

# CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television Programs for Children and Youth



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Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union  
&  
Save the Children

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Evaluator: Niklas N. Ageros, January 2013

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## Acronyms

BOL	Bolikhamxay Province
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRG	Child Rights Governance
DJ	Disc Jockey
LPB	Luang Prabang Province
LYU	Lao Youth Union (Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union)
MoICT	Ministry of Information, Cultural and Tourism
MMD	Lao Youth Union Mass Media Department
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCMC	National Commission for Mothers and Children
SC	Save the Children
SCN	Save the Children Norway
TV	Television
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children

## **1. Purpose of Evaluation<sup>1</sup>**

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess and document the progress to date of Save the Children's support to the Lao Youth Union radio and television activities. In the history of this support to this project there has not been a formal evaluation conducted, only an assessment workshop conducted in 2009 to develop a second phase of the program.

As the project is now coming to the end of the second phase, with the MoU ending December 2012, a new project phase will be developed. Therefore an additional purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and sustainability of the current project and to provide the Country programme with key recommendations for the next phase.

The main target audiences of the Evaluation:

- a) Save the Children – existing project staff and the Senior Management Team (SMT) in the Lao Country Office.
- b) Save the Children Norway – the main supporting member of the project.
- c) Central, Provincial and District governmental departments involved in the project management and implementation.
- d) Children and youth involved in managing the television and radio programme, including local listener groups in 4 target provinces.
- e) External donors – existing and future donors.

## **2. Scope of Evaluation**

The scope of the evaluation has covered 1) Overall management of the project, including technical support, by the Lao Youth Union and Save the Children; 2) Content of the radio and television programme; 3) Child and youth-led capacity for designing, producing and airing radio and television programme's; and 4) Role and effectiveness of provincial radio listener group.

## **3. Methodology**

For this evaluation both Primary and Secondary data is used. Primary data consists of individual and semi-structured interviews conducted in Vientiane Capital and Thaphabath District from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. Interviews were conducted with key staff involved directly and indirectly with this programme from Save the Children, Lao Youth Union, LYU Mass Media Department, LYU Pioneers Department, Lao National Radio, Lao National Television, and UNICEF. A list of individuals interviewed can be found in Annex 1.

On 16 December 2012 eight DJs (4 youth and 4 children) were interviewed about their involvement and participation in the LYU radio and television program. A focus group discussion was held with Thaphabath Listener group on 17 December 2012. A total of 32 young people (14 girls) were consulted. The participants discussed their views on the LYU radio program and their role in the project. A participant list from the focus group discussion can be found in Annex 2.

On two occasions, the evaluator, along with SC Staff, observed the production and recording of radio programs by children and youth DJ's. The first observation was of youth recording and editing content

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation should be taken lightly, given limitations to the scope of evaluations. Review of the programs objectives and progress with

for the Youth Radio program in office rooms of the LYU-Mass Media Department. The second observations was of children (young pioneers) recording content in the Lao National Radio Studio. Both recording/production locations are in Vientiane Capital.

Secondary data consisted of a desk review of program documents such as Memorandum of Understandings, project implementation plans, baseline surveys, and other key documents relating to the program. A list of documents reviewed can be found in Annex 3.

The review of secondary data also included sampling of content from the LYU radio and television programs. This consisted of evaluation of radio and TV programs scripts, and watching a 30 minute outh television production and TV spots.

It is important to note that terminology played an important role during the evaluation. The key terms that need clarification for this evaluation is *Child, and Youth*. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990) the definition of a child is a person up to 18 years of age. This is the definition which Save the Children uses as their work is guided by the UNCRC. The United Nations definition of youth (General Assembly, 1985) is a person between the ages 15-24. By this definition a child is then considered a person under the age of 14. In addition, within this is a category of teenager (13-19) and young adults (20-24).

The term “youth” often vary in definition country by country depending on specific social-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. The Lao Youth Union defines child (Pioneers) at people ages 6-7. “Young people” are considered to be ages 8-14 and youth considered to be 15-35. It is important to keep this in mind as age and culture often play a major factor on how people are viewed in society as well as level of participation and role they are allowed to play in society. Concepts of what children can, should or capable of doing or participating can vary greatly from partner to partner.

#### **4. Key Limitations**

Given the limitations, the evaluator has seen this process as a review/assessment of the progress *CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television program for Children and Youth rather than a full evaluation*.

##### *Duration and Timing*

The first key limitation to the evaluation was the timing and duration of the evaluation. The contractual duration for the evaluation was 13 days- which included a desk review, interviews and semi-structured focus groups and writing the evaluation report. The limited time only allowed for sampling of radio and television content. Without the time to conduct an in-depth analysis it was unclear to see the progress and changes of content over the project period (six years). Focus group discussions with Listener Groups were also affected by the restricted evaluation time. Rather than sampling listener groups in both urban areas and rural areas, the only option was to meet listener groups close to Vientiane. This poses a problem to addressing “what the real reach of the program is” especially since radio as a concept of communication has the capability and is used to reach “hard to access” communities.

##### *Accessing key ex-staff*

The second key limitation was access to staff with historical knowledge of the program and its origin. With the end of Save the Children Norway’s operational presence in September 2011 and the transition to one country office under Save the Children International, the country office has gone through a major reorganization process, which has translated into loss of project knowledge and information. The current CRG team is committed; however the team is quite new and was unable to provide historical

background of the program as well as locate key project documents to be reviewed. The evaluator made a number of attempts, all unsuccessful, to contact ex-CRG staff, who were responsible for program between 2007-2011 program years.

#### *Baseline follow-up*

The fourth key limitation of the evaluation was the absence of a follow-up audience survey to the 2008 Baseline Audience Survey for Children's Rights Radio project that was produced by the Lao Youth Union Mass Media and Pioneers Department with the support from Save the Children consultant Niamh Hannifin. The objective of the 2008 baseline was to understand the radio listening preference and habits of youth and children, to assess current awareness of the Mass Media Department radio programmes and to measure children's and youths understanding of Violence Against Children and the CRC. It was stated in the conclusion of the Baseline Study that a follow-up will be repeated at the end of the programme. Without the follow-up the evaluator was unable to measure any concrete changes in attitudes or knowledge levels among children and youth or changes in exposure to LYU's radio programme and overall impact of the project.

#### *Financial analysis*

The fifth and last key limitation to the evaluation was the lack of access to financial data relating to the project activities. Save the Children Finance Department was unable to prepare a detailed breakdown of the project budgets and expenditure over the last 3-7 years. The evaluator was unable to comment on the financial aspect of the project funds of timeliness, utilization, efficiency and any audit issues.

### **5. Additional Areas of Review**

The *CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television Programmes for Children and Youth* Project is designed around the concepts for a) creating spaces in the media sector for children and youth to actively participate and b) supporting children and youth so they have the skills and understanding to produce media content for their peers, especially content reflecting the provisions stated in the UNCRC. Because of these crossing cutting themes of media and child/youth participation the Evaluator felt it was important to explore these areas in the country and project context.

#### *Media in the Lao PDR*

With new technology, economic development in the past five years and a new Media Law (2008) the media sector in the Lao PDR have seen a large growth. According to Mr. Somkiao Kingsada, Deputy Director of Lao Youth Union Media Department, from 1979-1986 the media scene was closed. Around 1986 the media "doors" started to open up with pressure and support from international actors. Radio programming started to report more "openly" and included realistic topics such as HIV and yaba<sup>2</sup>. He further commented that 1994 to now is seen as the "investment period".

