



Save the Children
Norway

Global Evaluation

Save the Children Norway's work
in the Thematic Area of
Violence Against and Sexual Abuse of Children



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Preface: Protect Children's Rights

In this global thematic evaluation report Save the Children Norway document its work within the area of violence against and sexual abuse of children. It is a challenging working area as violence and sexual abuse affects children everywhere and may lead to irreversible physical and psychological damage, sometimes even to death. Violence and sexual abuse occur within all Save the Children's working areas and are among the worst violations against children's rights. It implies a fundamental abuse of trust by the adult society towards children and young people, which is reinforced when abused children are not supported, believed and taken seriously.

One particular challenge working with these issues is thus the secrecy, shame, denial and minimizing that surrounds violence and sexual abuse. The silence of the adult world and the subsequent social isolation of the abused child are sometimes felt, by the child, as bad as the abuse itself. Lack of protection and support may also make the child more vulnerable to additional forms of abuse and exploitation by the society.

There is a great potential for preventing and protecting children from violence if children are listened to, get support and the society implement child friendly communities, schools and ways of behaviour. This is what Save the Children Norway aims at in its programmes and advocacy.

The Evaluation

In the present global thematic evaluation the successes, challenges and the possibilities of Save the Children Norway's work are portrayed. The evaluation covers ten country programmes in Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Norway, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zimbabwe and one regional evaluation of the Save the Children Alliance South-East Europe Regional Anti Child Trafficking Response Programme. Save the Children Norway has previously carried out two global thematic evaluations on child rights and education for children. This thematic evaluation was made parallel with the thematic evaluation on children affected by armed conflict and disasters. Both evaluations were carried out by national evaluation teams and an independent evaluator writing the global report. Children and young people have been involved as respondents, advisors and interviewers.

It is a challenge for Save the Children Norway and its partners to get a common understanding and approach on how to apply child rights programming. The present evaluation points to many areas where Save the Children Norway can strengthen its efforts and coordinate its work in a better and integrated manner. At the same time the evaluator underlines and highlights the achievements to improve the situation of children. Save the Children Norway gets credit for its participatory and inclusive relationship with partners, collaborators and communities and for prioritising working with the thematic issue. The evaluator challenges the organisation, however, to increase its activities to prevent violence and sexual abuse against children.

Long History

As early as 1923, Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of Save the Children, mentions that children must be protected against every form of exploitation in the 5-point Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This Declaration was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. The Declaration was expanded upon and in 1959 another Declaration in 10 points was adopted by the United Nations. Here it is stated, "The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation." The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

from 1989 was based upon the principles in the Declaration. All countries except USA and Somalia have ratified the CRC.

Eglantyne Jebb was a truly radical person as she stated back at the turn of the century, that children have rights. She felt that children are victims of politics and that they are in *need* of protection against the consequences of politics, and have the *right* to be protected. Still today, most people regard children as the property of their parents and as objects of charity. Jebb's statement was that it is the duty of the state to secure children's rights. The essence of the idea of children having rights is thus that society has an *obligation* to satisfy the fundamental needs of children. She also stressed that rights applied to all children and that it should even be our duty to help the children of the enemy. Hence her statement: "Personally, I have no enemies under 18 years."

The UN Study on Violence against Children

Regardless of the broad support for the CRC, the fact is that most children in the world are not protected by those who have an obligation to do so. That is why Save the Children Norway in recent history, from the beginning of the 90ies, decided to focus upon child sexual abuse and exploitation. As one of the larger international NGOs Save the Children has been in the forefront challenging the secrecy of child sexual abuse and supported programming in the area. Increasingly the organisation has also focused on the broader context of violence against children, looking into violence against children in the family and local environment, in the schools, in the streets, in the institutions etc.

Save the Children realise the importance of supporting the UN who by autumn 2006 will launch a global study with recommendations to prevent and protect children from all forms of violence. Save the Children, the UN and other agencies are at the moment collecting data about the extent of violence against children, analyse the different forms of abuses, refine existing definitions and highlight the need for giving top priority for action against violence against children. Children are active participants in this process.

Article 19 in the CRC lists the different forms of violence by caretakers such as physical and mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Other articles mentions torture, slavery, abductions, bonded and harmful labour, harmful traditional practices, corporal and physiological punishment, the sale of children and their organs, illegal and coercive adoption practices, child trafficking, exploitation of children in the sex industry, in tourism, in pornography and in the family.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as: "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment and deprivation".

Exploitation and Systems of Protection

Save the Children was instrumental in organising the 1. and 2. world congresses against commercial sexual exploitation of children (1996 and 2001). These congresses were of utter importance for enhancing the global awareness of the destructive effects of child sexual abuse and exploitation. CRC articles 34, the subsequent Optional Protocol and article 35 all focus upon child sexual exploitation. The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000) and the UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children (2003) are important results of the two world congresses underlining the need for action to prevent child sexual exploitation. Many other international and regional achievements have been the result and quite a few countries have amended their laws. Governments and international and national NGOs have

also established programmes and projects to support children and strengthen the protection systems.

The implementation of the CRC, the protocols and other provisions are pursued through the reporting mechanisms to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as through the charter based mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Commission and the UN Special Rapporteurs. Save the Children Norway systematically use the possibility to report to the UN monitoring bodies, support the appointment of Ombudsmen for children, the strengthening of the Child Welfare system and awareness raising on children's rights and violations of rights.

Quality Programming and Key Quality Elements

The primary objective of the present thematic evaluation is to advance programme development in terms of its quality, relevance and impact on children's lives. The evaluation report will be an excellent tool for discussions about how to improve programme and policy development. The thematic staff in Save the Children Norway country programmes have built a Topic Network to ensure the follow up of the evaluation and the involvement of the whole organisation will be encouraged to support a high quality in all our work.

Save the Children Norway seeks to build its programmes in accordance with Save the Children's standards on child rights programming. The organisation has in addition developed a set of Key Quality Elements related to programming within the area of violence against and sexual abuse of children to ensure that the programmes do follow our learning related to child rights and child development. Children's participation at all levels is seen as an essential child right and a key quality element.

I wish you interesting reading,

Turid Heiberg,
Senior adviser,
Violence and Sexual abuse of Children

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The global evaluation report draws on country reports produced by country evaluation teams led by: Brigitte Bagnol (Mozambique); Maria Teresa Blandon (Nicaragua); Oren Ginzberg (South-east Anti-child-trafficking programme); Eglantina Gjermeni (Albania); Keshari Kansakar (Nepal); Askale Mekonnen and Mekdes G/Tensaye (Ethiopia and Uganda); Eunice Njovana (Zimbabwe); Corina Olteanu (Romania); Edelweiss Silan (Cambodia and Sri Lanka); Anita Sundnes (Norway).

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	– United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
IOM	– International Organisation for Migration
KQE	– Key Quality Elements
NGO	– Non-governmental organisation
SC	– Save the Children Alliance
SCN	– Save the Children Norway
SE	– South-east
TA	– Thematic Advisor
TEC	– Thematic Evaluation Coordinator
TOR	– Terms of Reference
UN	– United Nations
VSA	– Violence against and sexual abuse of children
WP	– Working Principles

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Part I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation background

Save the Children Norway initiated a global thematic evaluation of its work on violence against and abuse (VSA) of children in 2003. The evaluation covered most programmes working in this area – ten country programmes in Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Norway, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Zimbabwe as well as a regional Save the Children Alliance South-East Europe child-trafficking response (including an in-depth report on Romania). The evaluations were carried during the course of 2004. The context in which these country programmes work varies enormously in terms of socio-economic, political and cultural factors. The types of issues addressed is equally wide-ranging and encompasses sexual abuse, violence in the family and community, commercial sexual exploitation, corporal punishment, internet pornography, child-trafficking, sex tourism and harmful traditional practices.

The focus of the evaluation was set out in the terms of reference (available on request) and referred to specific objectives covering programming, policy, capacity building, cooperation and participation. The country evaluations were carried out using qualitative research methods such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, case-studies, observation, and documentary review. Child participation in the evaluation process was encouraged with the option of involving children as respondents, advisors or interviewers. The thematic evaluation coordinator visited most of the country programmes during the course of the evaluation for the purpose of guiding the country teams with their planning processes. The global report takes the country evaluation reports as its primary source and seeks to draw a comparative analysis of the issues arising. The global report is supplemented with insights gathered by the thematic evaluation coordinator through interviews and documentary review.

Story of a 6 year old boy from Mozambique

“A six year old boy was living with his uncle in the District of Nhamatanda. One day, the uncle went to the fields, leaving the boy alone at home with nothing to eat. Being hungry, he took a corn on the cob from his uncle's field near the house, and ate it. When the uncle returned, he saw the boy eating the corn, bound his hands with dry grass and burnt them, alleging that the boy had eaten 25 corn cobs. He treated the boy like a monkey. The community reported the incident and the boy was taken to the hospital. The uncle is in detention. Some photographs were taken at Beira child care unit which showed that his hands were totally burned and the fingers were missing.”

Mozambique report

Examples of impact

SCN is working in some of the poorest countries in the world in situations of severe lack of capacity and resources that are often compounded by political and military instability. The external environment carries many risks of violence and abuse and offers little in the way of protection or recovery.

Operating in such a climate, SCN has carried out some pioneering work to break the silence surrounding abuse and to offer support to victims.

- There are some inspiring examples of programmes directly intervening in situations of violence and sexual abuse with life-changing effect. The programme in SE Europe is providing a haven to victims of child-trafficking through a number of shelters which aid recovery and reintegration,

“for them it is a safe place where they found love, understanding and support. Most of them, which have lived in dysfunctional families, considered the shelter as the only place where they felt loved” [Albania report]

In other places, programmes are providing immediate assistance e.g. medical treatment to victims of sexual abuse in a first ever hospital unit of this kind in Ethiopia, or legal redress for hundreds of children in Sri Lanka.

- The Badi girls' hostel in Nepal provides the most striking example of prevention in action. The hostel houses girls from a low caste community whose women are traditionally destined for a life in prostitution - the project has been able to completely alter the trajectory of these young girls' lives by offering alternatives in terms of education, skills training and a safe and supportive environment,

“ The girls in the hostel were confident and their ability to express themselves was impressive.One girl in the hostel said, “We became free (from commercial sex work), it was like a dream.... Most of the girls aspired to develop their career as a nurse, lawyer, police, teacher, and social worker.” [Nepal report]

- Other projects are impacting more generally by empowering children and young people. The Sri Lanka programme has had a “*tremendous*” effect on children's sense of identity and dignity, especially those who are abused or from marginalized communities.
- The programme interventions have sometimes had a wider effect on downtrodden communities. The Badis in Nepal have been radically transformed from a marginalized segment of society to one that is increasingly respected – many of its women have given up the sex trade, and prejudice against them is diminishing as witnessed by the integration of Badi children into regular schools. Although the project was not initiated by SCN and is supported by other donors, the evaluation attributes significant credit to SCN for its work and influence. The Shakti Samuha project also in Nepal, has helped give a voice to a group of young survivors of child-trafficking.
- In other places, interventions have co-opted the broader community into playing a role in protecting children from violence and abuse. In Cambodia, the Village Safety Net Program has forged community networks and is,

“visibly influencing the daily life of a significant number of communities, schools, families and children.” [Cambodia report]

Community-based projects in Uganda are likewise said to be having a notable effect. In addition, a number of projects report changing attitudes towards child victims, for instance, among bar owners in Ethiopia, teachers in Sri Lanka, and police in Nepal.

