes it robust since it can draw on experiences gained by the SCNiR. Moreover, the project is an example of SCNiR expanding beyond the Murmansk region into another region. Replication of projects in other Russian federation subjects is one of the ways SCNiR's activities might become more cost-efficient.

The staff told the co-operation with SCNiR was useful not only for the material support rendered, but also for the opportunities offered through the co-operation to get in touch with other specialists elsewhere in Russia.

*Sources:*

Interview with the head of the centre, the project leader and staff.  
Conversation with children in the centre.

Annual Status Report 2007.

## **Promoting children's participation in Abram-Mys (project number 980162)**

### i) The background of the project

Abram-Mys is a city sub-district (mikroraion) in Murmansk, located on the Western bank of the bay and suffering from poor public transport. Abram-Mys has about 2000 inhabitants of which about 390 are children and is one of the most deprived mikroraions of Murmansk after the local ship repair yard was shut down. An orphanage is located in the community, and 30 percent of the students at the secondary school live in the orphanage. The local House of Culture (Maiák/Lighthouse) inherited from the Soviet days offer premises to various child and youth activities, like dancing classes and a theatre group as well as hobby groups (kruzhki). SCNiR's project on supporting child-generated activities, more precisely a youth club, takes place in the House of Culture.

SCNiR's activities in Abram-Mys are conducted in close co-operation with SCN member groups in Northern Norway and with Finnish and Swedish Save the Children.

The co-operation between the local community of Abram-Mys and SCNiR started in summer 2006. The activities are divided into three projects. In addition to the one on child participation, there is a project on quality education (90 percent of the school's computers have been changed, the school is connected to the internet, the library stock has been refreshed and the equipment and classroom for lessons in physics have been improved) and one project on direct support to marginalised children. This means that the project on participation take place in a positive atmosphere.

### ii) The partners in the project

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The local secondary school (no. 16) and the House of Culture “Maiák”, and the youth club.

iii) The objectives of the project

The project aims at empowering children to become able to identify areas that could be improved and organise activities to achieve improvements.

The target group is identified as “vulnerable children and youth and their families living in difficult life-situations”.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The activities under the project mainly consist in establishing the material pre-conditions for activities to take place. The club room has been refurbished (according to plans made by the club members themselves). Also the already existing activity groups have benefitted from SCNiR’s material support.

The project differs somewhat from the other case projects in its involvement of local member organisations in Northern Norway as well as the Swedish and Finnish branches of Save the Children.

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them

No such occurrences.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts

The preconditions for self-organised child and youth activities are in place thanks to SCNiR, and several self-organised activities have taken place through the youth club. At the time of the field visit altogether 33 children and young people went regularly to the club.

vii) Assessment

The Soviet emphasis on standardised, “upbringing” culture has left behind a significant infrastructure of among others houses of culture all over Russia. The general picture even in the 2000’s is that culture has low priority when it comes to funding, and many places the cultural infrastructure (house of culture and libraries are gradually getting more and more dilapidated). At the same time, the houses of culture and local libraries are natural meeting places

for children and young people. Therefore, they can be seen as strategically important for SCNiR and other child-friendly actors. In this perspective, the material support rendered by the SCNiR is well targeted.

In many towns and cities most of this infrastructure is well kept or taken over by Some of them are

*Sources:*

Interview with the director of “Maiák” House of Culture and director of secondary school no. 16.

Interview with the chairman and board members of the youth club

Conversations with club members.

Conversation with activity instructors (teachers)

Annual Status Report 2007.

## **Social and legal support of children in conflict with the law in Apatity city (project 980183)**

### i) The background of the project

There are two pre-trial detention centres (slédstvennyi izoliátor) in Murmansk region. Pre-trial detention center no. 2 is SCNiR’s partner in the project supporting young people in conflict with the law. The centre is located in Apatity and covers the southern parts of the Murmansk region. The premises of the pre-trial detention centre used to be a prison and were built in the 1950’s. A new, modern building is under construction financed by the federal budget. The number of inmates and their profile vary from day to day. On the day of the evaluation team’s visit, there were 321 inmates, of which 27 women and 16 young people in the age 14-18. The 16 young people sat in four cells. The young people are separated from the adults.