At present there are 32 TV stations including district, provincial and central stations nationwide, including two Lao National TV stations. Major cities now have access to international media through border country channels or cable/satellite TV. The Thai media still plays an important role in bordering areas to Thailand, as there are language similarities between the two countries. In the recent years the Lao government has granted licenses to private organizations/companies to run TV, and radio stations. In addition the government is allowing these private organizations/companies to buy buy air time on

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<sup>2</sup> Yaba is methamphetamines with a direct translation to "crazy medicine". According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports an increase of yaba use, distribution and trafficking throughout Laos.

National TV and Radio channels. Additionally, there has been high foreign investment into the Lao media, both in content and infrastructure support. Example of this would be China National Radio which started operating in 2011 with daily Lao language news and Vietnam setting up Voice of Vietnam in 2010. However, State run media is still the main medium for delivering official information.

There has been an increase of alternative media and sources for information, such as mobile phones and the internet. According to Inter World Stats<sup>3</sup> between 2000 and 2012, the number of internet user in Laos jumped from 6,000 to 592,764 users. This would be 9.0% penetration into the country's population, mainly in urban areas. This numbers will most likely continue to increase as internet access for mobile phones (3G and 4G) reaches more of the country's population.

Compared to its neighboring countries, China and Vietnam, internet user in the Lao PDR have open internet access. Due to this internet users are accessing social media sites well forming topic specific community discussion groups. This open access to the internet might change with the new constructed National Internet Center and support from China to the Lao government to develop an internet monitoring infrastructure and Internet control System.

The new Media Law (2008) outlines protective rights for Media and journalism, but there are still several areas of taboo. All media companies are associated with the government, Ministry of Information and Culture and Tourism, and all journals are employed by the State. Even with the large growth in the media sector, there are still many issues in regards to open journalism and taboo topics that can be reported.

The new law also stipulates the decrease in State funding to the media sector and need to move towards commercial support. Media will look more towards corporations (advertisements or/and selling "air time") as a source of revenue to fund their sector. This poses some concerns for certain media watch groups, as well as the government themselves. Such as the concern of "\$" being able to buy the media, and influence on social-cultural factors of young people with increased corporate media.

The children and youth media landscape has grown as well. Historically the Lao Youth Union had a child/Youth radio programme since 1982, but this mainly consisted of children and youth reading printed news on radio. As the "doors" opened up, and with support from international donors and INGO's like Save the Children, the media scene for children and youth moved away from a tokenistic form of participation too a form of participation in which children and youth are designing and delivering media content to and for children and youth. Having said that, child and youth media, like all media, is still controlled by State institutions such as the Lao Youth Union and the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MoICT). Save the Children and UNICEF have been the strongest supporters for creating active participation space for children and youth in the Lao media sector. An unofficial report from UNESCO on the media sector in Lao shows finding that Lao youth are engaging in other forms of media from other places and that they find State produced media to be uninteresting.

It can also be said that large companies such as telecommunication are actively engaging young people via the media, in order to win them as clients or users of their products.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>

### *Children and Youth Participation*

Save the Children, who are managing this project and Save the Children Norway as the donor are both guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Within the Convention there are number of articles directly and indirectly relating to children and youth rights to participation:

Article 12 of the UNCRC “assures to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the rights to express those views freely in all matters affecting the Child”. In relation to the media sector it would mean children and youth have an active right to take place on the media scene, and that media has a responsibility to listen to children’s views and give them participation spaces.

Article 13 provides the provision for children “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, and through various mediums.

Article 17 directly addresses the State. “State parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that he child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health”.

The Lao PDR adopted the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and since then the Lao government has established the National Commission for Mothers and Children (NCMC) to monitor and coordinate children’s issues across ministries. NCMC is also responsible, on behalf of the State Party, for reporting to the CRC Committee on the Rights of the Child (1997 and 2010). In the last Concluding Observation the CRC Committee encouraged the Lao government to respect the views of the child in all settings.

Throughout the country, institutionally and culturally, there is still little understanding about the concepts of participation and the value of active children and youth participation. Majority of child/youth participation that does take place takes a very conservative approach and often a tokenistic in nature. In Laos there still hangs a cultural barrier which gives way to the notion that “children should be seen not heard”. Having said that, like the “doors” opening up for the media sector, the “doors” or spaces for children and youth to choose to actively participate have begun to open up as well in the past 8-10. Support, as well as pressure, from the international development community has helped create this space and change attitudes towards child/youth participation. This support has resulted in targeted child/youth participation projects, such as this project which uses child/youth participation in the process to meet the overall and specific objectives- raising awareness about children’s rights, a key right being participation.

## **6. Background of Project**

The *CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television program for Children and Youth* project is implemented as part of Save the Children’s Child Rights Governance Programme in Laos. The project is the second phase of support for the Lao Youth Union’s (LYU) mass media department to run a child and youth led-radio and TV programme on child rights since 2007. The first phase of the project was implemented with support from Save the Children Norway (SCN) from 2007 – 2009 and a new phase started in 2010, following an assessment workshop that led to the expansion and further development of LYU radio and TV activities. The project has been managed by Save the Children International (SCI) since transitioned to SCI in September 2011.

As baseline audience survey<sup>4</sup> was conducted in 2008 by the Lao Youth Union Mass Media Department and Pioneer's Department with the support from Save the Children Norway and consultant, Niamh Hannafin. The purpose and objective of the baseline study was to understand the radio listening preference and habits of youth to assess current awareness of the Mass Media Department and Pioneer Department Radio programs and to measure young people's understanding of Violence Against Children and CRC issues. The survey reached 3999 respondents between the ages of 15 and 35 in five provinces over a period of three weeks. The provinces were selected as being broadly representative of northern, central and southern parts of the country. The methodology used for this research was quantitative. The questionnaire was developed by Save the Children Norway and the Lao Youth Union with the actual survey being administered by the LYU through its provincial network. It is important to note that the majority of the respondents were of Lao Loum making it impossible to accurately assess how ethnicity affects radio listening habits or levels of knowledge on relevant issues. The full findings of the baseline study can be seen in Annex 4.

The assessment workshop of the first phase showed that the radio programs had an overall positive impact on children and youth and so the second phase included an expansion into television and more outreach activities at the school and community level.

### *Objectives*

The overall objective of the radio and television program is to raise awareness of Child Rights, child participation, protection of children from any forms of child violation through radio and television programs for children and youth.

### *Specific Objectives (phase 2)*

1. To disseminate information on Child Rights, Child Participation and protection of children from violation and other problems related to children-youths through radio-television programs and outreach activities at rural school and community.
2. To provide opportunity for children to express their own views in society.
3. To sensitize people in communities realizing child rights, child protection and development of children.
4. To establish children and youth volunteers in order to become experienced radio and television presenters and disc jockeys (DJs).
5. To strengthen capacity of young presenters, DJ, LYU and provincial LYU on media especially radio and television

In Section 12, the evaluator reviews project achievements against the planned objectives and outputs.

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<sup>4</sup> Baseline Audience Survey For Children's Rights Radio Project (2008 Mass Media and Pioneers Department) with support from Save the Children consultant Niamh Hanafin.

At present the Save the Children project is supporting four Lao Youth Union radio programs and one youth television program. There are two youth radio programs 30 minutes in length and two children's radio programs also 30 minutes in length.

**Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *It is important to note that LYU Radio program has existed since 1984. At that time it was children and young people simply reading the news on the radio and since then has developed further with INGO support. The radio programs in this project have not been newly developed. In this project, SC has supported this existing LYU radio program by providing CRC content for the LYU to incorporate into the programs as well as helping LYU to expand their approach to involve children and youth to actively participate in LYU Media production.*

*Children's Radio*

Frequency/Channel	Title	Broadcast Time	Day
AM 576 MHz	Story Telling for Children	08:00 – 08:30	Saturday and Sunday
FM 103.7 MHz	Yao Vason Lao Kao Pia	08:30 – 09:00	Sunday

The programs are recorded by child volunteer DJ's (ages 8-15) in a studio at the Lao National Radio with technical support from the Lao National Radio staff. The Pioneer Department within the LYU coordinates "pioneer volunteers" to be DJ's, act as chaperones during the recording sessions and support to content development. The LYU children's radio programs are not live broadcasts. Children record news reports, stories, spots and child rights songs which then are compiled and edited into a final 30 minute radio segment by LYU and LNR technical staff and then broadcasted. When inquired why these programs are not live broadcasts, the response was the children were too young for live broadcasting.

**Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *There are evidence based radio programs in which children between the ages 8-14 are DJ for live radio broadcast. It is recommended that SC and LYU further explore this avenue when designing phase 3.*
- *Because the LYU children's radio program uses LNR studio facilities every weekend to record and edit the radio programs the LNR request financial support for the studio (equipment and maintenance), making the existing studio a LYU-SC Children's Radio Studio. At present SC financial support goes directly to the LYU, the main partner.*

*Youth Radio*

Frequency/Channel	Title	Broadcast Time	Day
AM 576 MHz	Friends for Youth	20:00 – 20:30	Saturday and Sunday
FM 103.7 MHz	Songs for Youth	21:00 – 22:00	Sunday

The spoken content for the programs are recorded by youth volunteer DJ's (ages 15-24) in offices rooms LYU- Mass Media Department every Saturday morning. Content, such as English language lessons, motto's, CRC spots, and new reports are produced by the DJs with additional reports coming from Listener Groups in the provinces. There are two LYU project staff (also DJs, but employees of LYU) that support the youth volunteer DJs in finding information/content, help youth plan programs, coordinate the volunteers and also are "editors" of content before live broadcast. After content has been recorded

using digital recorded and edited using simple audio software the DJs go to LNR to broadcast live. LNR provide technical support during broadcasting.

**Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *Using digital recorders in an office with the noise of air-condition and cars in and out of the parking lot is not conducive to capturing quality audio for radio programs and could potentially have affect on the number of listeners of the program.*
- *It is unclear why youth DJ's are not using the LNR facilities. Further investigation is needed.*
- *It is recommend that Youth DJ'S are given the appropriate space to record their content, whether this is a new space within the LYU or an agreed space provided by the LNR.*

*Youth Television*

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Broadcast time</b>	<b>Day</b>
Lao National TV 1	Youth Television And "Children Asking, Adults Answering"	08:10 – 08:40 20:10 – 20:40 <i>*Time above are the agreed time. However airing time might vary depending on LNTV program scheduling.</i>	Saturday

Save the Children support to the LYU Youth Television program was established in the second phase of the project. However, during the evaluation there was very little evidence based documentation on reasons for why and what type of support (except for the purchase of equipment) was to be given. Since 2010 to now the LYU TV has only produced two 30 minute TV productions. Television program are produced by a very small team in the Mass Media Department, with basic equipment. TV presenters are LYU volunteer or Youth staff. The LYU TV team report on LYU activities, which was observed by the Evaluator when attending a three day CRC camp in Bolikhamxay Province. Save the Children has provided video equipment (digital video camera and desktop editing suit). The financial support from the project is small, roughly 700 USD per month (8,400 USD annual).

**Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *Before any future support is committed to LYU TV program, it is recommended that an implementation plan is developed between the two partners. Outlining what type of support will provided and by whom, how the CRC messages convey in the TV program (spots, drama, quizzes etc.)and what the project outputs/outcomes would be*
- *It is recommended that SC either skill-up existing staff or acquire new staff that can support LYU TV Program. This person would need to have knowledge of TV as a medium, how to design and develop content to TV and understanding of the new Media Law (2008).*
- *Despite commitment of phase 3 it is vital that LYU technical staff receive training on how to use the desktop editing suit purchase by SCN for the project. During interviews with the LYU technical staff, they said they appreciated and needed the equipment but need training on how to use it and editing software. SCN purchased an Apple desktop valued at \$1,200 -\$1,700 (depending on specs) at time of purchase (2011) and is not being used.*

### *Radio Time and Date*

The both the children and youth radio programs are 30 minutes in length. The length of the programs is based on the allocated time which has been decided between the Central Committee of Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union and the Ministry of Information, Cultural and Tourism.

### ***Evaluators Comments or Recommendations***

- *Both DJs as well as LYU staff involved in the project requested for more air time for the radio programs.*
- *It is recommended that the CRG team follows-ups and further investigates. From the Evaluators understanding this would be a discussion between the LYU and MoIC. It could be that the LYU is inadvertently asking for financial support to buy air time.*

### *Geographic Reach*

It is extremely difficult to determine the geographic reach of the LYU radio and television program, without conducting an audience survey. Save the Children should consider supporting (funding and technical) the LYU with conducting a follow-up to the 2008 Baseline Audience Survey. The follow-up would allow better understanding of the reach of the media produced as well as the impact of the programs over the 6 year project period.

It has been confirmed by both SC and LYU staff that both the AM/FM programs does not reach all SC target districts<sup>5</sup>. The reason for this is unclear and needs further investigation; however the most likely reasons are due to low bandwidth as well as the mountainous terrain. The LYU has confirmed that listener groups or the LYU network in these districts do participate in the project as young reporters in the field.

## **7. Stakeholders**

### *Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union*

The Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, also known as the Lao Youth Union (LYU) is a mass organization of the government. The mass organization originated during the communist revolution, when two groups were formed: 1) the Battle Youth Association – which had direct relations to the revolution and 2) the Patriotic Youth Association – a civilian based organization, later these two groups where combined to form the Lao Youth Union<sup>6</sup>.

The objectives and defined policies of the LYU have been laid out by the Central Committee of Lao's People Revolutionary Youth Union. In the most simplistic form the Lao Youth has two main responsibilities:

It is responsible for educating and delivering useful information that develop the lives of Lao youths and pioneers in terms of cultural-social matters. Protecting children's rights as well as providing opportunity

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<sup>5</sup> Bolikhamxay Province: Viengthong & Khamkurt District; Luang Prabang Province: Viengkham District and Sayaboury Province: Hongsa District.

<sup>6</sup> ASEAN & ASEAN@Youth, No Date

for children to participate in the development. In addition, the LYU is responsible for leading Lao youth and children throughout the country.

It also studies and translates the policy, resolutions of the Party, regulations and social economic development plan of the government, the resolution of the Lao Youth Union Congress into programs for education developing youths and pioneers in order to become a good citizen of the nation and become devoted successor officials of the Party.

The LYU operates at the central provincial, district and village level. The organization has a Print & Electronic Department, which sits under the LYU Mass Media Department, and publishes NOK HIEN BIN (Small Birds) magazine and Noum Lao newspaper and also makes television and radio programmes for children and youth.

In the past 10-15 years the LYU role has transformed to being the “government” counterpart or implementing organization to project have introduced by international organizations/agencies such as Save the Children, UNICEF, and other child oriented organizations.

