



Organisational Review of SOS Children's Villages Norway

Final Report

Norad
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
COVCC	Community Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Committee
CRC	Convention on Children's Rights
CV	Children's Village
FBC	Family Based Care
FDP	Family Development Plan
FSP	Family Strengthening Programme
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
HQ	Headquarters
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IP	International Programme
KDI	Kinderdorf International
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NA	National Association
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PP	Programme Proposal
PSA	Promoting and Supporting Association
SIVSA	Civil Society Department in Norad
SOS-KDI	SOS Kinderdorf International
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee

Executive Summary

This review of SOS Children's Villages Norway, commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), examines the organisation's performance as a development actor, with a focus on:

- Cost-effectiveness in the use of funds
- Coherence with Norwegian development policy priorities
- Relevance for partners
- Ability to achieve its own objectives

According to the Terms of Reference, the review shall assess SOS Norway's technical, financial and administrative capacity – in cooperation with local partners in the South – to carry out the agreed programmes and achieve planned objectives.

In assessing SOS Norway's performance it must be taken into account that it is a member of the international umbrella organisation SOS Kinderdorf International (KDI). It works closely with SOS-KDI in order to achieve global strategic objectives. The overall objective for the period 2009-2016 is to enable one million children to grow up in a caring family. This review focuses on the Family Strengthening approach, i.e. the preventive outreach activities of the organisation, and not on the Villages as such.

A review of SOS Children's Villages Norway was carried out at the end of 2003 (COWI 2004). Findings and conclusions from the COWI report have to some extent been used as a basis for assessment in this review.

The team has collected information through qualitative interviews with members of different SOS offices and other stakeholders, and an analysis of relevant documents. The team also went on a field visit to Zambia in order to meet one of SOS Norway's partner associations, and to look at a Family Strengthening Programme.

The overall conclusion of the review is positive. Promising developments identified in the COWI report have continued, particularly in terms of creating a more integrated approach to the organisation's traditional and new areas of intervention. However, there is still much to be done in certain areas, and many challenges to overcome. Below three main conclusions are presented, building on the key words Transition, Relevance and Capacity. Some main findings to illustrate these are also included. The conclusions and findings relate to the international organisation as a whole, with a focus on challenges in the years to come, while the recommendations concentrate on SOS Norway.

Transition: *SOS Children's Villages is going through a transition phase. The team finds that the organisation is "on the right track" to become what it aims at. However, it must consolidate its new role in order to successfully implement its ambitious strategies.*

- SOS Children's Villages is in a transition in terms of scaling up its work on prevention of child abandonment, changing its character from being primarily a welfare organisation to working more with development issues, and is increasingly applying a strategic and programmatic approach to its work.
- SOS Norway has played a central role in this transition process. It has a strong voice in the KDI system, and is perceived as a constructive "driving force."

- While SOS Children's Villages' arguments for taking an increasingly holistic approach to the prevention of child abandonment are valid, it runs the risk of loosing its niche position as an organisation. A challenge is also to ensure sufficient quality of interventions in new thematic areas in order to achieve positive and sustainable impact on the target group.

Relevance: *SOS Children's Villages' objectives and work related to improving lives of orphans and vulnerable children are relevant for communities in which it operates. SOS Norway can do more to provide relevant added value to SOS partners at country level.*

- SOS Children's Villages is becoming a more open organisation internally and externally. As a result of this, it is also gaining more relevance, both for the countries and communities in which its programmes are implemented, and as a partner for public donors like Norad.
- The target group, orphans and children at risk of losing their families, is what primarily defines the organisation's identity, purpose, and core competence. SOS Children's Villages clearly reaches a large number of these children with its interventions worldwide. However, it has a potential to play a more important role in advocating for the rights of these children at country level.
- SOS Norway has increased its ability to provide added value to the Norad funded programmes by recruiting more technical staff. There seems, however, to be a potential for defining this added value more clearly in dialogue with KDI and local SOS partners in order to ensure relevance, and to avoid duplication.

Capacity: *SOS Children's Villages as a whole has a considerable capacity administratively and in terms of financial and human resources. The ability to reach its ambitious objectives will depend on the strategic allocation of these resources.*

- SOS Children's Villages has a considerable funding base, and professional administrative management. There are global minimum financial standards in place which are regularly monitored. The prevention of corruption and fraud remains a challenge, and is increasingly being addressed in the organisation.
- In order to operationalise and implement the ambitious new strategy, numerous policies, tools and guidelines are developed. A challenge for the "SOS family" will be to create local ownership and build the necessary competence at country level in order to put these into use.
- Among the main challenges in terms of cost-effectiveness are: Balancing quality and quantity, prioritising according to goals, and rationalising human resources both at implementation level, in SOS-KDI and between SOS Norway and KDI.

Recommendations

- SOS Norway should use its competence and creativity to the full extent in order to identify the ways in which it can support the SOS organisation, particularly its local SOS partners, to consolidate its new role and approach in the best possible way. There is a need to shift focus from policy development to implementation.
- SOS Norway should focus more on results according to goals and plans, and improve the quality of reporting to Norad with a focus on the results achieved for the main target group, i.e. orphans and vulnerable children.
- SOS Norway should encourage the SOS system to creatively assess and develop the most cost-effective use of human and financial resources. SOS Norway should also continue to focus on the prevention of corruption and fraud, and use its leverage within the organisation in order to reduce this risk.
- The Family Strengthening Programmes is the part of SOS' work where cooperation with Norad is the most relevant, and where Norad can provide the highest added value through dialogue with SOS Norway. The cooperation should continue to focus on this programme.
- Norad should follow closely the organisation's further development in the years to come regarding its ability to implement all the new policies and guidelines, and assess SOS Norway according to results achieved for the target group.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

SOS Children's Villages was founded by Hermann Gmeiner in Austria in 1949 for the purpose of helping orphans and homeless children in Europe after the Second World War. Today the SOS organisation has spread to 132 countries all over the world under the umbrella organisation SOS Kinderdorf International (SOS-KDI). The association in Norway was established in 1964 and has grown to be one of the largest NGOs in Norway with emphasis on children in development work.