- Some programmes have had an important influence on national law and policy. The Child and Law project of the Zimbabwe programme has been able to contribute to fundamental changes to the legal system through the enactment of new legislation and guidelines to protect victims of sexual abuse as well as the establishment of a Victim Friendly Court system. The Norwegian domestic programme has been at the forefront of influencing law and policy on new and emerging issues such as internet pornography and child-trafficking. The Sri Lanka programme is credited with contributing to raising the awareness of the judiciary and law enforcement on the rights of child victims. In SE Europe, the programme has helped put the issue of child-trafficking on the agenda, ensure that government policies are child-focused and that government interventions follow models of good practice.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are some visible strengths in SCN's violence and abuse programme which have helped contribute to these successes. There are also some areas for improvement which if addressed, could lead to greater impact and more effective programming. In some ways it is simplistic to talk of strengths and weaknesses from a global perspective, as there are few areas that are weaknesses in all programmes – in this sense the organisation has the internal experience to address most issues and the possibility of country programmes being able to guide each other. Nevertheless some overall trends can be noted.

The main strength of SCN is its participatory and inclusive relationship with partners, collaborators and communities. This is most evident in its model of implementation through local partners: an approach which fosters local capacity and helps ensure sustainable change. Some country programmes (Cambodia, Nepal, SE Europe) have provided intensive support to local partners which has been highly appreciated,

“One of the biggest accomplishments of [SCN] is considered to be the fact that partners believe there has developed a relationship based on mutual trust and learning between them. The existing partners of [SCN] say they have a special kind of relationship compared to the donor-recipient relationships with other donors,” [Albania report],
and in Cambodia,

“[partners] often repeat[ed] that in Cambodia it is only SCN that provides such consistent level of support for capacity building and program development, allowing Cambodians to take a lead in developing strategies, supporting them through the process, standing by them in periods of conflicts and helping them find ways for improvements themselves.” [Cambodia report]

However, this approach is not followed everywhere and some country programmes, such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique, take a more hands-off approach. The findings of this evaluation suggest that the more intensive model yields more results in terms of impact on violence and sexual abuse and local capacity building. If one compares the achievements of two programmes, the closer engagement of the Nepal programme results in achievements across the board by all project partners, whereas the more laissez-faire model adopted by Zimbabwe, in recent times, tends to show significant gains in one project where the partner already had the innate capacity and competence. Other country programmes fall halfway along the spectrum providing support in some areas and not others.

Child participation is another area of expertise, particularly in the country programmes of Nepal, SE Europe, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. In Nepal, child participation has meant giving children real ownership in the management and running of projects. The children are visibly empowered and have become confident enough to stand up for their own rights and the rights of others. In Cambodia, child participation integrated into the Village Safety Net Program, has also resulted in children developing a positive sense of responsibility towards fellow children,

“Many children go beyond reporting. They organize small activities to help poorer children in school, giving them books, pens, clothes. In one school, the children organized a money bank, with each child contributing 100 real each. The amount is pooled together and is used to help school children in emergency situations.” [Cambodia report]

Despite these positive experiences, some country programmes are struggling with the concept and require further guidance and support to turn child participation into a reality.

A number of programmes have experimented with community participation and mobilisation recognising that the setting up of such grassroots networks is perhaps the best and most sustainable way of protecting children from violence and sexual abuse. The programmes in Cambodia, Uganda, Sri Lanka and Nepal have been particularly effective in this regard. Relations with government partners and other Save the Children Alliance members are generally good across the board and have helped to facilitate SCN's work in this area.

Conversely, SCN's main weakness in this thematic area appears to lie in its lack of internal cohesion. At present, different parts of the organisation are not working together in a way that optimises their effectiveness. In some respects, head office appears out of tune with the needs of country programmes. In addition, there is a lack of integration between different thematic areas (except in Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Cambodia). SCN has the benefit of many very dedicated staff but a lack of capacity building and support is limiting their ability to make the most of their work.

More attention needs to be paid to strengthening internal systems and processes concerned with programme management. While there are some notable exceptions (Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Albania, Sri Lanka), country programmes are not habitually set up on the basis of a comprehensive situation analysis, conceptual understanding and overall thematic strategy. This can result in passivity in identifying partners and interventions as well as weaknesses in the design and formulation of projects. Monitoring and evaluation systems are generally poor (except Cambodia, Albania) and documentation is inadequate in most places (except Albania, Zimbabwe - Child and Law Foundation). More strategic thinking is needed on how SCN can reach the most vulnerable under 18 year olds in a gender-balanced way, using rights-based approaches, and capitalising on local and indigenous value systems and support mechanisms.

These gaps in internal processes may partly be due to SCN being a decentralised organisation where maximum authority is delegated to country offices. However, this has resulted in an uneven development of programmes. The most consistently strong programmes are those that have been able to develop adequate internal processes at country level. However, this is something of a hit and miss approach as it depends on the capacities and priorities of individual staff and particular country programmes. There is room for head office to play a stronger role in developing common systems and methods as part of its support function in relation to country programmes. A strengthening of these internal systems and processes would necessitate an increase in budget. Although SCN is at forefront of tackling this issue in a number of countries, the overall allocation of budget generally remains low as compared to some other programme areas. It may be worth considering whether more resources can be devoted to tackling this most difficult and damaging threat facing children.

The global report aims to give an overarching view of the main trends, lessons learned and conclusions with some illustrative examples. A more detailed internal report has also been prepared for SCN staff which draws more extensively on country examples and explains how key conclusions were reached.

Hand to mouth existence of street children in Ethiopia

“When they finished the programme (at the drop-in-centre), they all go back to where they come from. Most of them roam around looking for left over food from hotels and restaurants while others start begging or go back to their work place. Those engaged in commercial sex work do not have a reliable source of meal like the rest. Most of them are obliged to work for the employers without any kind of remuneration.

For the majority of children, there is no fixed time for rest and sleep since they have to continue their night duty so as to get some money for the coming days. Street children who mainly depend on begging and supplement their income from commercial sex work, spend the evening in begging or waiting for customers on the street. Those children engaged in commercial sex work have to wait for customers at their work place and if they succeeded in getting men, they would be able to secure income for the next day.....

The other groups of children who are not fully in commercial sex work depend on begging but their evening life is not different from the rest. Until late in the evening, they cannot sleep because of fear of being sexually abused by street boys and they only try to get some sleep after they make sure that the street boys have left the area. One the whole, this routine life style continue day in and day out because they do not have any other alternative to lead their life.”

Ethiopia report

Part II BACKGROUND

This part of the report is comprised of 3 sections:

- Evaluation – background to the evaluation, why it was set up, its purposes, structure, and methods
- Global policy – outline of SCN global vision and strategy on violence against and sexual abuse of children
- Overview of country context – socio-economic and political contexts of different country programmes, types of VSA issues, projects and interventions

A. EVALUATION

Save the Children Norway initiated a global thematic evaluation of its work on violence against and abuse of children in 2003. The evaluation covered most programmes working in this area – ten country programmes in Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Norway, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zimbabwe as well as a regional Save the Children Alliance South-East Europe child-trafficking response (including an in-depth report on Romania)¹. The evaluations were carried during the course of 2004. The context in which these country programmes work varies enormously in terms of socio-economic, political and cultural factors. The types of issues addressed is equally wide-ranging and encompasses sexual abuse, violence in the family and community, commercial sexual exploitation, corporal punishment, internet pornography, child-trafficking, sex tourism and harmful traditional practices.

The purpose of initiating a global process which entailed all countries carrying out evaluations at the same time was to enable programmes to learn from one another, to share experiences, common problems, solutions and good practices. It was also a way of enabling SCN to take stock of its work from a global perspective and to identify ways of moving ahead. The evaluation was carried out in parallel with a global evaluation on the thematic area of children affected by conflict and disaster in order to enhance learning between the two.

“A girl of 5 years of age is handed over by her parents to be the wife of a fifty-year-old man in exchange for bride price. The man sleeps in the same bed as the child several times making her used to his presence. When the girl reaches 12 years of age, she is expected to perform the sex act man and wife. This is a typical occurrence throughout the area. The Committee is working with the community to minimise the impact of early marriages.”
Community Committee of the District of Gorongosa - Mozambique report

The evaluation structure comprised a mix of internal and external resources as detailed in the evaluation terms of reference (available on request). The evaluation was initiated by SCN head office in Oslo by specialist units concerned with VSA and evaluation. The SCN

¹ The regional anti child-trafficking response programme in SE Europe was initiated in 2002 after a ground breaking piece of research that documented the extensive child trafficking taking place in Albania. SC wanted to address some of the challenges involved in the region regarding child trafficking and established a programme with partners in Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. As the present evaluation was not capable of making an extensive evaluation in all countries, the decision was made to draw empirical evidence from the programmes in Romania (run by Salvati Copiii) and Albania (run by SC in Albania) and supplement this with other kinds of information from the remaining countries. Salvati Copiii is not a SCN partner but is cooperating with the SC Alliance programme and therefore examples from their experiences are included in this report.

Thematic Advisor (TA) had overall responsibility for the evaluation. The evaluation itself was led by a Thematic Evaluation Coordinator (TEC), an external consultant, with responsibility for guiding the country evaluation process, setting a common coordinated approach and producing a global report containing a comparative analysis of themes, challenges, and responses. Country teams were set up in each location comprising of SCN and partner staff as well as a local external consultant charged with leading the research and writing process.

This hybrid structure represents a conscious effort by SCN to devise an evaluation that would give country offices the ownership necessary to carry out an evaluation useful to them and which capitalised on local skills and resources while at the same time drawing global lessons and an international perspective. This particular structure builds on earlier thematic evaluations and the introduction of a global coordinator at the start of the process is a lesson learnt from previous experiences. The process began with a global workshop held in Madrid in September 2003 in which the roles of the different team members, the logistics, mechanics and principles of the evaluation were developed.

The core principles underlying the evaluation included the best interests of the child, transparency, child participation, confidentiality and anonymity, participatory approaches and local empowerment. The importance of independence and objectivity were particularly reiterated during the Madrid workshop and led to some refinements to the evaluation structure and roles of team members to ensure that the actual research and analysis was carried out by external persons, "outsiders", as a way of safeguarding impartiality.

The focus of the evaluation was set out in the terms of reference (available on request) and referred to specific objectives covering programming, policy, capacity building, cooperation and participation. The country offices were to review their experiences at two levels: project level – an in-depth look at specific projects chosen for the evaluation; and programme level – a broader perspective reviewing the whole range of SCN activities taking place under the thematic programme and a consideration of its history and development, internal and external relations, partnerships, quality, impact, advocacy, and sustainability.

The TOR encapsulated the Key Quality Elements (KQE) (available on request), a set of 'hallmarks' defining important components of a programme on VSA and piloted for the first time in this evaluation. A "Framework for Country Evaluations" was developed (available on request) to coordinate and guide the research of country teams. This document served as both a planning tool, enabling countries to define issues, sources, methodologies, as well as a reporting framework for structuring findings so that a comparative analysis would be possible at the end. With the TOR, KQE and Framework, the evaluation covered a very broad spectrum of issues. Certain aspects were, however, outside its remit as they would have required further resources and different methodologies. The evaluation does not include learning and experiences on VSA interventions carried out by other organisations. Nor is it a full analysis of the phenomenon and its prevalence in different countries or a review of academic/practitioner literature on the subject. For most country programmes, it was first and foremost an appraisal of how they are addressing issues of VSA and the types of interventions they are carrying out. Only one country programme, Nicaragua, chose to amend the TOR to cover a full situation analysis as it was still at the development stage of setting up a VSA programme. Moreover, this is mainly a 'process' evaluation, looking at how programmes are implemented rather than an 'impact' evaluation, looking at the results of interventions. It is very complex and difficult to assess the impact made on individual lives particularly in the field of international development where there are multifarious issues and actors at play. Nevertheless, the evaluation does consider impact as part of this report.