Like other public institutions, the pre-trial detention centre is under supervision by the “prokurór”, public prosecutor. Among others the food, light and temperatures are controlled. Also the regional administration’s department for human rights has an officer supervising penitentiary institutions.

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The project is a result of the Programme of Co-operation 2007-2009 between the Russian and Norwegian Ministries of Justice.

ii) The partners in the project

Pre-trial detention center no. 2, Apatity.

iii) The objectives of the project

The project is a part of SCNiR' work to fulfil the rights of children in conflict with the law to be treated with dignity and worth and contribute to their social integration. It fits well into the pre-trial detention centre's endeavours to abide by the UN CRC and the Council of Europe's recommendations, among others on the right to education while in prison or detention. The centre aims at reducing the time the inmates spend in the cells.

The project targets young people aged 14 to 18 who stay in the pre-trial detention centre of Apatity. The project aims to improve their conditions in the detention centre, to improve the educational facilities, provide better psychological rehabilitation, to improve the prevention of infectious diseases and to integrate the UN CRC values among the young inmates.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The activities are a mixture of infrastructural improvements and capacity development. The young people have been asked (through questionnaires) what they would like to see improved in the pre-trial detention centre.

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them

No such problems have occurred.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts

According the 2007 Annual Report, altogether 50 young people have been reached.

In economic terms, by Summer 2008, the major part of the project has consisted in providing hot water to the cells. In addition a class-room has been refurbished and equipped with a TV and computer. Also the gym has been refurbished and equipped by

SCNiR. In order to improve the inmates' health, SCNiR has provided vitamins as a supplement to the diet.

Capacity-building has been carried out. Training is provided by a scholar from the Pomor State University in Arkhangelsk, among others in how to use drawings and music. In addition, the centre's pedagogue and psychologist have been trained in difficult conversations by the well reputed psychological institute IMATON in St. Petersburg.

#### vii) Assessment

The pre-trial detention centre is clearly in need of upgrading. This applies both to the physical standards and the psycho-social conditions under which the young (and adult) inmates live under. The ongoing construction of a new building, for which the federal government provided 60 million RUR, is a huge step towards better living conditions. SCNiR's contribution to the physical upgrading is another contribution that inmates already benefit from. The focus on basic, physical challenges is reflected in the centre's own priority list, on which food is most important, followed by housing conditions and then education.

#### *Sources:*

Interviews with staff.

Conversation with three young inmates.

Annual Status Report 2007.

### **Preventive and supportive measures against violence towards children in Monchegorsk town (project 980130)**

#### i) The background of the project

As a part of contemporary Russian family policies shelters for young people are established within local centres for social services. In Monchegorsk the shelter was established in September 2004. The shelters provide complex rehabilitation for children and their families being in difficult life situations. Normally between 15 and 20 children are living in the shelter.

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Violence in families and against children has been under-focused in Russia, but lately the issue has come more to the forefront. The municipality of Monchegorsk pays attention to the problem.

Project duration November 2006 to December 2009.

ii) The partners in the project

The Regional Committee of Labour and Social Development and municipality of Monchegorsk. SCNiR's immediate partner in the project is the Complex Centre of social service to the people of Monchegorsk town. Within the centre there is a shelter for children and young people. The staff and the young people carry out the project together.

iii) The objectives of the project

The project forms part of SCNiR's work on fulfilling the rights of children to protection against physical and psychological violence. The project aims at raising awareness against violence against children in Monchegorsk as well as improving capacities to deal with victims of violence.

The project defines a relatively wide target group. On a general level the project targets "children belonging to vulnerable groups", and more specifically children and teenagers in the age group 7 to 18 years old, who have been exposed to violence, and their families. More specifically the project targets children and young people living temporarily in the shelter under the Complex Centre. The Monchegorsk population at large is targeted with informational activities.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The plan has been reach out to 35 boys and 40 girls who are victims of violence, to carry out activities among children against violence, to raise awareness about the problem and to contribute to concerted actions by organs and institutions that work in the interest of children.

Financed by the project, the staff at the shelter has been linked up to centres in St.Petersburg working professionally against violence. These are the Centre for social and legal assistance for victims of

violence “Aleksandra”, The Foundation “Novye Shagi” (“New Steps”) and the IMATON centre for practical psychology.

An SOS phone has been set-up and a campaign carried out to make it known with the result that hitherto ten children have called. The project also has made it possible for the shelter to arrange excursions for the children.