SOS Norway has received Norad funding since 1997. It entered into a multi-annual cooperation agreement with Norad in 2004. Another cooperation agreement was entered into in 2006. The funding has been confined to the prevention of child abandonment through outreach activities. The level of funding is around 8 million NOK annually. Prior to the first cooperation agreement an organisational review was undertaken.

Norad has now commissioned another organisational review to reassess SOS Norway's ability to perform effectively and efficiently within the framework of the development cooperation. This review has its main focus on organisational matters in SOS Norway, and its work related to the so-called Family Strengthening Programmes of the SOS organisation internationally.

1.2. Methodology

This review has been carried out in September/October 2008 by an internal Norad team. SOS Norway has commented on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR), and assisted the team in planning and carrying out the review programme. SOS Norway and Norad's Civil Society Department have commented on the draft report. Findings stated in the previous organisational review of SOS Children's Villages Norway (COWI 2004) have to some extent been used as a basis for assessing the organisation's development.

The team has not applied any particular model of analysis. However, we have chosen to structure the report around two main concepts: "Relevance" covers the points in ToR relating to relevance for partners and coherence with Norwegian development policies. The chapter on "capacity" addresses to what extent the organisation is able to perform effectively according to plans. The review will provide Norad with insight in strategies, policies, systems, resources and value added, and provide a foundation for the dialogue between SOS Norway and Norad in the next agreement period.

The information is acquired partly through qualitative interviews (using an interview guide based on the scope set out in ToR) and partly through review of relevant documents. The team has been able to interview people from SOS Norway, from SOS-KDI and from one of SOS Norway's partner associations.

A field visit was undertaken to Zambia, which is one of the countries in SOS Norway's current Norad portfolio. Which country to visit was decided by SOS Norway and Norad's Civil Society Department. The possibility to generalise based on one case study is rather limited. However, it gave the team useful insight in the work on the ground, which is helpful in the assessment of SOS Norway.

Assessing actual results of the organisation's activities is not part of the ToR for this assignment. However, the team has found it relevant to shed some light on this by referring briefly to a recent evaluation report on the outreach programme in Zambia, written by a team of Zambian consultants (NIPA 2007).

Many issues addressed in the report would have deserved more attention. However, the limited number of pages set in the ToR puts a natural constraint the possibility of going much into depth.

The conclusions and findings (presented in the executive summary) apply to the SOS organisation as a whole. Recommendations are, however, concentrated on SOS Norway.

1.3. Acknowledgements

The team would like to express our sincere appreciation to representatives of the "SOS family" at national, regional and international levels who have been involved in the review. We were given access to all relevant documents, and the SOS staff members in Oslo and Lusaka generously allocated much of their time to interviews and meetings. The team is also pleased to have had the occasion to meet with the Secretary General of SOS-KDI and his Deputy during their visit to Oslo in September, as well as with two other members of the KDI management. Our deep-felt thanks also to partners of SOS Zambia for their useful input. The Norwegian Embassy in Lusaka was most helpful in facilitating our stay in Zambia, and deserves thanks.

2. Institutional context

2.1. Organisational structure and portfolio

SOS Norway has 57 employees of which 80% are women. Due to rapid expansion a restructuring of the Secretariat was undertaken in 2002, and 4 departments were created: Market and Communication, International Programmes, National Programmes, and Finance and Administration. A Council of 12 members is tasked to supervise that the organisation is run in accordance with its purpose. A Board, elected by the Council, is responsible for the management of resources.

SOS Norway is member of the international umbrella organisation SOS Kinderdorf International (SOS-KDI). In total there are 132 national associations (NAs) under the KDI. The supreme decision making body is the General Assembly which is convened every 4 years. Below the General Assembly are the International Senate and an Executive Committee, the President, and the General Secretary and Secretariat. The KDI Secretariat has around 350 employees, and consists of three levels: The International Headquarters in Innsbruck, the continental level (5 offices) and the regional level (17 offices). KDI brings together partners, facilitates the sharing of expertise in the organisation, and coordinates the formulation of strategies, policies and tools. It also ensures that minimum standards are adhered to by all SOS associations.

Although SOS Norway has opened a Children's Village in Norway, it is still mainly a "Promoting and Supporting Association" (PSA) contributing to projects and programmes in other parts of the world. The implementation and local coordination of activities is done by national SOS associations, operating within the agreed statutes and standards of SOS-KDI. These are legal entities staffed with local people, and governed by a Board of Trustees. The fee of being a member of KDI varies according to the financial capacity of an association. Annually 5% of the funds channelled by SOS Norway through KDI go to administration (12-13 million NOK).

From having the financial responsibility for only 2 programmes in 1995, SOS Norway now has a long-term responsibility for the running of 173 projects and programmes in various locations in approximately 40 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Central Asia and Latin America. About half of the locations are in Africa. SOS Norway's current Norad portfolio includes Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

2.2. Funding base and popular support

SOS Children's Villages Norway is according to its own calculations the most successful Norwegian NGO when it comes to mobilising funds from the private market. 75% comes from individual sponsors (of which 90 000 contribute on a monthly basis), considered by SOS Norway to be a very stable source of income. The organisation is increasingly engaging private companies (20%). Some financial support also comes from schools and kindergartens (5%). SOS Norway has a group of 500 active volunteers

around the country who mobilise funds locally. All in all SOS Norway has a broad support base in the Norwegian population to which it spreads information about development issues, with the individual child as an entry point.

Of a total income of 365 million NOK in 2007, SOS Norway received 8 million NOK from Norad. It occasionally also receives some emergency funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the level of public funding to SOS Norway is relatively low. This puts SOS Norway in a very “independent” position compared to many other Norwegian NGOs. Although SOS Norway can potentially get “easier” funds elsewhere, the aim is to increase its level of public funding. SOS Norway staff feels that MFA and Norad should contribute more to the work which the organisation is doing. They also see increased funding as a way to be heard more in discussions on public development policies. The technical dialogue with Norad on developmental issues is valued. More funding from public donors is also considered as a “recognition of quality” which may in turn appeal to private donors. In the KDI system SOS Norway is a pioneer when it comes to accessing public funding, and is recognised for its innovation related to this.