The country evaluations were carried out using qualitative research methods such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, case-studies, observation, and documentary

review. Some country evaluations, such as Albania, used more targeted methodologies e.g. '24 hour exercise' whereby project participants were asked to write down their thoughts over a 24 hour period without fear of scrutiny; or drawings in Cambodia and Albania especially for younger children. Uganda and Sri Lanka carried out more limited evaluations which relied primarily on workshops and documentary analysis.

Child participation in the evaluation process was encouraged (policy available on request) with the option of involving children as respondents, advisors or interviewers. Nearly all countries (Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe) involved children as respondents either through focus group discussions or face-to-face interviews. Fewer countries involved children as interviewers expressing reservations about their own capacity and experience to conduct this in a responsible way. The Ethiopia evaluation cited,

“strong cultural barriers [to]. . . using children to interview key informants/adults, [a] lack of being accepted by those children to be interviewed, and [the] capacity of children to take such responsibilities as interviewers (in terms of their low educational background) [as] . . . the main reasons [it also noted] . . . that children should not be pressurized before they are empowered to take part actively in such [an] exercise”. [Ethiopia report]

The Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Cambodia evaluations involved children as interviewers. Nicaragua set up an advisory reference group of children to provide inputs into the design of the evaluation. The Norway, Romania and Uganda do not appear to have involved children in any capacity.

Notwithstanding the discussions about the roles of “insiders” and “outsiders”, country programmes were free to involve staff from SCN or partner agencies if they felt it appropriate. Some country programmes chose this option: Zimbabwe involved evaluators from a VSA partner organisation, another international organisation and a staff-member from fellow country programme; Nepal involved an adolescent evaluator from a VSA partner; Cambodia and Nepal seconded their country thematic advisors to each others' evaluations; and the global thematic advisor from head office participated in the evaluations in Sri Lanka and Mozambique.

The TEC visited nearly all the country programmes during the course of the evaluation for the purpose of guiding the country teams with their planning processes. These country visits comprised of meetings and workshops with country evaluation teams, visits to project sites, and preliminary evaluation interviews with key SCN and partner staff. The TEC also visited Oslo to carry out interviews with head office staff. The global report takes the country evaluation reports as its primary source and seeks to draw a comparative analysis of issues arising. The global report is supplemented with insights gathered by the TEC through interviews and documentary review.

The global report cannot hope to reflect everything that is in the country reports and reference must be made to the reports themselves to capture the richness of the material contained therein. It aims to give an overarching view of the main trends, lessons learned and conclusions with some illustrative examples. A more detailed internal report has also been prepared for SCN staff which draws more extensively on country examples and explains how key conclusions were reached. The structure of this report follows the programme cycle as an appropriate way of organising the manifold topics covered by this evaluation. It begins with programme initiation, through to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, impact and concludes with future sustainability.

Girls' group saves child from marriage

"Durga Nepali (name changed) is a 12-year old girl from Ramghat VDC recently saved from early marriage. She is studying in grade four. Her marriage was fixed by her parents with a twelve year old boy from a nearby VDC after taking *sai* from the groom's family. *Sai* is a custom of engagement performed before marriage. According to the custom groom's family bring special gifts for bride's family such as variety of foods, fruits, goat, alcohol and money. After receiving

Sai, it is also fixed that girl will be the daughter-in-law of groom's family. In this case, Durga's parents had already accepted *Sai*. Durga did not have any say against her parents' wishes. Koushila and other core group members went to Durga's house and requested them not to carry out the marriage. But they insisted on marriage since Durga's family had already accepted *sai*. Then they told them of the legal provision of child marriage and that they would get punishment if they performed this marriage. They also threatened that they would file a complaint to the police. Then the boy's parents agreed that they would wait till their son and Durga both reach 18 years. Thus Durga was saved from early marriage. Her parents and boy's parents became aware of child rights and child marriage. Now, Durga says - "she feels safe and in the future she wants to complete SLC." Now she is in close contact with the girls' group."

Nepal report – Safer Environment for Girls Project

B. GLOBAL POLICY

Save the Children Norway's strategy document (2002-2005) sets out its *vision* of a world that respects and values each child; that listens to children and supports their influence; and where all children have hope and opportunity to live a life in freedom and security.

SCN has six *objectives* - two overall and four specific. The two overall objectives are a general understanding of and support for *children's rights*; and a general understanding of, and active opposition to, the *causes of poverty* and economic exploitation. The four specific objectives are that more children, especially girls, receive good and relevant *basic education*; children are not exposed to *economic exploitation*; children are not exposed to *violence or sexual abuse*; and *children affected by armed conflict and/or disaster* are ensured protection, development and social integration. The *HIV/AIDS* pandemic has negative impacts on the achievement of all six objectives and has been adopted as a cross-cutting issue. In addition to these objectives, country programmes can, to a limited extent, set additional country specific objectives to respond to country-specific problems. SCN has chosen a structure of overlapping objectives, where one single activity can contribute to achieving several objectives.

The organisation has adopted the following *working principles* which apply to its operations: ensuring children's participation; strengthening local capacity; working within the International Save the Children Alliance; influencing causes; and counteracting discrimination. There are *policy documents* on each of the 6 programme areas mentioned above which give further details of SCN's vision and approach for each thematic area. These policy documents are integrated with each other so, for example, all the policy documents make some reference to links with VSA.

The policy on VSA is contained in a document entitled '*Policy on opposing violence against and sexual abuse of children*', in which SCN asserts its belief that,

“violence against and sexual abuse of children are among the worst violations against children’s rights. Violence and abuse may lead to irreversible physical and psychological damage, sometimes even to death”.

The policy was expanded in 2001 to cover ‘violence’ whereas previously the focus was on child sexual abuse and exploitation. This was in response to one of the recommendations of the United Nations Graca Machel study on Children Affected by Armed Conflict. The policy now covers a wide range of issues as follows,

“physical and mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect, maltreatment, exploitation and sexual abuse. Torture, slavery, the sale of children and their organs, illegal and coercive adoption practices, abductions, bonded and harmful labour, harmful traditional practices and corporal and psychological punishment are included in the list of violence against children. Protection against child sexual abuse must consider abuse within the family, within the local community, child-trafficking, child sex tourism and exploitation of children in the sex industry and in pornography”.

In its policy declaration, SCN states it will contribute to:

- put violence against and sexual abuse of girls and boys on the agenda and call attention to the seriousness of the issue
- support initiatives to stop and uncover all forms of violence against children
- rehabilitate, reintegrate and provide support to children who have been victims of violence and sexual abuse
- provide relevant information, documentation, competence building, advocacy and awareness-raising in order to prevent all forms of violence against children;
- ensure an education that promotes care and non-violence to all girls and boys
- ensure that children affected by HIV/AIDS are appropriately taken care of, and that society is informed about the relationship between violence, sexual abuse and HIV/AIDS

The policy document also states that implementation will include:

- assessing children’s vulnerabilities through situation analysis
- measures to stop and fight violence
- measures for children who are victims of violence and sexual abuse
- preventive work in families and communities
- public information and advocacy
- influencing and supporting local and nation authorities
- international cooperation
- competence building and training

C. OVERVIEW OF COUNTRY CONTEXTS

This section gives an overview of the different situation each country programme is working in. The evaluation reports provide a summary of the country contexts to varying degrees as a way of providing a setting for evaluations. The following table summarises the context of the countries that SCN is working with the aim of giving an overview of the comparative socio-economic and political situation in each place. Apart from the GNI index which comes from official sources (Comparative Gross National Income 2003 table from World Bank web link: <http://www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/GNIPC.pdf>), the rest of the data is based on anecdotal information and ad hoc assessments contained in the country evaluation reports.

- Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is a measure of economic prosperity derived by dividing the Gross National Income population. The table shows that all countries are low to lower middle income except Norway which comes in at number three in the world whereas Ethiopia is ranked in last place.

- All countries have ratified the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child and have child protection legislation in place. However, the legal framework needs to be refined in all countries including Norway to address the specific and emerging issues around VSA against children.
- The implementation of this legislation is inadequate in all places.
- State welfare services for children in need of protection are virtually non-existent everywhere except in Norway (where there is room for improvement). There is no comparative data on state welfare provision across the world but anecdotal information collected during this evaluation demonstrates how little is provided in some places compared to services taken for granted in many parts of the Western world. In Ethiopia, SCN has contributed to the setting up of the first ever government-run clinic providing medical treatment to sexually abused children, there is only one clinical child psychologist in the whole country, and children who are victims of incest are routinely returned to their abusers after emergency medical care has been provided due to lack of alternative state provision. In Mozambique, figures from Sofala province, show that there are some 50,000 orphans (children who have lost one or both parents) in a province with an overall population of around 1.2 million and only one government child care facility which is able to house some 200 orphans per year. This clearly demonstrates the lack of capacity of some governments to meet the protection needs of children suffering from VSA which has implications for the type of role an international organisation like SCN can be expected to perform.
- In addition, four of the countries face political and military turmoil (with Sri Lanka now also grappling with the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster).

Table showing comparative context of countries where SCN has VSA programmes

Country	Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in US dollars	Rank compared to other countries	Good legal/policy framework but room for improvement	Good implementation of law	Good state welfare services for VSA	Political/military stability
Norway	43,350	3 - only Bermuda and Luxembourg have higher GNI	Yes	Yes but room for improvement	Yes but room for improvement	Yes
Romania	2,310	100	Yes	No	No	Yes
Albania	1,740	120	Yes	No	No	Yes
Sri Lanka	930	140	Yes	No	No	No
Nicaragua	730	150	Yes	No	No	Yes
Zimbabwe	480	163	Yes	Yes but system strained by economic and political crisis	Yes but system strained by economic and political crisis	No
Cambodia	310	183	Yes	No	No	Yes
Nepal	240	192	Yes on trafficking but not on child sexual abuse	No	No	No
Uganda	240	192 joint with Nepal	Yes	No	No	No
Mozambique	210	195	Yes	No	No	Yes
Ethiopia	90	208 – lowest GNI of all countries in world behind DRC, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone	Yes	No	No	Yes

The next table shows SCN's work in the countries under review. It shows the types of VSA reported in each country; the issues SCN is addressing; ages of children being targeted; gender of children being targeted; projects being evaluated; and other VSA projects which are not being evaluated. It should be noted that the terminology used to differentiate the types of abuse is that used by the evaluators in the individual reports which is not always consistent with global policy. This chart is intended to be a quick reference point showing the type of work each country is engaged in.

The table on the next pages shows SCN work in countries.