Depending on the source membership of the Lao Youth Union is between 213,000 to 2 million. The later figures have been recorded/reported by the LYU themselves. The criteria for becoming a LYU Youth Member are:

- Male or female of Lao nationality; ages 15-30;
- Demonstrate activeness in-schools, workplaces and communities;
- Be willing to contribute to national protection
- Agree to follow the rules of the Lao Youth Union; and
- Be physically health and strong

#### *LYU Mass Media Department*

The role of the Mass Media Department is to educate youth and children on political ideology as well provide information about social-economic and the movement of Lao youths concerning science, the environment, technology and entertainment using print, radio and television. In addition, the department is a space that provides opportunity for Lao youths and children to express their ideas and show their talents.

#### *Children and Youth DJ's*

Are made up of either volunteers (majority LYU members) or staff who contributes to the production of LYU Radio and TV programs. Fifty volunteer child/youth DJ's are participating in this SC supported project.

#### *Listener Groups/Clubs*

The project has established listener groups in three of Save the Children's target provinces – Sayaboury, Luang Prabang and Bolikhamzay. As an extension of the LYU network they are meant to provide feedback on the radio program.

#### *Save the Children and Save the Children Norway*

Save the Children and its Members (Norway, Australia, UK, and France) have been working the Lao PDR for more than 22 years. The organization works in the areas of early childhood Development Education, Primary Health Care, Child Protection, Emergency/Disaster Risk Reduction and Child Rights Governance. September 2011 marked the end to Save the Children Norway's (SCN) operational presence in the Lao

PDR with Save the Children International taking over operational management of the country program. SCN has played an important role in supporting the government to improve child rights in Laos with high a funding commitment from SCN Head Office and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### *Save the Children and LYU Partnership*

The Lao Youth Union and Save the Children have had a long standing relationship. Save the Children Norway became physically operational in 1997 with a mandate to explore entry points for the UNCRC and to better implement child rights among Lao children and communities, through awareness raising and strengthening the education system.

The Lao Youth Union (LYU) first became a partner of SCN in 1998, assisting with participatory research on the economic exploitation of children. Save the Children Norway (SCN) began to support the pioneer magazine, NOK HIEN BIN (Small Birds) in 2002. This involvement in youth participatory media has continued and evolved over the years until now with Save the Children, funding from SCN, collaborating with the LYU on radio and television programs run for and by children and young people.

Save the Children Norway's support to the Lao Youth Union (1997-2011) has been 476,593 USD<sup>7</sup> to the following areas:

- Trained DJs for youth radio and TV Programs
- 200,00 "Birds Learn to Fly" Journal were published and distributed
- 132 Youth received vocational training
- Equipment was provided for conducting youth radio and TV programs
- Provide various support to relevant activities related to LYU, such as Children' Day events

### **8. Overall Management of the Project (including technical support)**

#### *Save the Children*

The overall management of the project from 2007-2012 has been generally strong. The main responsibilities of the Save the Children CRG team have been to provide budget reviews for monthly budget requests submitted by the LYU; provide technical training on child rights, child participation and child protection; and monitor the project on an ongoing basis. Over the project period Save the Children has strengthen the CRG staff capacity, by sending them to media (mainly radio) and child trainings, workshops and study visits. However, due to the transition to SCI between 2010-2011 the CRG section has seen a large turn over off staff who have been responsible for this project during phase one. This has resulted in a relatively new CRG team which consists of 1x Head of Sector, 1x Program Manager and 1x Project Officer. It should be noted that since transition the team has been downsized from having two project officers to now only one. The Program Manager and the Project Office are new, but are knowledgeable in child rights programming and have strong skills in management and finance, which benefit the project. The team has a comprehensive understanding of the project and overall objectives, but lack the technical knowledge of radio and TV to fully support the project, as well as the means to properly monitor the programming of radio and TV programs. At present the Program Manager and Project Officer share the responsibility in providing support to this project.

Over the project period there has varying levels of monitoring of the project. The Evaluator suspects the reason for this in mainly due to the frequent turnover of staff in the past couple of years. From 2007-

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<sup>7</sup> Save the Children Norway Lao PDR 1997 -2011 History and Achievements

2010 there is evidence, showing the CRG teams active engagement in the project. The evidence is based on viewing project documents such a list of radio topics that organized weekly, monthly and collection of radio scripts and audio files. An example can be seen in Annex 5. Supporting and monitoring continues into phase 2 of the project but wanes in the last year in half. There are different reasons for this a) turnover of staff, b) transition – staff had to turn their attention to learning new systems and c) lack of historical knowledge of how the project was supported and monitored. At present, the radio and TV activities are monitored by quarterly, six month, and annual reports that produced and submitted by the LYU. Quarterly reports are simple in nature with very little details about what is being produced by the young people. Details of the report usually give a figure such as “8 CRC spots have been aired this Quarter” with no detail on what the spots were about. The reports are reviewed and then filed.

#### ***Evaluators Comments or Recommendations***

- *Skill-up existing CRG staff in the technical understanding of radio and TV.*
- *Phase 3 project consider hiring a Child/Youth Radio and TV Technical Advisor. Monitoring and supporting any radio and TV project is a time consuming responsibility.*
- *Develop a monitoring plan and a mechanism for analyze data/information. The CRG team could start with developing, in conjunction with the LYU project team, a simple Microsoft ACCESS database. As examples, the database could provide the number of CRC spots aired over a given period of time, topics by sectors, frequency of topics and key feedback from listeners. Having quick and accessible access to this type of information would help in the development of radio/TV programming, assist with quick and timely reporting to donors and quantitative data for future fundraising.*
- *Whether the recommendation to produce a database is implemented or not, it is essential that SC works with the LYU team to produce more detailed report. Reports which provide more detail on how the CRC messages are incorporated into the radio/TV programs, at what frequency, etc.*
- *Capture the media that is being produced, especially if there will be continued support to TV. This was also suggested by Brynjar Nilsen, Save the Children Norway Child Rights Governance Officer who visited the Lao country program 27 August to 4 September. English, or even Norwegian, subtitle can be added to youth television pieces which can be used to report back to donors and also for future fundraising purposes. It is recommended that in phase 3 there is a budget line to do this along with an action plan (marketing plan) to disseminate.*
- *CP/CRG officer's in field office need to play an active role in supporting and monitoring Listener Groups and activities that revolve around these groups.*

#### ***Lao Youth Union***

Like the Save the Children management, the Lao Youth Union management has been overall strong in this project. The LYU management team consists of nine LYU staff. The team consists of department heads, technical advisors of the LYU and LNR and coordination staff. A list of names, position and responsibilities of individuals making up the LYU management team can be seen in Annex 6. Within the Lao Youth Union the Department of Mass Media is the responsible for project activities. The project receives technical support for editing and broadcasting from the Lao National Radio and the Department of Pioneers help coordinate volunteer children DJs. Central LYU staff coordinate with LYU Provincial and District who support the Listener Groups, an extension of the LYU network. The project sits within the larger mandate of LYU to produce mass media for children and youth in the Lao PDR. Project reports produced by the LYU which are submitted to Save the Children on a quarterly, six monthly and annual basis lacks details of child rights content.

### **Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *Like the comments/recommendations for Save the Children, LYU needs provide more detailed reports.*
- *It is recommended that the LYU and SC work together to produce a monitoring plan with reporting guidelines specific to this project and/or continuation of this project.*

## **9. Content of the TV and Radio Programme**

### *Radio*

The length of the evaluation did not allow for a full review of six years worth of radio content. However, it can be confirmed, through project documentation and sampling of scripts, that relevant child right messages, addressing the four pillars of rights, have been incorporated into the media produced the LYU. Child rights are introduced into the children's radio programs through CRC stories and songs.