2.3. Decision-making and organisational culture

The NAs initiate and plan new programmes. Various levels in KDI then consider the quality, costs and consistency to SOS guidelines before sending the proposals to PSAs for funding. When a new Programme Proposal (PP) is received by SOS Norway, it is considered by all departments. If endorsed by the Secretariat, it is submitted to the Board for approval.

As a general rule PSAs do not have agreements with local SOS partners, and all communication with NAs pertaining to plans and reports is supposed to go through KDI. According to SOS Norway this will now change in cases of public funding, i.e. for this type of funding there will be direct agreements between PSAs and NAs. This is being formalised in a new “Public Funding Practical Guide and Toolkit” from KDI. As far as the team understands, this implies a closer cooperation and a more direct communication between SOS Norway and its partners in Norad funded programmes.

Whereas only few NAs participated in developing the previous global strategy (2003-2008), the process of developing the new global strategic plan (2009-2016) included all 132 NAs. Many beneficiaries, including children in the target group, were also involved. The team’s impression is that the ownership of the strategy, both in SOS Norway and SOS Zambia, is very strong. The procedures for policy development in the SOS-KDI system are generally becoming more systematic, transparent and participatory, and HQ is taking on a stronger role in coordinating these processes.

Though there is some frustration related to the rather slow processes in SOS-KDI regarding strategy development and decision making, the advantages of being part of an international umbrella were emphasised by SOS staff in Norway and Zambia. Being a major financial contributor to the KDI gives SOS Norway much influence, hereunder seats in important fora for strategic decision-making and policy development.

In a work environment survey undertaken in SOS Norway in 2008, the main challenges identified were internal communication across sections, and establishing appropriate routines and structures following the large expansion. A plan of action for follow-up has been made, and measures have been put in place to meet the challenges.

3. Strategy

3.1. New global strategic plan

The values of the SOS organisation are defined in the document “Who we are” from 2002. The overall vision is that “Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.” This document provides guiding principles for SOS Children’s Villages’ strategy development.

SOS-KDI got its first global strategy in 2003: “Taking Action for Children 2003-2008.” A new global Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2016 was adopted by the General Assembly in July 2008. Each national association is expected to develop a strategy in accordance with the new global strategic plan, identifying their priorities.

The current strategy of SOS Norway, “Strategi 2012,” was approved by the Board in 2006. This strategy will now be revised according to the new global strategic plan. The main focus for SOS Norway is to contribute to the realisation of the goals of KDI. SOS Norway has been heavily involved in developing the new global strategy, and feels that the strategy is a breakthrough and very much in line with what SOS Norway has been advocating, namely an increased weight on the preventive work (prevention of child abandonment). The team’s observation is that the present strategy of SOS Norway encompasses much of the same focus and priorities reflected in the global strategy.

The main strategic objectives in the global strategic plan are:

- 1) Enable one million children to grow up in a caring family.
- 2) Raise SOS friends around the world to fund one million children.
- 3) Have strong people, strong associations for one million children.

According to the strategy, SOS Children’s Villages’ activities in a community shall form an “integrated approach” in support of children who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care. The two main pillars are Family-Based Care, FBC (i.e. Children’s Villages) and Family Strengthening Programmes, FSPs. The aim is to support a child to be able to stay in his/her original family as long as this is in the best interest of the child. Where this is not possible SOS Children’s Villages offers long-term family-based care. Education and advocacy are part of the strategy as supporting areas for the two pillars.

The elements of the new global strategy appear to be more or less the same as in the previous one, but the new strategy has a more coherent structure and is largely focusing on the area of prevention of child abandonment. 90% of the children will be targeted by the FSP approach by 2016, more precisely 900 000 children, while 100 000 will be targeted by the FBC approach. The number of children reached by the two approaches at the beginning of 2009 is estimated to be 170 000 and 76 000 respectively.

The components in SOS Norway’s Norad portfolio which were previously called social centres, outreach programmes and prevention, now fall under the concept of FSP.

Outreach activities have been undertaken by SOS Children's Villages in Latin America for some time. However, it is only during the last 6-7 years that this has represented a clear direction in SOS Children's Villages' work globally. SOS Zambia and some of the other NAs in southern Africa have pioneered this to a great extent, realising the great needs in the communities. In 2007 SOS-KDI issued a Family Strengthening Programme manual, much based on experiences and input from the NAs and regional offices in southern Africa. This is now the main tool for the global implementation of FSP.

3.2. Target group and geographic intervention areas

SOS is targeting children at risk of losing parental care, or who have lost their parents (often referred to as OVC, i.e. orphans and vulnerable children). This is very clear in the perception of staff at all levels, and in key documents. Family orientation and targeting of OVC is also what SOS is recognised for among other actors working with children.

The number of actual beneficiaries will be higher than the strategic target of 1 million, as the focus in FSP is on strengthening family- and community structures around the child. People not included in FSP also benefit. For instance in Lusaka SOS medical services and education facilities have been opened to everyone in the local community, though families and children who are part of the programme are given priority.

Recognising that issues relating to vulnerability of children and their families vary from community to community, the FSP manual states that "vulnerability criteria are developed in consultation with community members, including children from our target group as well as their care-givers." In Zambia the selection of beneficiaries is done in cooperation with Village Development Committees (VDC). Selected families are usually headed by an old person, a child, a single parent, or by a chronically ill person.

Geographic prioritisation by SOS Norway is not defined in guiding documents, but the intention according to staff is to prioritise countries in Africa. This has, however, been difficult to adhere to as big sponsors sometimes have special wishes regarding locations. The new global strategic plan states that programmes will be developed where there is the greatest need, and where SOS can have the greatest impact. This will be based on analyses by NAs of the situation of children in each country (Child Rights Situation Analysis). The number of OVC in a given area is a key reference for intervention. Children living in countries heavily affected by HIV/AIDS are especially prone. Mostly FSPs are carried out within reach of a Children's Village, but this is not a precondition.

3.3. Thematic areas in the Family Strengthening Programmes

Compared to the previous outreach activities the FSP approach involves an intention of making the beneficiaries more actively involved and responsible in preventing child abandonment. In addition to provision of services and material support, the approach involves training of care givers and strengthening of support systems for OVC and their families within the community. The idea is that FSP shall include all aspects of empowerment to make families able to care for their children, and to strengthen the safety net for vulnerable children. This implies a very comprehensive way of working. SOS staff feels that their approach is unique in addressing families in a holistic way.