Country	Projects being evaluated and VSA issues addressed	Some other projects addressing aspects of VSA but not part of this evaluation	Age range	Gender breakdown	Other VSA or related issues in country mentioned in report but not addressed by thematic programme
Albania	Child-trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour - Vatra Vlore shelter – reintegration - NPF Youth centres – prevention through awareness-raising and other activities - FBSH Socio-educational centre – prevention and reintegration	None	Not specified but appear to cover whole range including children under 10 through FBSH	Boys and girls targeted as victims of child-trafficking	Plan to change focus in future as result of decrease in number of trafficked children, to other child protection issues - corporal punishment, juvenile justice, other issues related to sex and physical abuse at home and in school, in addition to child child-trafficking.
Cambodia	Sexual abuse in family and community, abuse in commercial sex trade, child-trafficking and physical abuse through one initiative, Village Safety Program implemented through Cambodian Centre for the Protection of children's rights (CCPCR) and Vulnerable Children Assistance Organisation (VCAO)	NGOCRC – corporal punishment LAC – juvenile justice CNCW – law against domestic violence Several other NGOs – work with street children Education programme – corporal punishment campaign	Not specified	Girls and boys as victims including in commercial sex work	
Ethiopia	Sexual abuse and exploitation - Child abuse and neglect unit in Yekatit government hospital providing emergency medical treatment in Addis Ababa - prevention/support programme for sexually abused/exploited children run by Forum For Street Children in Nazareth	Education programme addressing sexual abuse and exploitation, early marriage, corporal punishment through various initiatives; harmful traditional practices project on Female genital mutilation	All ages including very young children under 10	No specific mention of boys as project participants in report but some were noted. Recognition of boys as victims.	
Mozambique	Violence and sexual abuse; early marriage; child-trafficking and sexual abuse (through campaign) - 4 government social welfare departments carrying out work on awareness raising; rehabilitation of prostituted children; community committees. - police department – detention and prosecution of violators - 1 NGO Muleide – awareness raising, reporting and training	- Government welfare departments - providing assistance to other groups of vulnerable children also - Police – also dealing with cases of violence against women - SCN education programme school committees	All ages as working with police – victims as young as 5	Boys and girls as project participants – work through police disaggregates violence against boys; recognition of boys as victims in report especially in prisons and on streets.	Sexual relations between adolescent girls and older men in exchange for benefits, ceremonial practices (circumcision, scaring), child-trafficking of children for organs, child-trafficking for sexual exploitation, sexual harassment in schools, early marriage, sexual abuse in prisons, psychological ill-treatment.

<p>Nepal</p>	<p>-Protection of Badi children from sexual abuse and exploitation (SAFE) - Prevention of trafficking of vulnerable girls (Maiti Nepal) - Empowering survivors of girl trafficking (Shakti Samuha) - Safer environment for girls – mainly protection from sexual harassment (This project was recently taken over by SCN from Save the Children UK and was not part of the evaluation, nevertheless some learning from a previous evaluation on this project is included.)</p>	<p>CWISH – child domestic workers and sex abuse</p>	<p>Mainly girls under 18 but in case of trafficking over 18s also included</p>	<p>Girls – no mention of boys</p>	<p>Domestic violence and alcohol abuse in families</p>
<p>Nicaragua</p>	<p>6 projects linked to VSA directly – no specific forms of VSA except sexual abuse - Dos Generaciones – postgraduate training - Fundacion Sobrevivientes - research - CAPRI – networking - CODENI – commission - CONAPINA – plan of action - MIFAMILIA - regulations</p>	<p>10 projects indirectly addressing VSA through education projects and economic exploitation programme – were superficially part of evaluation</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>Boys and girls targeted. Consultation with boys and recognition of abuses against them in report.</p>	<p>Commercial sexual exploitation; physical and psychological abuse; torture; youth violence and gangs</p>
<p>Norway</p>	<p>SCN direct implementation of initiatives on initiatives on sexual abuse of children on the internet, and also child-trafficking</p>	<p>- Sex tourism campaign; - Research projects: pilot project Children's House; Abused children and the law (joint project with Save Children Alliance); Child care service and cases of incest; ways of talking to children; sexualisation of childhood; disabled children as victims of sexual abuse. - films and stories - Angry Man animated film - training - pre-school teachers</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>Presumably boys and girls are participants in activities.</p>	

Romania	<p>Child-trafficking - SCR/IOM – counselling and reintegration for trafficked children - SCR – networking - SCR/ECPAT – research - SC Italy – European network - ILO/IPEC – research on prevention/reintegration</p>	<p>6 counselling centres specialising in psycho-social recovery of victims of abuse or sexual exploitation</p>	<p>Mainly 14 upwards</p>	<p>Mainly girls, only one boy in reintegration centre though programme recognises child-trafficking of boys both for labour and sexual exploitation</p>	
Sri Lanka	<p>Violence in families and communities through 3 projects - AHIMSA – community development - SERVE – social work support in schools - LHRD – legal support to abused children</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>No indication that boys targeted</p>	<p>Sex tourism, child-trafficking and sexual abuse following Tsunami disaster, violence in families and communities, sexual abuse in schools, bullying, abuse of children in institutions</p>
Uganda	<p>Child sexual abuse; HIV/AIDS - Uganda Child Rights NGO – networking - ANPPCAN – networking; awareness-raising - Home after Rape – psychological support, training - RYDA – child rights clubs - CCF Acenlworo – community participation - AACAN – community sensitisation - UWCN – community work - Apac Scouts Council – child participation - KDG - training</p>	<p>Work with 9 partner organisation but limited evaluation carried out primarily by desk review.</p>	<p>Capacity to work with under 12 year olds needs to be increased</p>	<p>Boys as victims recognised but not addressed</p>	
Zimbabwe	<p>Child sexual abuse - Child and Law Foundation – Victim Friendly Court; also research on child-trafficking - Childline – Community outreach education project for teachers - Zimnamh – children at risk project – community education</p>	<p>- Child and Law Foundation – unclear whether broader activities concerned with multi-sectoral approach is evaluated e.g. coordination; schools programme; legal programme – or main focus on VFC - Childline – hotline; therapy; training others; court preparation; rehabilitation of perpetrators (including adolescents)</p>	<p>Direct beneficiaries mainly school age especially 10-18</p>	<p>Boys as participants in activities, no mention of boys as victims</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS; child neglect; child prostitution; harmful traditional practices like early child marriages and ceremonial dancing (“chikende”); ritual abuse involving belief systems such as satanism and witchcraft</p>

Part III PROGRAMME INITIATION

This part of the report is divided into two sections:

- Assessment - why programmes were set up, what prompted them, what kind of analysis was made
- Programme design - what was the overall strategy, what decisions were taken about what to do, where, and with whom

A. ASSESSMENT

1) PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

SCN has prioritised certain programme areas concerning children which include basic education; child rights; children affected by armed conflict and disaster; violence against and sexual abuse of children; HIV/AIDS; and economic exploitation. This marks a development in SCN from being a self-implementing organisation in the 1980s, involved in a wide range of community development work, to an agency that works through implementing partners on specific child-focused issues. These areas were selected as they represented areas of expertise within SCN but countries are free to work on other issues of relevance to their contexts. The decision to work on VSA in a particular country programme therefore occurs within the framework of these priorities.

The initial identification of the problem by country programmes often seems to be a response to heightened public interest or a chance encounter rather than a systematic analysis of the various issues facing children, including the many different forms of VSA. In Ethiopia, for example, the programme was ignited by a major public scandal in 1999 in which ten pre-school children were sexually abused by an old man. An approach which relies on external stimuli, while being open and responsive, can also have the disadvantage of being reactive by missing critical issues that are not in the public domain.

2) SITUATION ANALYSIS

Once the initial concerns regarding VSA have been raised, to what extent do country programmes carry out a thorough situation analysis before embarking on a programme? There are some examples of good practice where programmes have carried out a systematic analysis but a number of countries appear to have begun work without a proper assessment either at programme or project level.

The Cambodia programme started work on this area in 1998 after carrying out a full situation analysis of issues affecting children which indicated that VSA should be a priority for the country programme. Further research looked at programmes carried out by international organisations, NGOs and government on commercial sexual exploitation as well as research involving some 11,000 children on their experiences of physical punishment at home and school. Project specific situation analyses also appear to have been carried out with a partner agency on the situation of children involved in commercial sex work in parts of Phnom Penh. The Zimbabwe, Albania and Sri Lanka country programmes also began work with a comprehensive situation analysis. Others have started interventions based on limited studies or none at all.

KEY LEARNING

Lack of existing data

The absence of data on prevalence, scale, causes and effects of VSA is a common problem to all countries. SCN on its own may not be in a position to commission research on the scale required and may have to work within the constraints of the best available evidence.

The Nicaragua evaluation recognises the dearth of quality data stating that the widespread perception that VSA is a growing problem was not founded on good evidence. Where data does exist, it can be so piecemeal that it fails to give an overall picture. The Romania report states,

“Up to now there is no official statistic regarding the extent of the phenomenon. The most reliable data is provided by International Organization for Migration - Bucharest Office and represents just a small part of the phenomenon. In case of children the total number of victims assisted per year reads as follows: 24.84% in 2000, 20.73% in 2001, 22.83% in 2002 and 18.4% in 2003. The same statistics indicates that the most exposed group to human child-trafficking are children between 15 and 17 years old including a high rate of girls trafficked for sexual services. Despite the decreasing of percentage over the past four years, the same IOM report also underlines the decrease of victims' age.” [Romania report]

This data only tells us which percentage of those victims who have been assisted by IOM are children; it does not tell us how many are being trafficked, what became of those who were not found etc.

Important for credible advocacy

Sound analysis is important for valid project design and also for effective advocacy. The Norwegian domestic programme is generally well researched and documented and this has been the power of its advocacy. It too faces challenges with evidence, however. With child-trafficking, for example, there is an absence of accurate figures on how many children are trafficked into and within Norway due to the lack of official cases. This does not mean that child-trafficking does not exist and SCN has a lot of informal information but this cannot serve as evidence in the way reported cases do. Despite these constraints, interviews with politicians show that SCN's fact-oriented approach and good research were important reasons for its influence over government policy. Some still commented nevertheless that,

“they wish SCN would be more cautious when making statements, and make sure they are backed by documentation. In their opinion, the term “many children are” does not make any impression by itself, without specific cases to demonstrate what is being said.”. [Norway report]

Contents of situation analysis

A comprehensive situation analysis should be at two levels:

- broad study – showing national trends and data on VSA which can be obtained from a literature review of existing data or a new survey if possible; review of external resources – government, community, civil society interventions; gaps; SCN's strengths and prospective areas for intervention
- project specific study in project site locations to gather data on prevalence, causes, risk factors etc. Such a study would provide baseline data as a yardstick for future impact and help ensure effective project design. An organisational assessment of prospective partners could also be carried out at this stage to assess organisational capacities (governance, mission, leadership, stakeholders, manpower) in order to highlight areas requiring SCN support.
- it should draw on the experiences of those who are directly affected in order to enhance SCN's comprehension of the situation. As the SE Europe report notes,

“[the programme] should ground its learning in direct work with trafficked victims in order to get beyond the common knowledge on this subject and towards the uncovering and documentation of novel approaches to this fight”. [SE Europe report]

Ongoing need for analysis

Research and assessment must come at the start of an intervention and for this reason it is placed in this part of the report. However, an effective programme will continually review its data and analysis to ensure that its understanding of the situation is correct. The Nepal programme may have begun in an ad hoc way with little baseline data. However, at a later stage, in 2002, a study of over 5000 children (including those attending/not attending school) was conducted on their perception and experience of child sexual abuse.

3) ROOT CAUSES

A situation analysis should provide a good understanding of root causes which is essential for designing an effective intervention. *“Influencing causes”* is one of the core working principles of the organisation which states that,

“To prevent violation of children's rights and achieve lasting results for as many children as possible, Save the Children Norway shall consider causal relations in children's situations and seek to influence these”.