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them

No such occurrences.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts

According to Annual Report 2007, 131 girls and 106 boys have been directly reached (rehabilitation, consulting, follow-up, patrols and general preventive activities). In addition, 19 specialists have gone through competence-building and one on HIV/AIDS prevention. 35 parents have been reached directly through consulting.

Indirectly 363 children have been reached with materials on violence, and 200 have got a brochure on the UN CRC. Reaching out to adults is classified as “indirect” in SCNiR’s system of accounting for their activities. Therefore, the competence-building of 68 teachers have on violence against children and the handing-out of 280 booklets on the UN CRC is indirect results of the project activities.

In other words, the project’s outputs are of two kinds. Some of them are individual and immediate. The children who have received assistance through the shelter (and the phone), have received assistance from a staff which is more up-dated and aware of the problems of violence than they used to be. Other outputs are general and intermediate in the sense that they raise the general consciousness about the problem in wider circles, beginning from the professionals, continuing to the parents and then to the inhabitants of Monchegorsk.

In the short period of time that has evolved since the project up-start the ground has been prepared for outcomes to take place. The town has been made more aware of the children’s right to grow up without violence and the professionals working with the

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children are more trained and better linked up with ongoing activities in relevant fields of work in Russia.

vii) Assessment

Having shelters for children and young people as a partner enables dissemination of experiences since there are a considerable number of shelters in Russia. The activities in Monchegorsk could be emulated elsewhere.

Sources: Interviews in the shelter with staff and children, and with the acting head of the municipal administration (mayor).

Annual Status Report 2007.

### **School of equal opportunities in Apatity town (project 980110)**

i) Background of the project

Evening (shift-based) schools for working youth date back to a Soviet reform of 1943. Today there are 1025 evening schools in Russia, in which no less than 226,710 students attend classes (2006/2007). A sharp division in the Russian educational system due to elite schools for particularly gifted children (already a fact during the Soviet period) and private schools for the rich has developed. Young people who fall out of the ordinary educational system for various reasons get an opportunity to catch up through the evening schools. The evening schools cover 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> form. The majority (about  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of students at the school are older than 18 years old. About one in four are parenting a child (Project Description).

The project duration is May 2007 to December 2009.

ii) The partners in the project

The full name of SCNiR's partner is the very Russian "Municipal secondary educational establishment, open multi-shift secondary school no 1 of Apatity town in the Murmansk region".

iii) The objectives of the project

The project forms part of SCNiR's endeavours to fulfil children's rights to education. SCNiR's co-operation with the evening school is linked to one of the school's own objectives which aim at offering education that, creating an arena for joint intellectual activity and communication, reduces the risk of psychological breakdown of the teenagers. The target group is the young people studying in the evening school no. 1 and their families. Also teachers and child welfare specialists are targeted. The project – School of Equal Opportunities – aims at including teenagers of the risk group into quality education and socialisation. The risk group are those young people who are under specific school control, are registered by the commission on minors or with the police.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The intervention is concentrated in a psychological and pedagogical programme called "School of Equal Opportunities". Competence-building of teachers, school psychologist and parents (meetings for parents are held every two-three months).

The material support offered through the co-operation with SCNiR is considerable. The ordinary budget of the school (excluding salaries) is 240,000 RUR. The support from SCNiR amounts to 850,000 RUR, no less than three to four times the amount of the ordinary budget. This allows the teachers to go for training courses and for the students to receive material support. The rector mentioned shoes and rulers as examples, emphasising the fact that a large percentage of the students are poor. The refurbishment of the school premises is, however, the largest part of the contribution through the SCNiR. Today, the school is fully renovated. The premises used to be a kindergarten, but were taken over by the evening school that had to move out from its previous premises due to a rise in the rent.

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them

No such problems have been identified.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts.

Altogether 42 girls, 59 boys and 15 teachers have been reached directly. More than one hundred parents have been trained.

### vii) Assessment

The partnership with the evening school makes it possible for the SCNiR to reach out directly to a target group consisting of young people at risk. Since such schools exist all over Russia the opportunities for replication and dissemination of experiences are legion. Education is one of the Russian Federation's priority areas, which creates a good basis for SCNiR's endeavours to fulfil children's rights to education.