FSP is not clearly defined in terms of thematic focus. According to the manual, each programme is made up of a "package of services." The manual states that particular services offered shall vary according to different situations. Among activities in FSP in

Lusaka are medical care, education, income generation activities, food security support, paralegal training, HIV/AIDS counselling, support to local schools, home based care (psychological and medical), community kindergartens, as well as the establishment of CBOs where relevant community structures are non-existent.

Education has been part of SOS Children's Villages' activities for a long time, but received little emphasis in the previous global strategy. Education is in the new strategic plan considered as an integral part of both main pillars. SOS Children's Villages' own educational facilities include kindergarten / pre-school, basic school, high school and vocational training. If a local school exists, SOS may provide technical and material support to that school instead of building a new one. A formal education policy has recently been approved in KDI, and is expected to be implemented by NAs in 2009.

Like education, medical care is an integral part of both pillars in the strategy, offering services to beneficiaries in the Villages, in the FSPs as well as to other people in the community. It is not entirely clear why medical care is not considered as a cross cutting programme area along with education in the new global strategic plan.

3.4. Advocating for the rights of children

One of SOS Children's Villages' strategies in the global plan of reaching 1 million children is to become a leading advocate for the rights of children in its target group.

SOS-KDI has advocacy offices in Vienna, Brussels, Geneva and New York, and is taking part in important international processes on child issues. However, at the national level advocacy has not been at the core of SOS Children's Villages' work. The focus has very much been on providing social services related to child care, and on fundraising. SOS staff at different levels admit that advocacy has been a weak part of SOS' work, and that the organisation has been entering this area rather late. By the first quarter of 2009 an internal standard on advocacy will be launched in order to increase the coherence of the advocacy work. The focus will be more on advocacy related to the core target group, rather than on children's rights in general. SOS Norway has recently established a new position on public relations, with advocacy as part of the mandate.

4. Relevance

This chapter deals with SOS Norway's relevance for partners and local contexts, and its coherence with Norwegian development priorities.

4.1. Relevance for partners

SOS Norway's partners in programme countries are the national SOS associations. It is up to the NAs to consider partnerships with other actors at country level.

The team's impression is that the local SOS partners of SOS Norway are generally very strong, self-confident and independent. They are well anchored locally, and seem to attract motivated and qualified staff. This gives opportunities for having partnerships on an equal basis, which is how the team perceives the cooperation between SOS Zambia and SOS Norway. Since the communication and the capacity building of NAs is mainly being done by SOS-KDI it is, however, not so clear how SOS Norway has an added value. The added value of the Norwegian grant recipient beyond the transfer of funds is an important criteria in Norad's support to civil society (MFA/Norad guidelines 2001).

In documents to Norad, SOS Norway has presented its added value mainly as being a stable financial partner, and by its influence in KDI. SOS Norway's influence in KDI was made quite clear to the team by SOS staff at all levels. The KDI leadership expressed strong appreciation of the participation of SOS Norway in the development of the organisation. In particular SOS Norway is considered as a "constructive force" in strategy development, and as innovative when it comes to fundraising. It challenges KDI on a number of areas by offering new perspectives, and is considered to have qualified and professional people in the field of development cooperation.

SOS Norway is the PSA that contributes most funds to SOS Zambia. The leadership in SOS Zambia expressed that SOS Norway is among their most efficient and receptive partners. In particular, SOS Norway has been very willing to support the FSP work in its initial stages.

SOS Norway has over the last few years increased its capacity to provide technical assistance to SOS partners by recruiting more technical staff to the International Programme Department. 10 years ago there was no such department in SOS Norway. Today there are 6 employees in permanent positions as well as 1 part time and 2 temporary jobs in the IP department. The staff has a varied educational background and work experience, including experience of working for other organisations in the field. Each programme officer in IP has the responsibility for very wide geographical areas. The programmes which by far get the most follow-up by SOS Norway are the ones in the Norad portfolio. A close dialogue is necessary to make sure partners are aware of donor demands. Field visits by SOS Norway are undertaken regularly only to countries where there are Norad funded projects. SOS-KDI pays regular field visits to all NAs.

The team found it somewhat difficult to see how exactly the added value by SOS Norway in terms of capacity building is defined in order to ensure relevance for the partner, and to supplement KDI's follow-up in the best possible way.

4.2. Relevance for national policies and communities

There is no doubt that the work of SOS Children's Villages is relevant wherever there are orphans and vulnerable children not properly taken care of. Aggravated by poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa creates a situation with particularly many orphans which the enlarged family, communities and state do not have sufficient capacity to care for. In 2007 the number of children reached in Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi through FSP were 2015, 3000 and 3023 respectively. These numbers will multiply in the coming strategy period.

The character of SOS staff in the field (local employees) is clearly an advantage in ensuring understanding of and adjustment to local context and national policies. SOS Zambia's main partner is the Zambian government. The cooperation is generally very good, and there seems to be a strong appreciation of SOS activities by the authorities. SOS Zambia is very careful in following national standards and requirements in the running of its facilities. It gets land and equipment from the government, and the Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development has a seat on its Board of Trustees. The team was told in plain words that national policies would be given priority over KDI guidelines if there is a contradiction.

The relevance for beneficiaries in FSP is to be ensured by involving communities and families in prioritising interventions. SOS Zambia engages with the Resident Development Committee in a target area, which functions as an umbrella organisation for local CBOs. If no relevant group already exists, SOS facilitates the establishment of a committee for OVC (COVCC). Areas of capacity building and input depend on needs identified by the committee. SOS enters into an MoU with the committee, and facilitates its registration as a CBO. The idea is to enable the community to be self reliant in supporting vulnerable children whose families may be unable to care for them.

4.3. Coherence with Norwegian development policies

The overall goal for Norwegian development assistance is to combat poverty. The strategy for children and youth in Norwegian development policy (MFA 2005) is of particular relevance for this review. The strategy is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Millennium Development Goals. The key elements are: A rights-based approach, children's vulnerability and the gender perspective.