The evaluation reports mention various causes of VSA, though it must be said that these factors are nominally referred to by the evaluators since they are evaluating interventions and not analysing the phenomenon. The factors mentioned also seem to reflect the views of evaluators and there is no indication that the programmes themselves were premised on these considerations. The term ‘causes’ is also used broadly to cover both structural causes such as gender or poverty as well as risk situations making children vulnerable to abuse such as institutional care or lack of safe play spaces. The evaluators are referring to different forms of abuse, mainly sexual abuse but also child-trafficking, corporal punishment, and exploitation in the sex industry when they were discussing causal associations.

Poverty

Poverty is normally assumed to be factor predisposing certain children to experiences of VSA and is mentioned as an underlying cause in the Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Albania reports. Examples are given of family poverty leading to child prostitution, early marriage, and other forms of abuse. Uganda and Cambodia refer to the inclusion of the issue in national poverty eradication action plans. The issue of poverty is not explored in the Norwegian evaluation but merits further consideration given that Norway is one of the richest countries in the world but some 5-15% of children are still reported to experience sexual abuse.

Migration

Migration resulting from poverty is mentioned as a risk factor in the Zimbabwe report which cites cases of parents working away from home and leaving children vulnerable to abuse in the care of others. The movement of farmers to areas with limited school facilities has led to increasing numbers of children boarding away from home,

“these temporary boarding facilities are often of very poor quality and can be a disused building, the back of a beer outlet or some such unsuitable accommodation, rendering children open to sexual and physical abuse.... Some teachers quoted known cases of children that had been sexually abused by some miners”. [Zimbabwe report]

In Sri Lanka, labour migration of women has made children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by alternate care givers e.g. recent research has shown that most cases of rapes of daughters by fathers occurred while the mother was away in South West Asia.

Education

The lack of schooling is cited as a root cause in the Albania and Zimbabwe reports on the assumption that school provides a safety net.

Gender relations

Gender relations are stressed as an underlying cause of VSA in the Mozambique report,

“The gender social relations establish power relations between men and women and are marked by a strong inequality against women and children. . . . From a young age, young girls learn that school is less important for them than for their brothers, that in their lives they will depend essentially on the resources and status of their husbands and of their sons in society. It is in this context that physical violence and sexual violence against girls and women are inscribed. . . . Gender violence is a psychological, physical and sexual violence against women and is an expression of the power relations that exist in society between men and women.” [Mozambique report]

The Nicaragua evaluation also stresses gender as a root cause pointing out the different impact of violence and abuse on boys and girls. The Nepal evaluation found that poverty is increasing gender discrimination against girls as male children are valued as breadwinners while,

“poverty has pushed many families to force female children also into risky jobs such as domestic workers, stone quarrying, and circus.” [Nepal report]

HIV/AIDS

The Zimbabwe report strongly asserts a causal link between HIV/AIDS and says that,

“the magnitude of the problem of children orphaned by AIDS and overstretched family members has often meant that the affected children are moved from one family to another, exposing the children to higher risks of violence against them, as well as greater exposure to sexual abuse . . .” [Zimbabwe report]

In addition, the belief that having sex with a virgin will cure a man of HIV/AIDS is prevalent in many southern African countries.

Cultural practices

Cultural practices predispose children to VSA in a number of countries. In Zimbabwe, traditional cultural practices such as early/forced child marriages, traditional ceremonies and dances “chikende” expose children to abuse. The report also suggests that ritual sexual abuse as part of a belief system may be occurring. Practices in Mozambique include “lobolo” (bride price) which defines the social ritual of goods and money passing from the family of the groom to the family of the bride at the time of marriage which can result in abuses where minor children are involved. There are also reports of child-trafficking for human organs, male circumcision and scarification. The Ethiopia programme is tackling the issue of female genital mutilation.

The Sri Lanka report, quoting from an external publication, refers to the historical legacy of children traditionally viewed as the personal property of their parents,

“ancient chronicles on the social history of early Ceylon say that parents could sell or mortgage their offspring in circumstances of dire financial difficulties, in satisfaction of a debt or as compensation for a wrong doing. With colonization, the over-all guardian role of

the courts over the children came in place and the principles with regards to the welfare of the children were introduced into the Sri Lankan legal system.” [Sri Lanka report]

Domestic violence

Domestic violence and its potential links to VSA are stated in the Nepal report,

“Children in family with domestic violence may be more vulnerable to sexual abuse and those subject to domestic violence and abuse may also be the victims of child-trafficking. There is a need to document the relation between domestic violence and child-trafficking and its effects on children.” [Nepal report]

Natural disasters

The risk of violence and sexual abuse in the aftermath of natural disaster was highlighted by the Tsunami crisis. Sri Lanka reports the dangers facing children who have lost or become separated from their parents,

“Sadly, the disaster also highlighted the vulnerability of the children of Sri Lanka to sexual abuse and violence from both fellow Sri Lankans and foreigners. A number of stories of rape and attempts to sell children have been caught by the media and have been confirmed by the government.” [Sri Lanka report]

Institutions

The Sri Lanka report highlights reports of VSA occurring in institutions stating that lack of access to such places, the absence of monitoring and control, lack of staff training and poor resources contribute to making institutions places of danger.

Other factors

Other causes mentioned include, lack of safe spaces (Zimbabwe evaluation); lack of identity documentation causing children to become easily “lost” and “invisible” (Albania); presence of traffickers in communities (SE Europe); poor parenting (Ethiopia). The Sri Lanka report identifies a number of other factors saying that children are more likely to be vulnerable if they are living in “remote areas”, if they have “learning disabilities”, come from a “marginalized group” and that abuse in itself can be a factor in exposing a child to further abuse.

4) PROGRAMME THEORY

A proper understanding of the situation and root causes should give the basis for the theory behind the programme. Each programme/project is based on a theory or assumption even if this is not explicitly recognised or understood e.g. awareness-raising will prevent abuse, child-friendly courts will lead to more prosecutions which will deter perpetrators which will in turn protect children from abuse etc.

The lack of evidence on VSA in terms of hard statistics and proven causal links makes it difficult to design effective interventions targeting those most vulnerable to abuse. This can inevitably lead to a poor theorising

‘Because we don’t do as we are told.’
‘Because we are naughty.’ ‘So that we attend classes.’ Moreover, they associate use of violence with adults’ problems: ‘Because food is scarce.’ ‘Because they are not working.’ In some cases, use of violence is justified as a right of adults: ‘Because they are adults and have the right to use it.’ . . . Aware of the causes to which the use of violence against them is attributed, they emphasise the need to be well-behaved if they are to prevent violence from occurring: ‘I must not be naughty.’ ‘I must obey when ordered to fetch water.’ ‘I must not answer back.’ ‘I must attend classes and study.’ ‘I must not lie.’ ‘I must show adults some respect.’ ‘I must not hit my younger siblings.’ ‘I have to cook the beans.’ (Girls repeat the reasons given by adults for using violence against them)
Girls, Nicaragua report

and understanding of the problem. The SE Europe report asks,

“how are vulnerable groups defined and identified; and to what extent are they really the prime beneficiaries of SC efforts? This implies understanding the root causes of the phenomenon.” [SE Europe report]

It takes issue with a number of factors often presumed to be root causes of VSA in its various forms, questioning for example, whether poverty leads to child-trafficking,

“Data from round world suggest that while lack of money leads to migration not child-trafficking – low status of poor people and powerlessness in face of abuse make them into ideal victims for traffickers. Empowerment and attitudinal change rather than income generation may be a more appropriate response . . . trying to address poverty as a reason for departure should be considered beyond the scope of any anti-child-trafficking project; first because such a project should not try to limit migration (per se) but only deal with instances of child-trafficking; second, because fighting poverty, even on a small scale, is likely to absorb all of a project's resources for very uncertain results.” [SE Europe report]

The SE Europe evaluation also questions assumptions about linking child-trafficking and education, *“do more or less educated tend to migrate less? Once migrated are more educated in less exploitative situations?”*

It concludes that there is an inadequate conceptualisation of the child-trafficking problem in the SE Europe programme. There is a *“degree of blurriness”* between *“generic”* work on child rights and child protection and *“specific”* work on child-trafficking with assumptions being made about the causal links between generic work and impact on child-trafficking which were not spelled out or validated e.g. interventions in education, juvenile justice, corporal punishment are assumed to reduce child-trafficking without validating this connection with evidence.

These conclusions could well apply to other country programmes as there is no indication that any other programme has a better conceptual basis for its design. It is as well to bear in mind the caution indicated by the SE Europe evaluator and to think more profoundly about the causal links and the impacts of intervening. However, programmes also need to be pragmatic and given the dearth of data and analysis and the task of mediating interventions through partners, a common-sense approach may be the only feasible option. An examination of root causes may lead to a bewilderingly complex web of causes making it difficult to design an intervention at all. The Sri Lanka report, for example, contains a grid showing a range of economic, social, cultural and political factors which are influencing the prevalence of VSA in the country. As the thematic advisor points out, the task of identifying root causes is a highly complex one and can vary from case to case,

“To understand the risk and vulnerability factors is extremely important but also difficult as most of the countries involved tell about the uniqueness of every case. That nearly every case/victim into child-trafficking is a mix of factors...and as you say poverty increase the vulnerability but there often needs to be additional factors for child-trafficking to take place. There are poor communities where very many end up in child-trafficking and there are poor communities where the community works to hinder child-trafficking.” [Email from thematic advisor, Turid Heiberg]

B. PROGRAMME DESIGN

1) OVERALL THEMATIC STRATEGY

The SCN programme handbook defines “strategic” as,

“long term planning taking all relevant factors and considerations into account, enabling different persons and/or groups to joint efforts towards reaching common objectives. The planning process involves prioritising and choosing between alternatives”.

It states that developing a country strategy should take into account,

“why are we here; what do we want to achieve; how best to achieve our objectives; look at country context; situation of children in country; main concerns for children; specific competence of SCN – justification, role in relation to partners, resources, timeframe, strategic focus, strengths and weaknesses, relation to programme and also head office”.

Country programmes may be using this model for developing their overall country strategy. However, it seems unlikely that this level of strategic thinking is taking place as thoroughly and systematically for each thematic area. As the Mozambique evaluation notes, the

“programme doesn't exist in the true sense of the term, there existing only projects with partners,” [Mozambique evaluation]

and recommends a work plan for the thematic area showing the role of programme managers and the activities to be developed.

Cambodia and Sri Lanka represent examples of a cohesive and comprehensive strategy development. The Village Safety Net Program strategy in Cambodia outlines a detailed 4 phase plan for the community mobilisation intervention aimed at child protection.

This is not to say that other country programmes do not have any strategic vision at all. The Zimbabwe and Uganda programmes, for example, have been following a two-pronged approach aimed at developing the capacities of duty bearers from both the community and government/national level to respect children's rights. With some country programmes, strategic thinking appears to have evolved with time. The Nepal evaluation concludes that,

“SCN has thus come a long way by moving away from child-trafficking and giving priority to the hidden issue of child sexual abuse in its program area. Along with the partners it has also moved away from prevention and protection to empowerment of vulnerable groups and mobilization of communities in the effort.” [Nepal report]

The Albania programme also demonstrates the need for a continual renewal and revision of strategy. The programme is cognisant of the lack of credible data on levels of child-trafficking despite the heightened international interest and resources and realises it needs to take stock of the issue in order to refine its focus to ensure that it is meeting the most pressing protection needs of children,

“We need to do a proper mapping of issues/organisations and take a broader view before deciding which protection areas to go into – we need to look at underlying issues and see child-trafficking as a symptom e.g. child-trafficking because of domestic violence and perhaps focus on protection rather than just child-trafficking and look at violence and abuse, domestic violence, children as perpetrators, juvenile justice, gender, children in education system, corporal punishment, blood feuds – harmful traditional practice in northern communities which follow code of honour – are a risk to children as they may become

involved in violence. Also if we focus on child-trafficking we need to concentrate on areas which other agencies are not covering e.g. IOM covers 'all human beings' – we need concentrate on our niche as child rights agency" (TEC interview with Country Programme Staff, Albania)

2) ROLE OF NGOs – ADVOCACY OR SERVICE DELIVERY?