After less than one year of project implementation it is, of course, impossible to identify outcomes beyond the mere outputs (on how many people have received training, and on renovation of the premises).

#### *Sources:*

Project Description

Annual Status Report 2007.

Statistics on evening schools:

<http://stat.edu.ru/Edu2006/contents.htm>

## **Promoting the UN CRC in Kandalaksha town (project number 980161)**

### i) The background of the project

The projects take place in the town of Kandalaksha in the southern part of Murmansk region. Located on the shores of the White Sea the town's economy is dominated by a big aluminium plant and a nearby harbour shipping out of Russia. Kandalaksha has about 69,000 inhabitants of whom around 11,350 are children. SCNiR's project partner is the biggest school in town, having around students with a background from families of humble means. According to figures from the Commission of Minors and their Rights 250 out of a total 11,350 of the children belong to this category whereas 435 out of a total 11,350 are members of families in risk. The SCNiR and the authorities have identified the town's four "dormitories"/obshchezhitia as being particularly harmful to children. According to the SCNiR several articles of the UN CRC are violated there (articles 12, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 37, 39). The project duration is March 2007 to December 2009.

The project started in March 2007.

ii) The partners in the project

Secondary School (middle general educational) no. 10 in Kandalaksha (age group 8th to 12<sup>th</sup> form). A large share of the students at the school come from families in economic and other trouble, which is reflected in the fact that one out of three have free meals at school (a means-tested benefit).

iii) The objectives of the project

The project forms part of SCNiR' main objective on strengthening implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the awareness of children's rights.

iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic.

The main activity is to establish and run an informational-consultative centre with a base in Secondary School no. 10. The social pedagogue of the school is SCNiR's operational contact at the school, and she is supervising the activities. Russian schools have a social pedagogue, who among others is responsible for following up children with social problems, which means the social pedagogue works closely with the Commission of Minors and their Rights.

The project has been helpful in establishing a group of volunteers most of whom are students from Secondary School no. 10, but with members from another school as well. The group is called "Spasatel'nyi Krug" (Life Buoy) and is self-organised (by late April 2008 it has 51 members). The social pedagogue provides assistance and the school provides a room (shared by the school psychologist). The group meets every Saturday.

The Life Buoy activities vary between very traditional needlework types of leisure activities on the one hand and agitation and information work on the other. The members of the group have decided to work with younger children whose life situation is difficult. They have organised a holiday camp at school during the Spring holidays (five days from 10:00 to 14:00) for this category of

children. Activities at the camp were mostly traditional “kruzhók” activities, but CRC issues were also addressed. The group of volunteers has carried out informational campaigns (“agitbrigady”) against HIV/AIDS training among their peers. They make active use of the “klassnyi chas” (the class’ hour”) to disseminate information and activate the peers. The group is planning to introduce a “buddy system” and to arrange more holiday camps.

Teachers and parents have been trained in the UN CRC. Counselling has been provided and a help-line has been established. The help-line took some time to get known in town, but an advertising campaign changed that situation.

According to the project plan the centre will carry out activities that lead towards the objectives. These activities are to:

- train children, their parents, and pedagogues in the UN CRC principles
- recruit and train volunteers
- throw light on the issue through discussions and studies
- carry out activities on prevention against drug and alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS and delinquency
- support the introduction of consultative programmes for children and families
- carry out campaigns attracting attention of state authorities and public to the violation of children and the importance of fulfilling the UN CRC principles
- carry out work on raising the motivation for education
- offer vocational/career guidance
- co-operate with other relevant organs and authorities (among them the commission on minors, police, social protection department, educational organisations)
- make the project development be a participatory process involving children and their parents

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them.

There does not seem to have been any problems caused by changes in the surroundings.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts.

According to the Annual Report for 2007 the project has reached 351 girls (incl. 11 trainers) and 293 boys (incl. 9 trainers) directly. 474 children have been involved in project activities, of which 250 girls. No less than 90 girls and 60 boys have been reached through the help-line (phone) and counselling. Being directly reached in this context is defined by SCNiR as e.g. making a presentation in the “Class’ Hour” or being a child volunteer.