The youth radio programs have a wide variety of topics which are laid out in a magazine style format into a magazine style format. Child rights information usually comes in the form short spots. Youth radio content also includes traditional mottos such as *"a good person always stands up for the right things and dislikes the evil behaviors"*.

A review of phase 1 project documents shows that at the early stages o the SC provided a lot of support to content development in regards to child rights information. Evidence of this can be found in the annual 2008-2009 Radio Programme Plan, which provides a list of topics per month relating to the UNCRC. From the desk review the Evaluator was unable to find further evidence of these types of documents for the subsequent years of the project life span. During the interviews with LYU project staff, requests were made for SC to provide content for the radio programs. The lull in support to content development may be a result of frequent turnover in CRG staff in the past couple of years combined with SCN's decision to take a more hands –off approach. Additional content sampling shows topics such as "Kidney beans could make you lose weight" or "Yoga poses that help your digestive system" which implies that the team and DJ's are going to the internet to find content the radio program. Examples of radio content can be seen in Annex 7.

The youth radio style has incorporated an English language lessons into the program. An example of this is a sample of the English language section for AM 567 KHz aired on Sunday, 9 December 2012:

DJ 1: Hello Bee

DJ 2: Hi Ay! What are you drinking?

DJ 1: What was your question? Speak slowly\*

DJ 2: I asked what are you drinking. What are you drinking?\*

DJ 1: Oh... I am drinking Pepsi. I am drinking Pepsi\*

DJ 2: Drink in English is drink\*, D-R-I-N-K\*, Drink\*

DJ 1: We use the word drink to say drinking milk\*, water\*, and soft drinks\*

DJ 2: We as young people should drink only healthy drinks.

DJ 1: We should not drink alcohol as beer and so on.

*\*Underlined phrases or words are spoken in English by the DJ. The rest of the sentence, not underlined, is spoken in Lao Language*

English language lessons incorporated in the youth radio can be seen as a positive attribute to the project. When interviewing DJs who are involved with the project, they suggested and requested support to produce contests and quizzes with prizes. They felt this would make the programs more interesting and could increase listenership and popularity of the radio programs. In the focus group discussion with Listener Groups the participants said the best part of the programs were the songs and the ability to call in to request songs they liked.

#### **Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *It is recommended prior to commitment for a third phase of the project, that the present CRG sample at least 60 percent of the content that has been produced over the six year project period.*
- *Provide more content on the CRC, using a systematic approach, to be included in children/youth radio and TV programs, by developing a topic list for each month.*
- *SC needs to monitor the content being produced by LYU radio and TV, especial content relating to child rights. The aim of the project is to create awareness of child rights through radio and TV. LYU also have their own mandate and messages to deliver through radio and TV. Save the Children needs to insure there are no conflicting messages.*
- *From the Evaluators view point using the internet to find information is alright as long as the information is validated, and child/youth friendly. It is recommended that Save the Children provide LYU with a list of child rights web links to obtain information. Example would be the Child Rights International Network – [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)*
- *It is recommended that Save the Children further supports youth English language Lessons on radio or at least investigate the possibility of support. It would be worth find out if youth find this section of the program useful. And which demographic of you - urban, semi-urban, or rural? How are the lessons structured?*
- *Save the Children CRG staff (VTE based and field based) conducts mini-surveys on a frequent basis with Listener Groups.*

#### **Television**

Two television productions produced by LYU were sampled. The first sample was a five minute production piece called “Children Asking, Adults Answer”. The format is as what the title means, where children interviewers ask questions to adults and adults answer back. The full transcript can be seen in Annex 8. In this sample, children are asking relevant questions such as “*Why do adults allow children to be absent from school?*”, “*Why do adults hit children?*”, and “*Why are some children unable to go to school?*”. The answers that the adults provided reflected the cultural norm, which are not always in the best interest of the child (Article 3, UNCRC 1989). An extreme example was the answer the adults provided for “*why do adults hit children?*” in which hitting a child is condoned in order to teach discipline. Needless to say this is the wrong message and is directly against Save the Children Child Protection Policy.

The second sample viewed was a 30 minute, magazine format production highlighting young successful Lao business people. The production was creatively produced, overlaid with pop music and used fast paced editing techniques resembling production pieces from LYU competitors such as Lao Star Television or Thai TV. In the sample, youth DJs interviewed young Lao people who have taken jobs with private education institutes<sup>8</sup> in and around Vientiane Capital. Interviewees talked about how they

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<sup>8</sup> PIS, Oscar Bilingual Language school

managed to get the job or in one or two cases they might have been the one who have started the school. The rest of the production piece was made up of promo pieces of these private institutions. A five minute section of this production was devoted to interviewing an exemplary secondary school student and her parents. The interview revolved around how to be a good student, and the importance of an education. The LYU submitted a sample outline of a 30 minute TV program which can be seen in Annex 9.

#### **Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *Prior to future SC support to LYU TV it is recommended that an Audience Baseline survey for TV is conducted. Which channels/TV programs are young people and their families watching? Are young people watching this program? How many TV set are there in Laos? What TV signals are people receiving? The evaluator noticed that this was not done by either the LYU or SC prior to signing the MoU for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project.*
- *Like the radio, SC is supporting (roughly 700 USD a month) to introduce child rights message into an already existing LYU TV program. Child rights messages need to monitor by SC staff more closely as well as the LYU content to insure that SC approved message are not conflicting with other content.*
- *It is definitely clear that the LYU wants and needs to be producing materials that are entertaining for young people, but there might be constraints in technical ability as well as limitations placed on them by the LYU themselves.*
- *During interviews with the LYU-Department of Mass Media staff there where requests for assistance to produce a mini-series. No other information was provided. This is an interesting area to investigate as way to introduce child rights and youth issues, but it is also important to keep in mind that the LYU is a mass organization with their own mandate and messages that need to be delivered.*
- *It is recommended for a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project that there are clear objectives and outcomes stated in the MoU in relation to support to TV as well as a clear action plan developed.*
- *Throughout the evaluation discussions around private/corporate advertisements was brought up by the Evaluator as well as the LYU staff interviewed. The sample (30 minute production) reviewed contained promotional pieces of private education institutes in and around Vientiane Capital (PIS, Oscar Bilingual School, etc). Bring up the question “who else is funding the production of the LYU TV program”? It is recommended that SC further investigates this. Like other State Media enterprises, the LYU-Mass Media Department is feeling the effects of the new Media Law (2008) stating a decrease in funding support to State media. Because of this media is looking towards private/corporate enterprise to fund their media programs. For the sustainability of the LYU-TV program this could be considered to be positive, however this approach being new needs attention as it has the potential to effect/influence content. If there is future support to be given to LYU-TV it is recommended that SC further investigates this as well as support the LYU through this transition to insure that private/corporate partnerships are child-friendly and is not purposely effect child-youth content.*

#### **10. Child and youth-led capacity for designing, producing and airing the TV and radio programme**

The Evaluator interviewed 8 DJs on 16 December 2012 at the Save the Children office in Vientiane Capital. Four volunteer DJs from the LYU children’s radio and four volunteers DJs from the LYU Youth radio programs. In addition, the Evaluator observed DJs producing programs from both radio programs.

The project has a total of 50 volunteer DJ's. According to LYU staff of the project there are more children and young people interested in volunteering, but 50 volunteer DJs is what is stated in the MoU (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase). The DJs for each radio program meet every weekend to design, produce and air the programs. With such a large number of DJs, they are put on a rotating schedule to participate in the project, which according to the DJs and LYU project works. The LYU project staff (Youth and Pioneers department) coordinates this schedule.