Country programmes need to find a balance between advocacy work and delivery of services. This goes to the heart of what the role of NGOs should be,

"Are NGOs there to fill gaps that government does not provide for or should we monitor and support? . . . If [we] . . . tackle the situation in isolation we will not meet the needs of the vast majority. We need to work together as NGOs to see if we can pressure governments to build a better social welfare system." (TEC interview with Country Programme Staff)

Advocacy based on rights-based approaches therefore seeks to hold duty-bearers i.e. governments to account for upholding the rights of their citizens.

Such approaches often fail to take adequate account of the capacity of different governments to bear responsibility. It is important to recall that governments do not have the same obligations under international human rights law for all rights – civil and political rights are absolute obligations whereas economic and social rights are 'progressively realisable' meaning that governments have agreed to uphold these rights as far as they are able in economic terms. Given the world economic order, all governments are not equally able to uphold all the rights of their citizens no matter the amount of advocacy directed towards them.

The Norwegian domestic programme is able to take an advocacy only approach given that,

"Norway has a prosperous economy and a well-developed welfare system. Consequently, rather than helping Norwegian children directly, SCN sees it as its main task to advocate children's rights to the authorities, and to educate the public". [TEC interview with Country Programme Staff, Norway]

A good example of this is SCN's pioneering work in identifying child pornography on the internet as an issue, piloting a hotline to receive reports, and then handing over the running of this hotline to the police as the rightful state authorities bearing this responsibility. This role is wholly appropriate in a country like Norway where the government has the resources to meet the needs of most of its citizens. Nevertheless even here, there are some who would criticise SCN for having too "academic" an approach to issue and "lack of contact between SCN and actual victims of child-trafficking". [Norway report]

Programmes operating in poorer countries need to balance direct advocacy towards government authorities with providing real services to fill gaps that would otherwise remain unfilled. Maintaining this balance is an ongoing debate in some programmes,

"it's necessary to discuss whether we've got the balance right in Nicaragua as there is so much advocacy – I feel it's a live debate in Nicaragua and a valuable one – we need to discuss why we are doing certain things and what it will give us. I don't think other country programmes have that debate often enough" [TEC interview with Country Programme Staff]

In some countries the scales seem to be tipped in favour of advocacy work. The Ethiopia evaluation noted a,

“tendency that SCNE planning to work more on advocacy level advocacy work is essential . . [but] if activities at the grassroots level are not visible the individual child is not visible. The actual and practical experience which will have greater input for the advocacy becomes nil and the advocacy will not have better results.” [Ethiopia report]

Official policy sanctions equal attention to both forms of intervention. Save the Children Norway's strategy document (2002-2005) says,

“Save the Children Norway's work to promote children's rights comprises two equally important and interdependent elements: practical work for children and advocacy to improve external conditions that affect children's lives.”

However, interviewees commented on the sometimes disparaging attitude to the delivery of services in the organisation,

“SCN policy is to push at a higher level – it is unwritten but this is the message that we get – it does look down on service provision as piecemeal but if you insist they let you do it.”

Another added,

“SCN policies need to pay more heed to the fact that the context of the countries they are working in is very different e.g. awareness-raising may be appropriate in Norway but is not enough in X where there is a need for more basic interventions. We need to provide knowledge but also to meet basic needs”.

Interviews conducted by the TEC at head office show how the wording used by senior managers might be interpreted as disparaging service delivery for only reaching limited numbers of children. However, the actual message being conveyed by senior managers is one which tries to encourage more thoughtful service delivery which builds on local capacities and existing resources and is sustainable. Care needs to be taken in the language of discourse on this subject as the message filtering down to some is one which values advocacy over grassroots support. In addition, undermining achievements with regards to individual children can have a demoralising effect on ground-level staff who may struggle on a daily basis to effect changes in children's lives. Moreover, advocacy is best founded on grassroots experiences and real life accounts.

3) IDENTIFYING PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

Decisions concerning what kinds of projects to initiate and where to work are very much contingent on partner selection and availability which is addressed in greater depth in the next part of the report (Part IV Programme Implementation, “Partnership approach”). SCN is frequently working in an environment of low or variable local capacity and programmes approach partner identification and selection differently. Some programmes that perceive their role as building up nascent local NGOs are very pro-active in searching for partners with potential. In Albania, SCN identified the need for a shelter for victims of child-trafficking as a gap in services and then identified ‘Vlore’ as partner with the relevant commitment and interest to carry out this work. SCN recognised that ‘Vlore’ did not necessarily have the full technical skills and management experience but was more concerned about finding people with the right commitment rather than the best formulated proposal. Sri Lanka and Cambodia have also taken a similar pro-active approach. In other places, the lack of a full situation analysis by programmes means that they are not able to identify specific gaps in provision but rather a general need for work in the area of VSA. As such, specific interventions are more often chosen on the basis of partner availability, ability and interest in carrying out particular activities.

In terms of a framework for selecting partners, some countries have elaborated clear standards. Nepal appears to have the most rigorous vetting procedure and while there are no written criteria, partners are selected according to their shared vision, common goals and objectives to work for the rights of children as well as certain non-negotiable registration requirements. A pre-partnership phase of six months to one year is initiated where the thematic manager senses a commitment and interest in working together and this involves several rounds of discussions on the programme and the budget. Programmes may put in dedicated support in initiating a relationship with a particular partner as shown by Nepal's work with child-trafficking survivor's group 'Shakti Samuha', a group of young women lacking in formal education and citizenship documents who had struggled for four years to obtain registration as an NGO until they received the dedicated support of SCN and another international NGO, OXFAM.

4) TARGET GROUPS

Programmes and projects need to ensure they are tailored to children under 18 on a non-discriminatory basis in line with SCN policies. This involves various considerations of age, gender and other aspects. Programmes do not appear to be taking these matters into consideration to the desired degree when planning programmes.

Age

One recurring issue is how to draw a line between women and children's rights in subject areas where women's and children's concerns are often enmeshed and are more often assumed to be one and the same even when they are not. In reality, there can be a conflict of interest between women and children particularly in cases of VSA where women may themselves be perpetrators of abuse or complicit in the abuse of children. SCN needs to safeguard its role as a child rights agency and ensure it advocates for children's best interests. This can be a challenging and little understood perspective as discussed in the Norway evaluation,

"The child perspective on needs and rights is still a relatively unknown angle in the Norwegian political discourse. As the thematic advisor puts it, the politicians participating in the work against child-trafficking are taking "a women's language", being rightly concerned with women's rights. Most cases of trafficking are also related to women. In contrast, the idea that children have distinct needs and rights is quite new, the thematic advisor's view is that the political system is resisting somewhat because the politicians and others do not sufficiently recognise the essence of SCN's argument". [Norwegian evaluation]

Most country programmes are faced with the practical problem of funding projects which support both women and children. In Albania, even though SCN was active in establishing the Hearth shelter for victims of child-trafficking, it has now reduced its funding, as most of the beneficiaries are over 18.

Gender

The Mozambique and Nicaragua evaluations stress the need for more gender analysis and clear dis-aggregation of data by gender in the country programmes. The lack of understanding of gender as a root cause among SCN and its partners has the consequence of programming which often fails to address the institutional/societal root causes of violence against girls and boys. There is also a notable absence of programming for boys who are victims of violence and abuse. The Mozambique, Nicaragua and Uganda reports acknowledge the existence and taboos surrounding VSA against boys. None of the programmes (except SE Europe to some extent) are however, specifically targeting boys.

There is equally no programming targeting boys in terms of their views and roles in carrying out VSA. Boys may be potential perpetrators, bystanders or victims of abuse now or as adults in the future. As the Nepal report concludes,

“Another important lesson from this is that the programs should include men as well for holistic approach to problem solution. Projects exclusive of men and boys would be like patching up things only; for long-term solution change in the behaviour of men is necessary and it should start from their boyhood.” [Nepal report]

Other groups

Non-discrimination is a central working principle of SCN. Some thematic programmes (Zimbabwe, Nepal, Albania, Sri Lanka) appear conscious of this principle and make efforts to target marginalized communities. Other groups which may require more attention include out-of-school children, children in rural areas, disabled children and children as perpetrators.

5) DEFINITIONS

The issue of definitions of violence was not much addressed by the evaluation reports. There are two aspects at play: how SCN and partners define VSA; and how it is defined by wider society. The Nicaragua report discusses differences in definitions at some length, pointing out the different definitions used by projects, by SCN overtime and in society as a whole. Some suggest broadening the definition of violence, e.g. Nepal report recommends that it should include domestic violence especially given its potential links with child-trafficking while the participants at a Sri Lanka evaluation workshop expanded the definition of violence to cover children suffering from hunger,

“Starving the children is a form of violence against children. With all the development, 40% of the people are living below the poverty line. Here poverty line is 1/3 of a dollar. It is also violence when children are deprived of access to education and health because of compliance to policies imposed by international financial bodies”. [Sri Lanka report]

Such wide-ranging definitions of VSA are far from what is recognised as abuse in the societies themselves. Although definitions of violence and sexual abuse vary from country to country particularly in terms of what is considered acceptable and taboo, the tolerance threshold is always lower than that proposed by child rights advocates. Corporal punishment, for example, is widely accepted in most countries. Ideas about *“sparing the rod and spoiling the child”* were mentioned as far afield as Mozambique and Cambodia. In Sri Lanka, physical chastisement of children by fellow members of the community is so widely tolerated that it goes unchallenged,

“In densely populated urban poor communities, mothers reported that their neighbours hit their children in their presence and they could not do anything about this. Children say that adult neighbours verbally assault them when they play too near their neighbour's houses or when they are too noisy.” [Sri Lanka report]

One concern raised by some at head office was whether there was too much focus on sexual abuse at the expense of other forms of violence. Most country programmes are focusing on sexual abuse, perhaps due to a tacit acceptance that this is deemed unacceptable in nearly all societies whereas as other forms of VSA are more tolerated. However, it is true that other forms of violence and abuse require attention and also that they are inter-related and it is artificial to seek to segregate them.

6) TECHNICAL FORMULATION

There seem to be a number of weaknesses at this early stage of development in the technical design of programmes/projects. Nearly all the evaluations note weaknesses in project planning documents which include a lack of clear, coherent and achievable objectives and indicators. Consultation with communities and other affected stakeholders about the design of projects is a well-recognised good practice but appeared to take place infrequently. The Albania evaluation refers to a systematic consultation during the programme development phase. Other countries carry out consultations on a more sporadic and ad hoc basis and even where they are carried out, they do not necessarily influence project planning as shown by some of the community consultations conducted by partners in Nicaragua.

7) PILOTING

Piloting new programme or project interventions is good practice but was only mentioned in the Cambodia and SE Europe reports. In Cambodia, the Village Safety Net Program strategy allowed a period for pilot testing the project. Piloting of the centre-based intervention in the city led to a realisation that centres for prevention and recovery would be better placed in provinces as children come from rural settings, and it would help them to stay in familiar surroundings and learn relevant vocational and interpersonal skills.