The work of SOS Children's Villages is clearly relevant for many of the priorities in the child strategy, mainly the focus on vulnerable groups of children and youth, and on contributing to a good childhood environment. SOS Children's Villages' approach to children's rights, primarily child participation, and limitations of gender focus and mainstreaming was pointed out as weaknesses in the COWI report.

There is no clear reference to gender in the global strategic plan. In Zambia the same number of boys and girls are generally targeted in the programmes. The team noted that some special measures were made in order to follow up girls who for various reasons were not able to benefit from the programmes as planned (i.e. in vocational training). According to SOS staff empowerment of women in communities and training of women

and children in rights issues and in expressing themselves is part of the organisation's work. However, the team is not sure to what extent this is currently being done. SOS Norway has been working for many years to make KDI develop a gender strategy. Gender is the next area on KDI's policy development agenda to be started in 2009.

Key principles in a child right's approach are survival and development, participation, best interest of the child, and non-discrimination. *Survival and development* has been and is central in SOS Children's Villages' work through providing opportunities for children to get out of poverty and to develop their potential as human beings. The focus on child *participation* is relatively new to SOS. Within the frames of this review the team was not able to go into depth on the issue of child participation. However, the team's impression is that there is an intention in the organisation to work more systematically with this. The use of Family Development Plans (in the FSPs) and Child Development Plans (in the CVs) where the children are consulted implies considering each child as a special case. *The best interest of the child* is clearly reflected in SOS' value document and in a forthcoming "umbrella policy" on Child-centred approach. The team found no evidence that the principle of *non-discrimination* is violated by SOS.

A policy on children with disabilities has recently been approved by KDI, and will be implemented in 2009.

A new KDI policy on HIV/AIDS is approved and ready to be implemented at country level. This is a cross cutting issue in Norwegian development cooperation. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has dramatically increased the number of street children and child headed households, and has impacted negatively on the development and welfare of children. In SOS Zambia the prevention of HIV/AIDS is already a priority area.

Environment is another important area of Norwegian development cooperation. The team did not have the opportunity to look much into SOS' efforts related to environment in this review. It can be noted that SOS Norway has developed a response to the Norwegian Government's Action Plan on Environment in Development Cooperation.

Strengthening of civil society is the major "rationale" in the guidelines of 2001 for development cooperation with voluntary actors, which forms the basis for Norad's support to civil society in the South through Norwegian NGOs. This issue is addressed in various parts of the report. In brief the team finds that the weight put on strengthening of families and communities makes SOS' work more relevant in this respect. SOS Norway's contribution to capacity building of local SOS partners is addressed in 4.1.

5. Capacity to perform

This chapter deals with SOS Norway's ability to efficiently and effectively carry out programmes and planned objectives in cooperation with partners.

5.1. Financial capacity, management and administrative control

Fundraising is one of three strategic objectives in the strategic plan. SOS Norway works very professionally with fundraising, and seems to adjust quickly to new realities in the market. Currently SOS Norway is the 2nd largest fundraiser in SOS-KDI, and the PSA which collects most funds per capita. The income has increased steadily for 20 years despite recessions. In 2007 the income of SOS Norway was 365 million NOK. The plan is to increase these numbers even further, partly through mobilising more support from the private market and partly through more public funds. SOS Norway looks to cover 10-15% of the costs related to implementation of the new global strategy. NAs are expected to raise more funds locally. SOS Zambia already raises 25% of its budget, but has ambitions to increase this level. In general the fundraising ability in the SOS organisation seems to be stronger than in most other NGOs. Still it will be a major challenge to increase fundraising in order to reach the ambitious global objectives.

On paper the organisation has a safe and comprehensive system of accounting and auditing. Auditing is done according to international standards. As KDI is responsible for supervision and monitoring of all projects and programmes in NAs, it checks and approves the financial statements. However, SOS Norway also goes through and comments on the accounts and audited statements as an extra precaution. A Financial Manual provides common minimum requirements for financial follow-up which must be adhered to by NAs. An updated Financial Manual is in the pipeline adjusted according to the changes in strategy and structure. The increased diversity of activities related to the FSP approach, as well as plans for expansion, might make it more challenging to ensure transparency in the use of funds.

The team has looked into the financial management system pertaining to projects and programmes in Zambia which are supported by SOS Norway. Some random samples were made based on the accounts and audited statements for 2007 that SOS Norway had received from SOS Zambia. Here we found for instance no mentioning of accrued interests, and the independent auditor's reports contained no findings or special remarks, only standard statements and reference to International Standards of Auditing (ISA 800). However, our follow-up questions were satisfactory answered both orally and in the "Financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2007," where "interest received" did appear. In the so-called "Management Letter" from the auditor there were several useful recommendations and points to be followed up by the management in SOS Zambia. The internal routines for financial management seemed to be clear. The regional office played a central part in the monitoring of resources. A method used by the regional FSP coordinator was surprise sample controls. This seemed to be an efficient way of identifying possible fraud cases at an early stage.

Despite an apparent solid system, cases of corruption and fraud have been reported in a couple of SOS Norway's partner NAs in Africa. One case was recently discovered by a representative from SOS Norway and the regional coordinator during a field visit, thus not by financial controllers or auditors. The team's impression is that the cases have been followed up well by SOS Norway, and that lessons have been learned and used in the strengthening of the anti-corruption work. SOS Norway has been active in KDI's work of introducing guidelines for prevention of corruption in the organisation, due to be finalised in the first half of 2009.

5.2. Planning, monitoring and reporting

SOS-KDI has identified the need to revise the planning process according to the shift the organisation is going through, with the intent to make a single and consolidated document for all parts of the programme management at country level. A document titled "Administration of SOS Family Strengthening Programmes" (draft) is intended to provide information about requirements and deadlines that the NAs need to adhere to in their FSPs. A "Child Rights Based Analysis" will according to the strategic plan be used to decide areas of intervention. So far only a few countries have pioneered this. More in-depth feasibility studies are conducted at community level. SOS Zambia did a baseline study before the initiation of its FSP in 2002.