With support from Save the Children, and Lao Youth Union the volunteer DJs have undergone trainings and workshop in the areas of child rights, child protection, and child participation. Lao National Radio has provided technical support to the DJs in the areas of interviewing, storytelling, reporting, and overall general child-youth radio skills. From the Evaluators interviews, observations, and sampling of content, it is clear that the volunteer child/youth DJs' have the skills to design and produce media, with adult support, for children and young people. More importantly when talking to the DJs it was very clear that they were eager and happy to participate in this project.

#### *Selection process*

At present the majority of the DJs are members of the Lao Youth Union. When interviewing the 8 DJs, five out of the eight said they were given the opportunity to become a DJ because either a relative or friend was working at the LYU or was a LYU volunteer. According to the LYU project staff, at the beginning of the project the LYU put announcements on the LYU radio and newspapers asking for volunteers for child/youth DJs.

#### ***Evaluators Comments or Recommendations***

- According to LYU Project staff child (ages 8-14) are considered too young to conduct live broadcasts. It is recommend that SC further investigates this, as there are evidence based cases that it is possible for this age group to have capacity to conduct live broadcasts.
- During the interviews the youth DJs mentioned they wanted more support to travel to the field so they can interview children and youth in other parts of the country. Further investigation of this is a good idea, as it might expose "Vientianite"<sup>9</sup> children and youth DJ to some of the issues that the rest of their demographic group might be facing, which they might not face having grown up in the Capital city. This could also strengthen ties with young reports in the field with the DJ's who are presenting their reports.
- With the Lao Youth Union as the partner and with its large network and reach to its child/youth membership it makes sense that the majority of the DJs are LYU members. However this opens of the questions of equal opportunity to participate as there is a selection criteria to become a member of the LYU. It is recommend that SC looks at different ways to widen the selection process of volunteer child/youth DJs.

### **11. Role and Effectiveness of Provincial Radio Listener Groups**

With the assistance from the Lao Youth Union and Save the Children staff, the Evaluator conducted a brief two hour focus group discussion on 17 December 2012 in Thaphabath District, Bolikhamxay Province with 32 children and youth who are participants of a project Listener Group. The group consisted of 16 females and 16 males between the ages 13-18 and all members of the LYU. It is

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<sup>9</sup> Referring to an upper-middle class, most likely 2 or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

important to note that the Listener Groups for the project are an extension of the larger Lao Youth Union network (Provincial-District-Village).

From the brief meeting with the Listener Group, it was clear that they enjoyed the radio programs, especially the songs that are broadcasted and the ability to call-in to request songs. The group members took turns as field reporters who write a news report of what might be happening in school. An example of this would be school activities around Environmental Day. The reports are written by child/youth and then are reported over a mobile telephone to the LYU radio team and volunteer youth DJs. Through the receiving mobile phone the report is then recorded via digital recorder and then transferred to a computer where the audio file can be edited and placed into the magazine format radio program. Members of Listener Groups also are participants that take part of Child Right activities which are associated with this project.

#### **Evaluators Comments or Recommendations**

- *More time needs to be spent with Listener Groups to discuss their participation and how to improve their participation in the project. Two hours is too short of a time to build the relationship with child/youth to get the “real story”. In addition, the Evaluator and SC supporting staff did their best to block adult input during the FGDs, however there were 14 adults off to the side looking and listening at the time, which is not normally conducive for the purpose of the activity.*
- *Members of the Listener Group lived in a semi-urban area. It is recommend that a review of Listener Groups living in rural areas is conducted, such as Viengkham or Khamkurt Districts.*
- *Like with the DJs, all the participants of the Listener Group that the Evaluator met were LYU members. Does this make a difference? Yes and no. The participants are children/youth who have the right to participate. However, they are also a selected group within the community who are given more chances to participate.*
- *If SC continues to support these Listener Groups it is recommended that CRG staff based in VTE as well as in Field Offices engage with these groups on a more frequent basis. No matter if they are LYU members, they are also children and young people that hold a lot of knowledge and can provide SC with quick and easy “temperature” of children and youth present day issues. SC needs to tap into this resource, especially in rural area, where the majority of children and young people are still living.*

## **12. Reviewing Achievements Against Specific Objectives and Outcomes**

For the Evaluation, the Evaluator, has used a color coding to rate achievements against specific objectives and outcomes<sup>10</sup>. Green represents “achieved”, Yellow represents “partially achieved”, and Red represents “not achieved”.

### *Specific Objective 1*

<b>Objective and Outcome</b>	<b>Evidence/or Lack of Evidence</b>	<b>Evaluators comments</b>
O1: To disseminate information on the CRC, child participation and protection from violation and other problems related to children-youth through radio-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,152 children and youth radio programs have been broadcasted with CRC messaging.</li> <li>- Two 30 minute Youth TV</li> </ul>	<p><b>(GREEN)</b></p> <p>The Evaluator has deemed Objective 1 as “Achieved” as programs with child rights</p>

<sup>10</sup> Specific Objectives and Outcomes found in the 2010-2012 MoU

<p>television programs.</p> <p>Outcome: Children, youths, parents, guardians and teachers received information on child rights, child protection, child participation and involved school activities in Vientiane Capital and provinces.</p>	<p>productions have been broadcasted with CRC messaging included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CRC activities (i.e children’s day) have been conducted in schools and communities both in</li> </ul>	<p>messages have been broadcasted and child rights activities have been conducted with communities in the provinces as well as Vientiane Capital.</p>
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*Specific Objective 2*

<b>Objective and Outcome</b>	<b>Evidence/or Lack of Evidence</b>	<b>Evaluators comments</b>
<p>O2: To provide opportunity for children to express their own views in society.</p> <p>Outcome: Children-youth are able to produce and design radio – television programs by themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and youth designing and producing radio programs with the support from LYU staff.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(YELLOW)</b></p> <p>The Evaluator has deemed Objective 2 as “partially achieved” due to the fact that the outcome states children and youth are designing and producing radio and TV programs <u>themselves</u>. Having children and youth to do this for and by themselves (which could be possible) was most likely the “ultimate” outcome.</p>

*Specific objective 3*

<b>Objective and Outcome</b>	<b>Evidence/or Lack of Evidence</b>	<b>Evaluators Comments</b>
<p>O3: To sensitize people in communities promoting child rights, child participation, child protection and development of children.</p> <p>Outcome: The radio-television programs for children-youths broadcasted on child rights, child protection, participation and other social issues that are related to children and youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,152 radio programs and two 30 minute TV productions have been broadcasted with messages relating to the CRC as well as other social issues relating to children and youth.</li> <li>- CRC activities have been conducted at the community level</li> <li>- 50 DJs plus Central and Provincial LYU staff have been trained in CRC related topics</li> </ul>	<p><b>(GREEN)</b></p> <p>The Evaluator has deemed Objective 3 as “achieved” based on the fact that child rights information has been broadcasted. In addition children and youth, as well as, specific persons in communities have received training child rights related topics. However, it should be noted that this Objective could also be deemed “YELLOW” since there is has not been a follow-up to the Baseline Audience Survey which could provide an estimate of how many people have received child rights messages and to what</p>

		degree of understanding through radio and TV. It is important for future planning that realistic, achievable objectives and outcomes are developed.
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*Specific Objective 4*