“A boy would follow her to the school and threaten to kidnap her. He would wait in front of her house. But she was afraid to speak to anybody and for fear of the boy would not attend school. Had she not come to the girls' group, she would not be bold enough to talk to the boys and also tell teachers and the family members who also talked to the boy. She also learnt the way to talk to boys in such a case. They learnt that such things were not to be tolerated and needed to react to the things that they did not like.”

Nepal report – Safer Environment for Girls Project

Part IV PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This part of the report falls into three sections:

- Strategies – how the programme is being implemented, what strategies and approaches are being adopted, what are the lessons learned from these
- Resources – what issues there are in relation to financial and human resources deployed for the implementation of the programme
- Activities – what kinds of activities are being carried out and what are the best practices from these experiences

A. STRATEGIES

1) PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

SCN shifted its strategy from self-implementation to implementation through partners in 1995. The reasons for this change were a combination of external pressures which emphasised the need to empower Southern-based organisations as well as SCN's own positive experiences of working through partners, particularly in Latin America. At the same time, another strategic decision was taken to concentrate on certain child-related areas rather than dispersing expertise over a range of subjects. Recent years have seen SCN downsize from 12,000 employees to some 350 staff and 250 partnerships.

All projects on violence and sexual abuse are implemented through partners. The policy on strengthening local capacity (2002-2005) states,

“Local partners shall have the primary responsibility for implementing initiatives. Save the Children Norway shall emphasise the strengthening of local capacity to promote children's rights”.

The policy document leaves the exact nature of the relationship flexible and adaptable to local circumstances emphasising the need for mutual learning and recognition above all. In such a context where SCN is not directly implementing, the role of the thematic managers is to act as a bridge between local partners and the country office, ensuring that the projects are implemented in accordance with SCN policies and principles.

Whatever the global vision, the country programmes demonstrate considerable diversity in the way they interpret and implement the partnership model. Albania demonstrates one model in which SCN provides intensive capacity building and support to local partners in a way that is perceived as beneficial by all concerned,

“One of the biggest accomplishments of [SCN] is considered to be the fact that partners believe there has developed a relationship based on mutual trust and learning between them. The existing partners of [SCN] say they have a special kind of relationship compared to the donor-recipient relationships with other donors” [Albania report].

Cambodia has also followed such a model,

“[with partners] often repeat[ing] that in Cambodia it is only SCN that provides such consistent level of support for capacity building and program development, allowing Cambodians to take a lead in developing strategies, supporting them through the process, standing by them in periods of conflicts and helping them find ways for improvements themselves.” [Cambodia report]

Nepal found a close engagement with partners to be a valuable two-way learning process. The similarities in partnership approaches in these three countries could possibly be the result of exchange visits between the programmes.

Some countries follow a very different hands-off model to partner relations. In Mozambique, although partner relations were considered generally positive, the evaluation found more attention was being given to financial management rather than capacity building, training, evaluation or monitoring, project management, documentation, and sharing of experiences and learning. The evaluation conclusion (disputed by the Mozambique programme) was that,

“SCN technical staff are respected and feared due to them being holders of the real or imaginary power to increase or cut the funding of the partners,”

with budgets seemingly linked to performance,

“ . . .allotments available for the partners that have demonstrated higher levels of competence and performance”. [Mozambique report]

In recent times, Zimbabwe has adopted a more distant approach (compared to previously when it worked very closely with one particular partner, Child and Law Foundation) and was found to be weak in the area of partner management and coordination.

Some other programmes fall midway between these two extremes. Ethiopia, Uganda and Nicaragua provide strong support on human/financial resources and administration but less in technical areas such as psychosocial support, child participation, advocacy, monitoring, recording and report-writing.

KEY LEARNING

Lack of local capacity

Lack of local capacity is a hindrance facing nearly all country programmes both in terms of project management as well as specialised knowledge concerning VSA and especially areas of work such as child-trafficking. Some country programmes have sought to tackle this problem by building local capacity and there are some very inspiring examples of how capacity can be built in even the most unpromising of situations. The SAFE project in Nepal is one such example and although SCN was not responsible for its early development, much can be learnt from this case. The history of SAFE can be traced back to 1987 when a Danish volunteer visiting Nepalgunj raised the awareness of the Badi community regarding the injustice of their low position in the caste system and the exploitation of their women as prostitutes. The Danish volunteer helped establish schools, clinics and facilities and acted as a catalyst in mobilising local Badi youth to work for their own community. These initiatives faced considerable opposition over the years but with the continued support of SCN and other organisations, a true development in the social status of the Badis has been achieved. SAFE is now run by members of the Badi community themselves and represents a true example of community ownership. As the Nepal report concludes with reference to two partner NGOs,

“Educational qualification of staff and running a visionary organization are not necessarily related to each other as the experiences of SAFE and Shakti Samuha had shown.” [Nepal report]

Some country programmes have shied away from working with community-based organisations in this thematic area. In Mozambique, some staff were under the impression that working with small NGOs was ‘against the rules’,

“SCN-M should be open to supporting initiatives of creating partnerships with NGOs that are very weak – this would allow us to help build them up. But our policy says not to work with them. . . I’m not sure if it’s written down that way but I feel we’re not allowed to work with them as community-based organisations need a lot of effort and intensive work,” [TEC interview Country Programme Staff, Mozambique]

This indicates a confusion among some, if not the actual policy of the Mozambique office, about SCN’s role in a non self-implementing environment (see discussion below).

Another potential solution to the problem of local capacity is to select partners for long-term relationships rather than on a project-by-project basis. This is the approach taken in Nicaragua though there are still challenges in moving into new areas, such as VSA, where competence and consent to work in these areas is subject to negotiation and capacity building.

Differences in values, expectations and systems

Differences in approach is another challenge facing SCN in many places. Local partners may have their own views of working with funding agencies and negotiating a different kind of non donor-recipient relationship may be difficult. In addition, there might be resistance to some ideas proposed by SCN. In Albania, a partner agency running youth centres was resistant to the concept of child participation as they were more used to carrying out activities for children rather than involving them. Other values may also be at odds. In Nepal, nepotism in the hiring of staff was found to be a problem in partner projects. Systems and procedures may also differ. The Sri Lanka evaluation recognises the problem of different approaches and suggests it might be improved by a pre-partnership orientation.

Varied forms of capacity building needed

Capacity building required by partners can be very wide ranging and falls into two broad categories:

- organisational development – finance, personnel, strategy, project management including proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, indicators, documentation etc.
- technical matters e.g. thematic issues concerning VSA, psycho-social support, rights-based approaches, HIV/AIDS etc.

Those country programmes taking an intensive approach to partner support have provided training on as wide a range of subjects as possible. In Albania, staff from the Hearth project found the on-the-job training provided by SCN very helpful as it covered designing, planning and writing project documents (including help with preparing the proposal for SCN), preparing reports, evaluation of projects, psycho-social support, interviewing skills, child rights, working with children etc.

In Nepal, extensive training and support has led to an impressive level of capacity building of partners. Commenting on Shakti Samuha, an organisation run by former adolescent survivors with no formal educational training, lack of English language skills (considered necessary for getting development aid), and lack of family support, the Nepal evaluation concluded,

“Capacity building of SS seemed to be the strongest and effective part of the project. The members who were the project staff as well were learning to run an organization. They have learnt to keep proper accounting system. Through various training such as leadership, community facilitation, counselling, they have built their self-confidence, learnt to interact, deal with governmental and non-governmental organizations, and counsel the victims of violence and child-trafficking. SS members could now speak with authority about the rights of survivors and the proper ways of rehabilitation and rescue in front of any audience and express their feelings and disagreements without hesitation...”. [Nepal report]

The evaluations note that support to grassroots organisations can stretch well beyond financial support and training to resolving internal conflicts and it can be a dilemma for country programmes to know how far to get involved in such issues.

In other country programmes adopting a more traditional donor-recipient model, capacity building of partners is virtually absent. In Zimbabwe, the current approach in relation to one of the partners was described as,

“The existing relationship is based on funding only and no capacity building strategies i.e. no added value) .. . [In addition] Partners felt they are currently not benefiting from the knowledge and experiences generated within the wider Save Norway family and its networks because the information is not reaching them”. [Zimbabwe report].

The Mozambique evaluation also concludes that the programme is not providing adequate training or guidance to partners.

In general, most country thematic advisers felt they lacked the time or technical know-how for providing satisfactory support to partners. The Ethiopia evaluation called for increased head office support to country programme staff so that they could in turn provide support to partners (see section on “Interaction with HQ”).

Some suggested that capacity building of partners could be improved by a more systematised approach that involves carrying out an organisational needs assessment at the outset,

“We need to focus more on capacity building and organisational development. This is not taken seriously enough, a good start would be a framework for a systematic approach which could start with the assessment of the partner – then by identifying the means for improvement – we should give partner support to improve weak areas, we should not necessarily do all the work ourselves but as a donor we can help the partner to identify resources. We need a simple flexible approach which is explicitly referred to in the country programme plan”. (TEC interview with Sigurd Johns, former Programme Advisor, Cambodia).

More guidance on implementation of partnership policy

The SCN policy on partnership currently leaves wide room for interpretation as highlighted by the different models adopted. It was clear from interviews carried out by the TEC that each person has a very subjective interpretation of what it means. Many country programme staff expressed confusion as to the boundaries of their relationships with partners and how they should act in relation to them. This was neatly summed up as follows,

“Since we were working in another way before (direct implementation), it is not easy for some staff to understand their role in the present moment. Staff need training and a lot of discussion on how to do the role of being a partner. We are doing it gradually and in our internal supervision systems we gradually introducing items to ensure that it is understood the role of SCN staff...” (Email to TEC from Country Programme Staff in Mozambique)

This uncertainty can lead to the feeling among some that self-implementation is better. Indeed, there is no hard data as to whether the partnership model is more effective or efficient and the trade off between long-term sustainability and equitability on the one hand and the need to provide more intensive support for what can be less direct short-term results, is recognised,

“there’s an ambivalence ... on the one hand we want results – on the other hand we want to work through partners – sometimes all our efforts in capacity building may not give us the best results”. (TEC interview with Sigurd Johns, former Programme Advisor, Cambodia)

It can also lead to a confusion over SCN's goals and objectives – even though it's ultimate goal of protecting child rights should be clear there can be tension with lesser goals such as local capacity building especially where these seem to be pulling in different directions.

There is clearly a need for more conceptualisation at the policy level on what partnership means to SCN, how it should be carried out and what it involves. SCN should state which model of partnership it favours and endorses in the spectrum of intensive support to a hands-off approach. In the view of the TEC, the intensive model appears a more original, responsible model of donorship which yields more results in terms of impact on VSA, and country level capacity building. If one compares the achievements of two programmes: a supportive model can lead to progress across all project partners, as seen in Nepal, whereas a more laissez-faire approach can only show gains in projects where the already partner has the innate capacity and competence e.g. Child and Law project in Zimbabwe. However, it is for SCN to decide and give guidance to its country programmes accordingly. Moreover, SCN can ill-afford not to clarify this aspect since it is dependent on partners to deliver on the ground. Top managers, including the Assistant Secretary-General, agreed that this is an area requiring more discussion and direction.