Indirectly, children have been reached through the distribution of written material. Also parents, teachers, specialists and municipal authorities have been reached indirectly, altogether 388 people. If a child receives a brochure, e.g. on the CRC, or a parent contacts the centre for counselling, it is registered as indirect.

vii) Assessment

Working through the social pedagogue at schools seems to be strategically wise since the holder of this position easily will target the children in need and is in a position to spread knowledge about the CRC among students, teachers and parents. The social pedagogue is an established institution that parents and children know about. This is a “working model” that could be replicated although the personal qualities of the individual social pedagogue are of great importance.

The Volunteers Club (Life Buoy) is a good example of child participation and children taking responsibility. The somewhat charitable and “positive” profile of its activities is in line with long Soviet and post-Soviet traditions of youth and child organisations, but is well balanced against the focus on child rights.

*Sources:* Interview with Olga Falaleeva and conversation with members and leaders of “Life Buoy” in Kandalaksha 26 April 2008.

## **Mobile Street Work in the Kola district (project 980174)**

i) The background of the project

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To avoid confusion among readers not familiar with the Murmansk region, it should be noticed that the Kola district is one of the municipalities of the Murmansk region. Apart from the town of Kola (11,000 inhabitants, 12 km south of Murmansk city) the district consists of remote, rural settlements marked by poverty and social problems. The project consists in strengthening outreach work among children in the remote settlements.

Having run an outreach project (Mobile Social Work) in Murmansk city since 2002 in co-operation with the regional Youth Committee, SCNiR has a long experience in this field.

The project duration is May 2007 to December 2009.

#### ii) The partners in the project

The Complex Centre of Social Services to People of the Kola District. The word “complex” in this respect refers to the fact that the centre provides services to several groups in need, among them children, elderly and disabled people. The centre forms part of the regional system of social protection, which means it is classified as a state organisation. The MSW has got an official status as a unit within the centre. When the three year project period is over, the MSW will continue as one of the centre’s six departments.

#### iii) The objectives of the project

The project forms part of the portfolio aiming at fulfilling the rights of marginalised children to social protection and reintegration.

The target group is socially maladjusted children, teenagers and their families. The overall aim of the project is to improve the lives of socially marginalised children in remote areas of the Kola district. In the small peripheral settlements of the Kola municipality, a majority of the inhabitants could be classified as being poor. The focus is on those who are “out in the streets”.

#### iv) The concrete activities and their link to the objectives, i.e. the intervention logic

The activities consist of Mobile Street Work (MSW) including revealing children in need and offering rehabilitation through inter-sectoral co-operation between “stakeholder” organisations having responsibilities within the child welfare sector. The activities are

being planned by the Complex Centre on its own, and consist in complex and systematic assistance and support to children and their families through outreach social work and developing and implementing rehabilitation programmes. The MSW staff helps people fill in forms and provide food baskets.

Carrying out the activities, the partners apply the CRC principle and propagate them. The outreach work focuses on providing psychological, pedagogical, social and emergency medical services to children identified as being in need of it. Also preventive work against violence, juvenile delinquency, STD and HIV/AIDS form parts of the project. As many marginalised children drop out of school, the project helps them back.

The MSW Kola staff works closely with the educational authorities, the commission on minors' affairs, the settlements' local councils as well as the social pedagogues of schools and kindergartens.

In addition, the project description lists several other activities, like monitoring the territory in order to identify and register the target group. The project also collects and analyses information about the life situation and problems of the children and their families.

The programme also includes advocacy work. It should attract attention of the public authorities and the population to the problems of children living under difficult conditions.

In this project relatively simple, but expensive, material support (a car) enables the Complex Centre to reach out to the target group, not only on Kola town, but in the small settlements of the municipality. Also refurbishment of the centre's room for day care for children is of importance.

v) The problems, unexpected developments and changes in the surroundings and how the SCNiR and partners dealt with them.

There does not seem to have been any problems caused by changes in the surroundings.

vi) Results so far of the project and their links to possible impacts.

According to the Annual Report 2007, the project has reached directly 200 socially marginalised girls and 260 boys with social follow-up (food, organised excursions, medical assistance,

placement in shelter, treatment against drug addiction, or being referred to the Red Cross soup kitchen). 115 families of the children have been reached indirectly. 970 young people have been reached indirectly (having received training in awareness-raising and preventive activities). 939 families and nine university students of social work have been reached indirectly.