Objective and Outcome	Evidence/or Lack of Evidence	Evaluators Comments
<p>O#4: To establish children youth volunteers in order to become an experienced radio and television presenters and DJ's.</p> <p>Outcome: Volunteer children and youths who are presenters and DJs prepared he contents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50 volunteer DJs have been trained child-radio radio skills. They partaking in the design and production of both mediums.</li> <li>- Listener groups have been established in 3 SC target provinces. Members of these group/network act as young reports that provide local reports to the radio program.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(GREEN)</b></p> <p>The Evaluator has Objective 4 as "Achieved".</p>

*Specific Objective 5*

Objective and Outcome	Evidence/or Lack of Evidence	Evaluators Comments
<p>O5: To strengthen capacity of young presenters and DJ and staff of Mass Media at Central and Provinces on Media, especially radio and television</p> <p>Outcome: Strengthen capacity of young presenters and DJ and staff and Mass Media at Central and provinces on media, especially radio and television.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DJs have been given the training and capacity to produce radio programs.</li> <li>- Members of the Listener groups have been given training in reporting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(YELLOW)</b></p> <p>The Evaluator has deemed Objective 5 as "partially achieved". There was little evidence through field interviews, project documentation and discussion about project design that provincial training to LYU Provincial and District have has conducted and/or utilized in the provinces. This is mainly a central based project activity. In addition, the specific objective and outcome are the same.</p>

In conclusion, the overall objective of this project, *"To raise awareness of child rights, child participation, protection of children from any forms of child violation through radio and television programs for children youth"*, has been met. For future planning it is advised that both parties (LYU and SCN) develop objectives and outcomes that are clear, realistic and achievable.

### **13. Financial Analysis**

Save the Children Finance Department was unable to prepare a detailed breakdown of the project budgets and expenditure over that last 3-7 years. The Evaluator was unable to comment on the financial aspects of the project funds in relation to timeliness, utilization, efficiency and any audit issues. The budget for Phase 2 (2010-2012) was 100,000 USD, which averages to 33,000 USD per years to support activities. Discussing with the CRG team, it is estimated that 700 USD a month support LYU TV programs, coming out to 8,400 USD support a year. It is highly suggested that the Donor along with the SC Management team further investigate the budget versus expenditure in relation to the outputs/outcomes and overall objectives and reach.

### **14. Overall Impact (Save the Children's Theory of Change)**

With Save the Children's operational and program work transitioning to Save the Children International, SC Theory of Change was introduced. Save the Children aims to bring positive change to children around the world. SC's Theory of Change describes the organizations understanding on how it can create that change for and with children. Furthermore, this over arching approach seeks to look beyond objectives and an output level change brought about as a result of the project, and considers the impact of the project in terms of:

- a) Being a Voice – advocate and campaign for better programmes and policies to fulfill children's rights at national, regional and global level; promote child participation and ensure children's voices are heard – particularly those children most marginalized or living in poverty.
- b) Being the innovator – develop and prove new, evidence-based and replicable breakthrough solutions to problems facing children, through policy research and programme activity.
- c) Achieve results at scale- support effective implementation of best practices, programmes and policies for children, leveraging our knowledge and working to ensure sustainable impact at scale through, advocacy, direct support and capacity-building.

Phase 1 and 2 of the *CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television Programmes for Children and Youths* project was designed in 2007 and 2010, prior to transition to Save the Children International and SC's Theory of Change. Nonetheless, the following can be said about the project in relationship to SC's Theory of Change:

- The actions of the project aim to improve child participation or create spaces for child participation. In addition, the process of implementation includes children participating.
- The project designed is based around previous Save the Children Norway child radio and child listening clubs implemented in Nepal during the mid 1980's.
- Save the Children has provided both children/youth as well as partners with ongoing support in understanding and raising awareness of child rights related issues.

#### ***Evaluators Comments or Recommendations***

- *A follow-up audience baseline study will assist with measuring SC impact on making positive changes for children and youth.*
- *For Phase 3 or any future support to Media-Child/Youth, SC needs to look beyond at other Media*

## **15. Relevance and Sustainability**

As future expansion of this project into a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the existing project, the Evaluator was asked to look at the overall relevance and sustainability of current project to date.

### *Relevance*

Overall the project objectives have a high relevance in country in which there is a still limitation to children and youth participation as well as for a media environment which has minimal programming for children and youth and content relating to the rights and protection of children. The designing and production of media by young people is a good means of active participation as well as means to reach out to children and youth. One area of concern is that the programming content is meant for the general masses without taking in account of children/youth living in urban, semi-urban or rural areas, ethnicity or language. As part of the follow-up audience survey or new audience survey it would be important to ask key questions such as “What information do you like to hear about?”, “What problems are children and young people facing” and then aggregate this data by gender, ethnicity, geographic locations in order to create media programs that target specific populations.

### *Sustainability*

Save the Children has been funding and supporting this project over six years (2007-2012) into an existing LYU radio and now TV programs. The project has provided technical and financial support which has allowed the LYU to open its own “doors” in the areas of child/youth participation and child rights related content. As a result of this support children and youth involved in LYU media production now have the capacity to actively participate in the making and presenting of radio and television. LYU management has a better understanding on how to create more spaces for participation for children and children. Content, of the media produced by LYU, now incorporates child rights related messages or themes.

It would be of the Evaluator’s opinion that if funding and technical support to this project were to stop then there would be a dip in child rights content in LYU radio and TV. The review of the six year project shows that Save the Children has played an important role in feeding child rights related content to the LYU as well as assisting with an action plan to increase child/youth participation in the design and delivery of the LYU Radio and TV.

According to Mr. Duangsaly Sivilay, Deputy Head LYU Mass Media Department, Save the Children supports 70% and the LYU 30% of the radio budget. When LYU staff were asked the question “What would happen to these programs if Save the Children stopped funding this project?” the Evaluator received to very different opinions. The first was that SC support is extremely important for the LYU radio and TV program as the mass organization has a limited budget for media and if SC support ceased then they would be forced to find new donors. The other opinion was that radio and TV would continue without SC support as it is part of the larger mandate of the Lao Youth Union. How or under what capacity the programs would run was not mentioned.

As mentioned before, the new Media Law produced in 2008 and enforced in 2009 says that the State will start to decrease their funding to State Media making them more reliant on other sources of funding (ie. corporate partnerships). This decrease of support will have an effect, if it has not already, on the

general future of LYU Mass Media Department and its production of media for children and youth. In later discussions about this with Mr Somkiao, the Head of LYU radio and TV Division, he mentioned the department was discussing to hire a marketing person who would be responsible for finding new avenues of financial resources.

It is the Evaluators impression that if SC were to stop funding LYU Mass Media, SC would lose the access to insure child rights related message are being incorporated into media productions produced by LYU Mass Media Department. It would also lose the ability/access to monitor LYU media to insure it is child-friendly.

#### ***Evaluators Comments or Recommendations***

- *SC is only supporting LYU-Mass Media, without considering other outlets of media within the country.*
- *SC can play a role in monitoring, or supporting the state mechanism, to ensure child friendly content is being aired.*

### **16. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the 13 day evaluation conducted which included a desk review, interviews and focus groups discussions and sampling of radio and television content. The key recommendations provided below are for Save the Children and Lao Youth Union to internally discuss and then discuss further together as the two partners plan for a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project.

#### *Operations*

MoU & Logical framework (SC & LYU) – when developing a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of this project, it is essential that the two partners agree on clear, realistic and achievable specific objectives, outcomes and indicators. In addition, it is advised that a monitoring and evaluation tools/ including an M&E Plan is developed.

Communication Plan – for a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project it is recommended that SC and LYU develop a separate communication plans for Radio and Television. This is even more important for Television as there was very little documentation on SC support to LYU TV.