Before reports reach SOS Norway from the SOS partners they have gone through all KDI levels for quality assurance. SOS Norway also reviews the reports. In the case of Norad funded projects SOS Norway often has to ask for additional information from the partners through KDI in order to satisfy Norad's reporting requirements. Still the quality of reporting to Norad has not been quite up to expected standards for a cooperation agreement partner, and the room for improved reporting has been part of the dialogue between Norad and SOS Norway. SOS Norway has made an effort to improve this. In June 2008 it organised a workshop in Uganda with SOS partners from the six countries which would be included in the new multi-annual plan to Norad, in order to create a common platform. Result orientation was an important issue on the agenda. SOS Norway has also hired a consultant to work with the staff on result-based management.

SOS Norway's recently submitted plan to Norad (2009-2013), is considerably clearer on goals, objectives, indicators and risks than the multi-annual plan for the current agreement period. The fact that a similar programme model is implemented in all six countries gives opportunities for rationalisation in planning by using the same template for goal hierarchy and indicators which can be adapted to local contexts. SOS Norway has exploited this fully in the new multi-annual plan.

An internal draft KDI document indicates that the organisation is in a process of working out a clearer programme structure, and trying to define what an integrated approach means in practice, thus aligning the existing structure more to the new strategy, identifying inconsistencies and gaps. A project group has been established for this purpose. A main output of this work will be a new concept for the structure of SOS programmes which can form the basis for planning and measurement of results.

KDI is also in the process of setting up a new database for FSP, which will make it easier to retrieve information about results. This database will keep record of all the families involved and the resources committed. According to SOS Norway this will

improve baseline information and quality assurance, and be an important tool for result-based management.

In order to monitor the progress of beneficiaries on the way to self reliance, the FSP manual states that a system of Family Development Plans (FDPs) shall be used. SOS Zambia started using FDPs 2 years ago. Social workers sit down with each family and identify gaps and how to fill these, and especially what the family itself is able to do in this respect. Social workers and community volunteers then monitor progress of the families and consider when a family has reached the point where it can exit from the programme.

A new Monitoring and Evaluation framework is under development in KDI. A system of annual self-evaluation is being introduced as part of the FSP follow-up at country level. This might improve the ability to assess efficiency throughout the programme cycle. According to the FSP manual, external impact evaluations shall be carried out every 3-5 years. At the end of 2007 such evaluations were carried out in selected countries, including Zambia, based on the standards in the FSP manual. SOS Zambia has included the recommendations in its strategic planning. A global summary report has been made by KDI, highlighting the main findings of these evaluations. A major mid-term review of the entire global strategic plan will take place in 2012.

5.3. Technical capacity

SOS Norway's capacity in terms of human resources has been addressed under points 2.1. and 4.1. above.

SOS-KDI has a staff of approximately 350 people. A new international technical programme department is currently being set up at HQ level. Previously the technical work was mainly done in the Hermann Gmeiner Academy, which is now an arena for sharing lessons learned. The regional offices are tasked to provide technical support to the NAs. The regional office in Harare, responsible for Zambia and six other countries in southern Africa, currently has 7 staff.

There are more than 30 000 local employees in the NAs. This is a considerable number. In addition SOS Children's Villages makes use of volunteers. SOS Zambia currently has a staff of 310 people, but has calculated that it needs 760 within the coming strategy period in order to achieve its national target of reaching 16 000 children. Included in the calculation is the establishment of new Villages in addition to the three existing ones. Shortage of qualified manpower, as well as difficulties of retaining qualified staff was pointed out as a major future challenge by the Chairman of the Board of SOS Zambia.

The team's impression of the staff both in SOS Norway and SOS Zambia is that they are very proud of their organisation, motivated and committed to making a positive change for children. According to the National Director in SOS Zambia the organisation is characterised by a strong, shared feeling of working for a common cause. This is clearly a strength in terms of capacity to implement.

The new global strategic plan includes stronger national self reliance. Capacity building of national SOS associations was highlighted by SOS staff at all levels as a major challenge in the new strategy period. According to KDI representatives, the intention is to move more capacity from HQ level to the regional level in KDI. The global strategy recognises the need to improve the sharing of lessons learned. The team's impression from the field visit is that this worked well at a regional level.

The usual procedure in SOS Zambia when receiving a new guideline or tool from KDI is to appoint a core person who will be responsible for the follow-up, and try to see how it can be harmonised with other guiding documents. There seems to be little awareness in SOS Zambia about KDI policies that are in the pipelines. However, the staff does not fear such new policies as they trust that these will be useful and can be adapted to the local context. The team's impression is that there is a risk of overloading NAs with all the new documents that are now coming more or less at the same time.

The core competence of SOS Children's Villages is within child care and management of child care institutions. The organisation can build on considerable experience when it comes to care for children with difficult family backgrounds and emotional traumas. There seems to be a potential to use this competence more, i.e. not so much replicate the SOS Village as such ("hardware"), but rather share tools in child care and best practices ("software"). The new areas within FSP related to community development, is where the organisation lacks most competence.

Partnership is an important standard in the FSP manual, and key SOS documents (final ones and drafts) indicate that partnership is becoming more important in the work of SOS Children's Villages. Partnering with local groups is a way of increasing ownership and sustainability. It can also be a way of supplementing SOS competence and capacity. There might be a potential to further exploit the opportunities of partnerships in the implementation of the new global strategic plan. Partnership is only just briefly mentioned in the strategy. However, a practical handbook exists, based on best practices (2006). Tools have moreover been developed at the regional level. SOS Zambia has a number of local partners that contribute to the programmes in various ways.

The Zambia FSP evaluation report (NIPA 2007) found that results at the end of the 5 year programme period were limited in terms of families moving away from a state of vulnerability. Only 13% were ready to exit the programme. Among the lessons learned identified in the report related to this are that: "Some interventions such as income generating activities (IGA), food security, and paralegal training required specialised skills and experience if they were to make significant impact on the households." Our assessment is also that while for instance IGA is clearly relevant for ensuring the self reliance of families, it is an exercise which demands considerable skills and competence. If not undertaken properly there might even be a risk of increasing the vulnerability of households involved. More technical in-house competence on issues like IGA is clearly needed if this shall be offered to beneficiaries either by SOS Children's Villages itself, or by other actors identified by SOS.