In general, the project has made it possible to reach out much more efficiently to the inhabitants of Kola municipality. In all, by April 2008, altogether 999 families were followed up by the centre. Among the activities financed by the project (i.e. through the SCNiR) 970 children have been offered organised excursions, and six families with a disabled child have got the opportunity to go for an excursion together. A puppet theatre has visited a settlement. Twice a week outreach work (“raids”) is carried out. Two specialists from the centre (one social worker, one psychologist) take part in each raid.

#### vii) Assessment

The project provides a good example on how material support from SCNiR has been of use for the institutions responsible for child welfare. The refurbishment of the centre’s room for day care for children is of importance in the work with vulnerable children. The car provided by SCNiR has made it possible to reach out to a larger group of people in need. Also, training of the personnel has been enabled through the project, mainly in the form of a seminar and co-operation with colleagues in Arkhangelsk. The fact that an outreach project already has been carried out makes it possible to benefit from “replication” and learning from the experiences of colleagues working under relatively similar conditions. Through the experiences from MSW in Murmansk and other follow-up from SCNiR the staff gets acquainted with outreach work methods.

The project is well “rooted” and stands out as being sustainable. It forms part of the regional programme “Children of the Kola far North 2007 – 2010”. The fact that the authorities, have agreed to finance a driver is a good example of “co-financing”. The fact that the MSW unit will be continued after the project period as a department of the centre is another sustainability achievement.

Since its start-up the project has prepared the ground for working more directly promoting the core objectives of the SCNiR. Therefore, in the following the main focus should be on training and the development of practical methods within outreach work. The fact that the MSW unit is new makes it easier for the co-workers to adapt and develop new working methods.

In the following SCNiR should make a more clear distinction than hitherto between the activities carried out by the Complex Centre as a part of the partnership with SCNiR on one hand and the activities that would have been implemented by the centre anyway, even if there was no partnership. This is required in order to be able to be more precise on how to “add value”.

*Sources:* Interviews in Kola town 28 April, visit to a household in the settlement of Shónguy and one in the settlement of Pushnói.

Annual Status Report 2007.

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## Appendix 2

### List of interviewees

Svetlana Troshcheva, project co-ordinator, Monchegorsk  
Nadezhda Selivanova, head of shelter, Monchegorsk  
Margarita Biriukova, acting head of administration, Monchegorsk municipality  
Gennadyi Shakhov, acting director of Pre-trial detention centre no. 2, Apatity  
Sergei Beliantsev, head of the department for upbringing, Pre-trial detention centre no. 2, Apatity  
Vladimir Chesnokov, psychologist, Pre-trial detention centre no. 2, Apatity  
Zhanna Isaeva, director of evening school no 1, Apatity  
Aliona Pashenko, director of school, Abram-Mys  
Irina Iasinenko, head of the youth club, Abram-Mys  
Children and youth at the “Maiák” youth club, Abram-Mys  
Olga Falaleeva, social teacher, Secondary School (middle general educational) no. 10, Kandalaksha  
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Irina Matveichuk, head of MSW unit in the centre, Kola town

Svetlana Bairasheva, specialist in social work in the Complex Centre of Social Services, Kola town

Family in the settlement of Pushnoi

Family in the settlement of Shongui

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# The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

## - short unofficial version

### 1. Definition of a child

All persons under 18, unless by law majority is attained at an earlier age.

### 2. Non-discrimination

The principle that all rights apply to all children without exception, and the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination. The State must not violate any right, and must take positive action to promote them all.

### 3. Best interests of the child

All actions concerning the child should take full account of his or her best interests. The State is to provide adequate care when parents or others responsible fail to do so.

### 4. Implementation of rights

The State's obligation to translate the rights in the Convention into reality.

### 5. Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities

The State's duty to respect the rights and responsibility of parents and the wider family to provide guidance appropriate to the child's evolving capacities.

### 6. Survival and development

The inherent right to life, and the State's obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

### 7. Name and nationality

The right to have a name from birth and to be granted a nationality.

### 8. Preservation of identity

The State's obligation to protect and, if necessary, re-establish the basic aspects of a child's identity (name, nationality and family ties).

### 9. Separation from parents

The child's right to live with his/her parents unless this is deemed incompatible with his/her  
The right to have a name from birth and to be granted a nationality.