Development of a Media Data Base – This database could be simple Microsoft Access database that could be populated with information such as previous content topics, and feedback from listenerx. If done properly it would be a valuable tool for designing future programs as well as tool to access data quickly for donors or potential donors. The database could also be used to track child/youth trends in the media such as songs that are liked, topics that most discussed. At present all this information of this sort is written into a paper report which makes it difficult and time consuming to aggregate and analysis.

Capture what is being produced – This recommendation is mainly for Save the Children. The project revolves around media, and over the past six years, children and youth have been creating and developing creative content for radio and just now in the format of video/television. Save the Children has failed to pull out key examples which could be used for donor reporting or additional fundraising. It is suggested for a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project, the budget includes specific budget lines set aside for English dubbing of production or translation of scripts. Another recommendation would be to utilize the training and equipment provide to LYU by SC and have the LYU TV team produce a 5-10 video piece highlighting the projects achievements, and the participation of child and youth. This would be a great way to find funding for the future of the projects as well as an innovative and creative report format for the donor.

Equipment – Throughout the project Save the Children has provided funds for the purchase of media equipment for both radio and TV. Through the interviews with both LYU supporting staff as well as young reports there has been a request for funds to purchase digital recorders. Young reporters, part of the Listener Groups, write reports then make a call to Central LYU, hang up and wait for the LYU Central to call back (so the cost is not put of reporter). The young reporter then reads his/her report over the phone which is then recorded using a digital recorder via the calling phone. This makes for poor quality reports to be broadcasted, which in turn can affect listenership. The Evaluator suggests SC and LYU single out Listener groups who are actively providing the field reports and provide the group with a digital recorder and training on how to use the. The field reporter could then digitally record their reports and the Provincial LYU or SC Field Office staff could send the audio files back to VTE.

Between 2010 and 2011 the LYU received a new Apple Desk top computer, worth between 1,200-1,700 USD, for the designing, editing and production of LYU TV. During the interviews it was made clear that the equipment that was received is very good, but was not used because the mass media staff needed training on how to use the computer and also associated software. At present they still use and old but functional PC computer to edit and produce TV programs.

Third party partnerships – if the LYU decides to partnership with corporate companies to further finance LYU radio and TV, and SC continues to support as well, it would be vital that SC supports this process to ensure these private partnerships are with child-friendly companies as well as to insure accountability and transparency.

#### *Program*

Follow-up Audience Survey – With the possibility of a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project it is recommended that Save the Children provides support to the LYU to conduct a follow-up to the 2008 Baseline Audience Survey. The follow-up or even a new survey would provide current data on listeners preference that can be used to develop content and formats that children and youth people like. It is also recommended that listener groups and LYU Provincial staff are given further training in data collection so that more frequent “mini” survey’s can be conducted throughout the project period. These mini surveys will help track child-youth likes and dislikes.

Moving Radio support to the Provincial Level: It is recommended that SC (internally) and then also with the LYU discuss the possibilities of moving radio support to the provincial level-either via the Provincial LYU or the Provincial radio stations. This would also open up the opportunity to support child rights radio programming in ethnic languages, something that is not being done in this project. When discussing radio programming in ethnic language with the LYU central staff there was an interest. The LYU commented that the Lao National Radio does this already at the provincial level but it is difficult for LYU as they do not have the staff that are capable of reporting in ethnic languages. UNICEF child/youth radio program is currently working on the provincial level with the provincial radio stations and supporting them to produce child/youth programs in Khamu, Hmong and most recently Akha. In addition UNDP Laos is supporting an Ethnic Community based Radio Station. It is recommend to in order to reach the most marginalized children and communities that SC explores community based radio program.

Skill up CRG team – the new CRG team is strong with a large amount of potential to move SC CRG initiatives forward. However, in regards to support to any future radio and TV activities it is

recommended that SC invest in providing the CRG with necessary training and understanding on how to support these activities.

#### *Evaluators Comments*

*After a review of the CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television Programmes for Children and Youth project the Evaluator recommends Save the Children Country Program Office to further review Communications as well as the use of radio in its overall operations and program work. It is fair to say that the program office has an almost non-existent communication department, and are only project specific.*

#### *Some areas to considered:*

- *Radio and Television can be used by the country program to advocate broader SC messages and work*
- *Explore developing a communication unit that would work across sectors (Health, Education, Child Protection, Emergencies, Disaster Risk Reduction, Primary Health Care and Child Rights Governance). The unit can be used to to market SC mission and goals, as well as support specific programs/project which have media components such as BCC programs.*
- *Insuring that future grants have a realistic communication budget line. Either feeding into actual project activities budget or to the communication unit which would support the grants activities.*
- *Explore the many innovative ways to use Media in program work*
  - *Developing radio modules as follow-up support to new preschool teachers (District Staff support only reach new preschool teachers on a quarterly basis. The modules could include a call/feed-back session in which new teachers could call to ask questions or receive support. DJ could be trainers from the in-service training.*
  - *Support to the PHC program – tip and reminders for mothers with newborns*
  - *Compliant mechanism for Save the Children programs; call-in system; especially for Emergency Response where donor require such a system in place (ie. ECHO)*
  - *Radio could be used as means to inform communities of the work that has been done SC and its partners, or work that is being planned.*
  - *Consider supporting the development of sustainable Education Entertainment (i.e. Sesame Street (USA), Playschool (Australia).*
  - *Look at other partners for radio and television- UNICEF which has a very strong Communication/Communication for Development Department has been asking to meet with SC for over a year to discuss collaboration on child and youth radio/television. Unfortunately due to the transition process this meeting was considered a low priority.*

*In short, it is worth SC's time to investigate the possibility of a holistic approach to working with Media such as Radio and Television, rather than project specific. Like the concept of participation, communication can be a cross cutting theme.*

*Another issue, which relates to SC reviewing their communication strategy as well as the evaluation of this project, is the "partner". The LYU has been a long term and valuable partner for Save the Children. But given that it has a mandate from the Central Committee of Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, the space limited for innovation and creativity. In addition the reach, which media "has no bounds" is also limited.*

## **17. Conclusion**

The overall conclusion is that Save the Children and the Lao Youth Union are meeting the media and child/youth participation objectives laid out in the 2010-2012 Memorandum of Understanding. Children and Youth are actively participating and engaging in the media sector and producing media with CRC components as well as content aimed at child and youth. The Lao Youth Union has been a long term partner of Save the Children in the advocacy and awareness of children's rights and has a strong network and reach throughout the country. Like the economic growth in the recent years, media will continue to grow and more and more young people will have access to radio, tv and alternative forms of media. Having an understanding of the potential exponential growth of the media sector as well as the countries need to control the media sector then is in the best interest of the Lao child, as well as Save the Children to support children and youth media in the Lao PDR.

## **18. Annex and Supporting Documents**

<b>Annex 1</b>	Names of Participants Individually Interviewed
<b>Annex 2</b>	List of DJs and Listener Groups interviewed
<b>Annex 3</b>	List of Documents Reviewed
<b>Annex 4</b>	2008 Baseline Audience Survey for Children's Rights Radio Project (Children)
<b>Annex 5</b>	2008 Baseline Audience Survey for Children's Rights Radio Project (Youth)
<b>Annex 6</b>	2009 Monthly Radio Topic List
<b>Annex 7</b>	List of Lao Youth Union Project team
<b>Annex 8</b>	Example of Youth Radio Content
<b>Annex 9</b>	"Children Ask, Adults Answer" transcript
<b>Annex 10</b>	Example of Youth TV program format