Another lesson learned in the NIPA report was that: "Community capacity building in preparation for community involvement and project ownership requires more investment, i.e. leadership and project management training awareness raising projects, and adequate budgetary provisions." This indicates that human resources and the level of competence have not been sufficient to achieve sustainable results. It might also indicate that the goal of self reliance, and "exit" of SOS Children's Villages, might not always be realistic within the planned time frame for all beneficiaries. Indeed, one of the main findings in KDI's global summary report of the impact evaluations is that 3-5 years is not enough to achieve sustainable impact. On the other side, it is reasonable to believe that the chances for success will increase as NAs such as SOS Zambia gain more experience with FSP. The southern African region currently accounts for around

50% of all FSP beneficiaries. This indicates that NAs in other parts of the world might have a longer way to go before it can implement FSP in a sustainable way.

5.4. Challenges related to cost-effectiveness

SOS Children's Villages' increased focus on empowering families and communities, and attempt to promote "help for self-help," has the potential to reach more children with less SOS resources. However, there are a number of challenges related to a successful and efficient implementation of this new approach. In general the holistic approach and high ambitions, as well as the great needs in the communities in which SOS Children's Villages operates seem to make it difficult for the organisation to prioritise. The following dilemmas and challenges can be highlighted:

Balancing quantity and quality: SOS Children's Villages is known for its strong focus on quality. While FSP shows flexibility in responding to needs, this poses at the same time a risk to inefficiency by spreading resources too thinly. Doing "a little bit of everything," some of which might be beyond SOS Children's Villages' competence, involves challenges in ensuring sufficient quality. However, in more traditional SOS intervention areas like education, quality standards might be too high to reach all beneficiaries efficiently. It might be a challenge for SOS to accept lower standards for its beneficiaries such as when entering into a cooperation with a local school.

Keeping the focus on goals and target group: SOS staff and documents are very clear when it comes to defining the target group. This might at times be difficult to stick to as SOS is increasingly opening up to the larger community. There are many positive aspects of opening up facilities; it provides some income, gives goodwill, and access to social services for more poor people. It can potentially reduce stigma, and integrate the target group more in the community. SOS is also faced with general ad-hoc requests from communities involved. The challenge is to balance this carefully towards using available resources for cost-effective activities more directly benefiting the target group and the achievement of planned goals. The focus on FSP also implies balancing the need for additional Villages vs. exploiting the potential for outreach activities.

Impact on target group beyond direct beneficiaries: Advocacy within the area of SOS' core competence, and efforts to build capacity in relevant government agencies and other child care institutions based on the existing competence of the organisation, could potentially have considerable impact on the target group beyond those who are direct beneficiaries in SOS programmes. However, this might be difficult for NAs to prioritise when trying to reach so many children directly through its own programmes, and also trying to apply a holistic approach which partly requires building of new competence.

Rationalisation of human resources: The high ambitions in the new strategy has created a felt need in the organisation for increased capacity in terms of extra staff. The team questions the scale of such an expansion. Have other opportunities been properly considered in order to reallocate human resources and find new ways of organising the work? In the case of SOS Zambia, basing its plans on a huge expansion involves a risk both for itself as well as for public agencies within the field of child care, considering the scarcity of qualified manpower. For SOS Norway there might be opportunities for rationalising human resources by taking more advantage of the opportunities of being a member of KDI, first and foremost by considering ways to avoid duplication of work.

6. Recommendations

The main conclusions and findings of the review are included in the executive summary at the beginning of this report. The team's main recommendations are:

- SOS Norway should use its competence and creativity to the full extent in order to identify the ways in which it can support the SOS organisation, particularly its local SOS partners, to consolidate its new role and approach in the best possible way. There is a need to shift focus from policy development to implementation.
- SOS Norway should focus more on results according to goals and plans, and improve the quality of reporting to Norad with a focus on the results achieved for the main target group, i.e. orphans and vulnerable children.
- SOS Norway should encourage the SOS system to creatively assess and develop the most cost-effective use of human and financial resources. SOS Norway should also continue to focus on the prevention of corruption and fraud, and use its leverage within the organisation in order to reduce this risk.
- The Family Strengthening Programmes is the part of SOS' work where cooperation with Norad is the most relevant, and where Norad can provide the highest added value through dialogue with SOS Norway. The cooperation should continue to focus on this programme.
- Norad should follow closely the organisation's further development in the years to come regarding its ability to implement all the new policies and guidelines, and assess SOS Norway according to results achieved for the target group.

Key reference documents

COWI (2004): "Review of SOS Children's Village Norway, Final Report"

National Institute of Public Administration, NIPA (2007): "Evaluation report. Lusaka Outreach Programmes of SOS Children's Village of Zambia Trust (Family Strengthening Programme and Medical Centre" www.norad.no/ngo-evaluation

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005): "Three billion reasons. Norway's Development Strategy for Children and Young People in the South" www.mfa.no

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad (2001): "Grant schemes for Humanitarian Assistance and Development Cooperation by Norwegian and International Voluntary Actors" (guidelines) www.norad.no

SOS Children's Villages Norway (2006): "Strategi 2012"

SOS Kinderdorf International (2007): "Family Strengthening Programme Manual"

SOS-KDI (2008): "Strategic Plan 2009-2016"

SOS-KDI (2002): "Who we are. Roots, Vision, Mission and Values"

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

1. Background

As part of Norad's mandate to carry out quality assurance of the cooperation and support to NGOs, organisational performance reviews are carried out regularly. Similar reviews are also carried out as a part of Norad's assessment before any renewal of frame agreements. .

Since we have entered the final year of the frame- agreement between Norad and the SOS- Children's Villages Norway (SOS Norway), an organisational review will be carried out as per agreement

SOS Norway has been a cooperating partner and received support from Norad since 1997. The organisation entered into a two-year agreement with Norad in 2004. A new three-year agreement was entered in 2006 and 2008 is the last year of the current agreement.