### 10. Family reunification

The right of children and their parents to leave any country and enter their own in order to be reunited or to maintain the child-parent relationship.

### 11. Illicit transfer and non-return

The State's obligation to try to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

### 12. The child's opinion

The child's right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

### 13. Freedom of expression

The child's right to obtain and make known information, and to express his or her views, unless this would violate the rights of others.

### 14. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance and national law.

### 15. Freedom of association

The right of children to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless the fact of doing so violates the rights of others.

### 16. Protection of privacy

The right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel/slander.

### 17. Access to appropriate information

The role of the media in disseminating information to children that is consistent with moral well-being and knowledge and understanding among peoples, and respects the child's cultural background. The State is to take measures to encourage this and to protect children from harmful materials.

### 18. Parental responsibilities

The principle that both parents have joint primary responsibility for bringing up their children, and that the State should support them in this task.

### 19. Protection from abuse and neglect

The State's obligation to protect children from all forms of maltreatment perpetrated by parents or others responsible for their care, and to undertake preventive and treatment programmes in this regard.

### 20. Protection of children without families

The State's obligation to provide special protection for children deprived of their family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is made available to them, taking into account the child's cultural background.

### 21. Adoption

In countries where adoption is recognised and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interest of the child, with all necessary safeguards for a given child and authorisation by the competent authorities.

### 22. Refugee children

Special protection to be granted to children who are seeking refugee status, and the State's obligation to cooperate with competent organisations providing such protection and assistance.

### 23. Handicapped children

The right of handicapped children to special care, education and training designed to help them to achieve greatest possible self-reliance and to lead a full and active life in society.

### 24. Health and health services

The right to the highest level of health possible and to access to health and medical services, with special emphasis on primary and preventive health care, public health education and the diminution of infant mortality. The State's obligation to work towards the abolition of harmful traditional practices. Emphasis is laid on the need for international co-operation to ensure this right.

### 25. Periodic review of placement

The right of children placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment to have all aspects of that placement evaluated regularly.

### 26. Social security

The right of children to benefit from social security.

### 27. Standard of living

The right of children to benefit from an adequate standard of living, the primary responsibility of parents to provide this, and the State's duty to ensure that this responsibility is first fulfillable and then fulfilled, where necessary through the recovery of maintenance.

### 28. Education

The child's right to education, and the State's duty to ensure that primary education at least is made free and compulsory. Administration of school discipline is to reflect the child's human dignity. Emphasis is laid on the need for international co-operation to ensure this right.

### 29. Aims of education

The State's recognition that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others.

### 30. Children of minorities or indigenous peoples

The right of children of minority communities and indigenous peoples to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

### 31. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities

The right of children to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

### 32. Child labour

The State's obligation to protect children from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to their health, education or development, to set minimum ages for employment, and to regulate conditions of employment.

### 33. Drug abuse

The child's right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs and from being involved in their production or distribution.

### 34. Sexual exploitation

The child's right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

### 35. Sale, trafficking and abduction

The State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

### 36. Other forms of exploitation

The child's right to protection from all other forms of exploitation not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

### 37. Torture and deprivation of liberty

The prohibition of torture, cruel treatment or punishment, capital punishment, life imprisonment, and unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. The principles of appropriate treatment, separation from detained adults, contact with family and access to legal and other assistance.

### 38. Armed conflicts

The obligation of States to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law as it applies to children. The principle that no child under 15 take a direct part in hostilities or be recruited into the armed forces, and that all children affected by armed conflict benefit from protection and care.

### 39. Rehabilitative care

The State's obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflicts, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social re-integration.

### 40. Administration of juvenile justice

The right of children alleged or recognised as having committed an offence to respect for their human rights and, in particular, to benefit from all aspects of the due process of law, including legal or other assistance in preparing and presenting their defence. The principle that recourse to judicial proceedings and institutional placements should be avoided wherever possible and appropriate.

### 41. Respect for existing standards

The principle that, if any standards set in national law or other applicable international instruments are higher than those of this Convention, it is the higher standards that applies.

### 42-54. Implementation and entry into force

Provisions on i.a. making this Convention widely known, ratification of this Convention and about state parties' periodically reporting to a Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Save the Children Norway's vision is a world  
where children's rights are fulfilled:

- that respects and values each child
- that listens to children and supports their influence
- where all children live a life in freedom and security

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