SOS Norway – the organisation (in brief)

- SOS Norway is a member of the SOS-Kinderdorf International. SOS-Kinderdorf International was founded just after the Second World War. An umbrella organisation was founded in 1960. SOS Norway is a member of the umbrella organisation. The organisation is a politically and religiously independent and neutral organisation.
- Children's rights and preventing orphanage
- Children villages and an outreach-program

The team

Will consist of Inge Tveite (team leader), cand. paed., Senior Adviser, Norad and Vibeke Sørum, cand.polit, Adviser, Norad. The team will present its division of labour in the Inception Report.

2. Purpose

The review shall describe and analyse SOS Norway's ability to perform effectively and efficiently within the framework of the development cooperation. The focus of the review must be on the following:

- Cost-effectiveness in the use of funds
- Coherence with Norwegian development policy priorities
- Relevance for partners
- Ability to achieve its own objectives

The review must assess SOS Norway's technical, financial and administrative capacity – in cooperation with local partners in the South – to carry out the agreed programs and achieve planned objectives.

3. Scope

The review must describe, analyse, conclude and recommend suggestions for a follow-up with special emphasis on the following:

SOS Norway's development objectives and strategy

- Values
- Thematically and geographical area of attention
- Working methods
- Organisational culture

Structure of the organisation

- Organogram; management and executive bodies, communication and decision-making
- Benefits and constraints of belonging to an international organisation/network.
- Peers/donors/sponsors/members
- Budget

Working with (local) partners/ Strengthening civil society

- Strategies for selecting local partners
- Roles – relations – agreements – ownership in the South
- Competence building
- Sharing experiences and lessons learnt/ Transparency
- Exit-strategies/sustainability
- Added value
- Advocacy work and networks

Financial management and administrative control

- Systems for prevention of corruption
- Monitoring cash flows
- Financial reporting routines
- Human Resource Development (HRD) management and recruitment of staff

Technical competence

- Thematic
- Geographic
- Organisational knowledge
- Local partner's competence/expertise

Use of resources related to activities and results (cost effectiveness)

- the outreach-program

SOS Norway's coherence with Norwegian development cooperation policy, especially with respect to

- Gender
- Environment
- Children's Rights
- HIV/AIDS
- Inclusion of children living with disabilities/children with special needs
- Education

Result management

- System for collecting, assessing, evaluating and reporting
- System for monitoring and learning
- Relevance for end user

4. Methods

The review shall consist of the following elements:

- Document-studies, relevant files both in SOS Norway and Norad
- Interviews, SOS Norway management and some programme officers, Norad-heads and programme officers.
- An interview guide must be developed and presented in the inception report
- Field visit to Zambia – one week in October (week 41) 08.

5. Reports

An inception report shall be presented to Norad within the 3rd October 08

A draft report shall be submitted to Norad and SOS Norway for comments within 2 weeks after the field visit.

The final report shall be submitted to Norad within 30th October 08.

The report must not exceed 20 pages, including a maximum of a 3 pager executive summary. The report must be submitted electronically in Word for Windows format.

As part of a follow up, a workshop to extract, discuss and conclude from the report may be called for and arranged by Norad.

6. Timeframe

Norad stipulates the following timeframe:

Desk –study in SOS Norway and Norad: 2 weeks.

Field-study: 1 week - Zambia

Report-writing: 2 weeks.

7. Budget

Not to exceed 100 000 NOK including travel costs, allowances, salary (local consultant if necessary) .

Terje Vigtel
Director
Civil Society Department
Norad

Date: 22.09.2008

Annex 2: List of people met

SOS Norway

Mr. Svein Grønnern	Secretary General
Ms. Anne Helte	Deputy Secretary General/Director Adm. department
Ms. Berit Bakkane	Director of International Programmes
Ms. Cathrine Solheim	Programme Coordinator/Deputy Director
Ms. Hanne Rustad	Director Marketing and Communication
Ms. Sidsel Jordheim	Director National Programme
Ms. Synne Rønning	Head of Information Department
Mr. Stein Støa	Public Relations International Programmes
Ms. Kjersti Movold	Programme Coordinator
Ms. Britt Schumann	Programme Coordinator
Mr. Lars Gill	Programme Coordinator
Mr. Anders Strand	Financial Controller

SOS-KDI

Mr. Richard Pichler	Secretary General (HQ)
Mr. Peter Völker	Deputy Secretary General (HQ)
Ms. Evelyn Winkler	Global FSP Advisor (HQ)
Mr. Paul Fasser	Team Manager Finance Monitoring & Clearing (HQ)
Mr. Justine A. Lungu	Regional Community Development Advisor, Harare

SOS Zambia

Ms. Florence F. Phiri	National Director
Mr. Chamanga T. Mithi	Deputy National Director
Mr. Jitesh Naik	Chairman of the Board of Trustees, SOS Zambia
Mr. Christopher B. Phiri	National Family Strengthening Programme Coordinator
Ms. Selenia Matimelo	Family Strengthening Programme Coordinator, Lusaka
Mr. Smaiton Sichande	Director, SOS Children's Village, Lusaka
Ms. Morah Povia	Head, Kindergarten, SOS Childrens Village, Lusaka
Ms. Rabecca Chipoya	Head, Herman Gmeiner Basic School, SOS CV Lusaka
Mr. David Nyimbiri	Head, Herman Gmeiner High School, SOS CV Lusaka
Mr. Smart Changwe	Principal, Vocational Training Centre, SOS CV Lusaka
Mr. Lucas Nkhoma	Act. Coordinator, Medical Centre, SOS CV Lusaka
Mr. Lazarus Bwalya	Senior Accountant
Mr. Fred M. Kaunda	Human Resource Manager

The team also met social workers, volunteers, members of a COVCC and beneficiaries in the FSP, as well as SOS Mothers in charge of some of the Village family houses.

National stakeholders

Mr. Samuel Mwenda	Chief Child Development Officer, Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development
Mr. Gabriel Fernandez	Chief, Child Protection Section, UNICEF, Zambia
Mr. Joseph Breza	Chief Executive Officer, Breza Engineering, Lusaka

Norad

Mr. Terje Vigtel	Head of Civil Society Department
Ms. Eli K. Sletten	Senior Advisor
Ms. Tone Slenes	Advisor

Royal Norwegian Embassy, Lusaka

Mr. Tore F. Gjøs	Ambassador
Ms. Helene Michalsen	Programme Officer

Norad

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