‘I react violently and rebel.’ ‘I would like to hit my brother.’ ‘I run away from home.’ ‘I feel like getting into drugs.’ ‘We become enraged and lash out in anger at other people.’ ‘My grandfather angers me and I answer back to him..’ ‘I use obscene language and feel a surge of violence.’ (Boys agree with girls as regards the feelings that violence generates. However, they clearly show anger and disgust, and feel rewarded when they “win” a fight. Such feelings are associated with some of their reactions to violence)
Boys, Nicaragua report

Coordination of partners important

Coordination of partners with each other is a pertinent issue for all programmes but was only fully explored in the Zimbabwe report which highlighted the need to bring partners together, more transparency in terms of who SCN is working with and on what, and better division of labour to ensure that partners are not doing the same things in the same places,

“The general perception was that both the individual projects and the SCN-Z program would have greater impact if there was integration, and communities knew that the projects belonged to the same family . . . Partner projects sometimes pull each other apart to the detriment of children’s rights and their development”. [Zimbabwe report]

The Zimbabwe programme has attempted to facilitate linkages by organising a biannual Partnership Forum but some felt this had led to increased rivalry and tension and needed careful restructuring. Rivalry between partner agencies is a reality especially in resource poor environments and lack of transparency and equal standards of treatment can compound such problems as indicated in the Nepal report.

In Sri Lanka, coordination among partners has led some to change their focus so as not to overlap with the work of other Save the Children partners. The evaluation recommends that mutual support among partners should be fostered and that also the country programme

planning process should invite inputs from partners in order to foster a collective sense of ownership.

Examples of responsible donorship

Responsible donorship emerges as a hallmark of some of the stronger partner relationships. The Nepal programme has demonstrated a thoughtful and constructive approach to the management of partner relations by safeguarding SCN principles while at the same time encouraging partners to improve their performance e.g. concerns over the way Maiti Nepal was treating victims/survivors of child-trafficking led to a review of support provided but SCN remained engaged with the organisation in order to influence their approaches and philosophy through dialogue and reviews,

“we were more concerned to see how the project could be improved rather than dropping it altogether, its our responsibility to bring about change”. (TEC interview with Country Programme Staff, Nepal)

SCN has often shown itself to be a reliable donor. The Albania programme has taken care to help partners such as the Hearth shelter to find new funding before discontinuing support.

2) CHILD PARTICIPATION

Some of the best examples of child participation are found in Nepal where child participation has been made a central feature of all projects in the programme. SCN introduced the concept to partner SAFE resulting in a transformation of the way activities are run,

“The hostel that was run like an orphanage was completely given a new facelift with a child-friendly environment . . . Children themselves devised hostel rules and regulations and made schedules for daily activities”. [Nepal report]

The Safer Environment for Girls project shows the importance of full engagement,

“Instead of simply forming child clubs and involving children in extracurricular activities, children were given the charge of the whole project so that their activities are recognized and their voices heard at the local and even at national level.” [Safer Environment for Girls Project report]

The girls became so empowered that they intervened in various situations e.g. saved 12 year old girl from child marriage by persuading her family that this was unacceptable and contrary to the law.

Child participation not only enhances the skills and abilities of children, it also serves to improve the projects themselves. In Albania,

“placing priorities on the beneficiaries, listening to them has led to several improvements [in the Hearth shelter] such as broadening the spectrum of services provided to the clients, transforming accommodation centres to a reintegration centre as well as becoming more flexible to client needs”. [Albania report]

In Sri Lanka and Cambodia, the engagement of children in project activities has served to boost their self-esteem and helped them develop a positive sense of responsibility towards other children,

“Many children go beyond reporting. They organize small activities to help poorer children in school, giving them books, pens, clothes. In one school, the children organized a money bank, with each child contributing 100 real each. The amount is pooled together and is used to help school children in emergency situations.” [Cambodia report]

Norway and Uganda have used child participation in a more limited way but to good effect. Other country programmes are struggling to implement the concept of child participation effectively.

KEY LEARNING

Meaning of child participation

The evaluations reveal confusion about what child participation means and a number of country reports such as Ethiopia and Uganda cite the need for capacity building. One important lesson is that child participation means the full engagement of children in a wide range of aspects which need to be specified on case by case basis – this means not only listening to children's opinions but empowering them to be involved in project development, evaluation and monitoring. Some of the best examples given above involve child participation at these levels.

Limits to child participation

At the same time, child participation has its limits and is not a boundless concept. The trend in child participation reflects wider trends in user consultation in services provided by public and charitable bodies. For the sake of practicality, participation of users cannot be without limits. In hospitals, for example, participation might amount to consultation forums for patients, informed consent procedures, and complaints/redress mechanisms but it does not mean that the patients participate in every single action that is taken as some responsibility has to be abnegated to staff.

There are also some limits to do with this particular subject area. The Ethiopia evaluation asks whether child participation is feasible in difficult and traumatic circumstances e.g. emergency medical unit in a hospital. This difficulty is recognised by the Sri Lanka report as well as by Norwegian domestic programme,

“SCN describes the lack of child participation as a major challenge. The inclusion of children who have experienced sexual abuse is very difficult on ethical grounds, and must be taken care of by professionals”. [Norway report]

These difficulties highlight the need for more creative and broader approaches to participation which do not simply focus on the participation of the affected child but of other forms of representation, for instance, by other children.

Cultural resistance

Resistance to child participation is mentioned by various country programmes and neatly summed up by the Ethiopia report,

“In a society like ours children are brought up in an adult-dominated environment without having any say in matters affecting their lives. The social norms and values imposed on children by most cultures are to obey orders from adults without questioning the effects or repercussions (these orders have) on them. ... owing to this fact, it becomes hard and time taking to internalise the new concept of child participation for most people who passed their childhood through an authoritative mode of orientation and socialisation”. [Ethiopia report]

This is compounded by gender differences as the Nepal and Nicaragua reports both cite greater resistance on the part of parents and communities to the participation of girls especially if this entails travel away from home. In some countries although the external environment is enabling, e.g. the ruling political party FRELIMO in Mozambique has

promoted the idea of a bi-annual national children's parliament, the VSA projects run by SCN are still lacking in participatory approaches (though other SCN child rights projects involving school committees, Nucleos Escolares, are more child inclusive). By contrast, in Albania where,

“the child participation approach was also new for the local partners [who were] used to provide services for children not with children”, (emphasis added) [SE Europe report]

the programme has made significant gains in the promotion of child participation. These experiences suggest that whatever the external cultural norms, projects can introduce new ideas and ways of thinking at community level.

Broader participatory approaches are effective

Wider approaches which include child participation as part of the package are likely to have most effect. The Nicaragua evaluation observes a link with parental participation,

“some experiences led us to assume that there is a direct link between parental participation in partner organisations' activities and a receptive attitude on their part toward participation of their children. The experience gained by Don Generaciones in previous projects suggest that it is advisable to undertake parallel processes with mothers/fathers, and children/adolescents as a means to achieve sustainable participation”. [Nicaragua report]

Ensuring access to participation

Participation of the most vulnerable groups and particularly those that are hard to reach is important. In Uganda, work in schools is supplemented by community level advocacy clubs targeting out of school children. Participation within interventions also needs to be monitored. The Nicaragua report notes the exclusion of some children as school authorities conceived participation and access to student councils as a way of rewarding “good behaviour”. There is a particular need to ensure that participation is not restricted to already ‘privileged’ or ‘elite’ groups of children.

Tailoring participation to developmental stages

Participation needs to be tailored to the developmental stage of the child if it is to be effective. Children cannot or do not necessarily wish to participate in identical activities to adults. Programmes need to be aware that the capacity of children to participate will alter as they grow. The Nicaragua report highlights the need for more playful or creative forms of participation. Tailoring participation to different developmental stages can be a challenge especially where very young children are concerned. There appear to be no examples from the reports of the participation of very small children (except for their involvement in the Albania country evaluation).

Participation in real-life

Many of the programmes are concerned with child participation in specific projects. It is also important to bear in mind, however, that participation does not necessarily entail creating new opportunities or avenues for participation. It can also mean facilitating the increased participation of children in their own daily contexts – in their families, schools, neighbourhoods etc. This is important in terms of sustainability as it can help foster a participatory approach that goes beyond the life of a project. Some programmes in Nepal and Uganda for example, appear to be taking this angle through their work in community settings.

‘I feel like running away from home and living far away, by myself.’ ‘I feel ugly, sad, and upset.’ ‘I feel humiliated and cheated. I feel like crying.’ ‘I don’t want to go on living.’ ‘I am afraid to answer back to them...’ (Violence prompts feelings of fear, escape from reality, grief and low self-esteem among boys)
Boys, Nicaragua report

Impact should be measured

Child participation is assumed to be positive and as the examples above show, can be beneficial both for child and project development. However, the actual difference made to children, communities, the problem and the project could generally be better documented and measured (and measured with the participation of children themselves).

Balancing protection and participation

The UN CRC is both an empowering and protective statute – on the one hand it asserts the rights of children to be equal citizens while on the other it advocates their protection from harmful situations. There can clearly be a conflict between child participation and protection. This issue was recognised in the planning of this evaluation as although the full participation of children as evaluators was seen as beneficial the country programmes were aware of the attendant risks and dangers to the physical and emotional safety of child evaluators.

3) RELATIONS WITH SAVE THE CHILDREN ALLIANCE

Relations with other members of Save the Children Alliance are generally good with few problems indicated. Collaboration can include joint advocacy work, shared funding, networking etc. Uganda and Sri Lanka are consolidated Alliance programmes but these mergers were not explored as part of this evaluation. SE Europe is a regional child-trafficking initiative involving seven Alliance members and the regional evaluation contains a number of lessons learned from this cooperation exercise.

4) RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

Relations with government appear largely positive in most country programmes and the importance of collaboration at all levels - with different departments throughout central and local government – is well understood. Zimbabwe demonstrates a sophisticated model of interaction between SCN and government partners in a multi-sectoral approach that links with different government ministries related to social welfare; justice, legal and parliamentary affairs; health and child welfare; education; as well as other NGOs and donors.

In Albania, collaboration has been positive at many levels: the programme has played a significant role in drafting policies; it has forged partnerships with operational agencies e.g. relationship between the Hearth shelter and the police said to be “*one of the most successful accomplishments*” [Albania report] as some 95% referrals to the shelter are from the police (lack of referrals used to be a problem) and police provide security for shelter etc. The programme is also seeking to foster closer collaboration with local government authorities for the running of youth centres (with limited success).

KEY LEARNING

Nature of collaboration

There are a spectrum of possible relations with government and SCN can position itself in a variety of ways by playing an influencing/advocacy and monitoring role; by doing the work of government itself e.g. drafting policies, initiating pilot projects for government to scale up; or by funding government departments to carry out work themselves. The working principle on strengthening local capacities stresses a broad-based approach in working with partners from all sectors,

“..... SC Norway considers this mix of public and civil society partners as a strength. The importance of sustained impact requires commitment from the authorities combined with critical monitoring by civil society who can hold public authorities accountable”.

Some country programmes work almost exclusively through government partners due to lack of alternative structures e.g. Mozambique. This raises questions about the extent to which SCN should work through government and whether this approach compromises its independence and its ability to advocate on child rights.

The Nicaragua country programme has deliberately positioned itself as an ally and not a critic,

“in the particular case of SCN, it does not consider that its role is to monitor and denounce violations of children's rights from the state. Thus, it does not use this mechanism as a means to exert influence”. [Nicaragua report]

One staff from the Zimbabwe programme identified the following factors as enabling a positive relationship with government,

“we have developed good contacts over the years because of our transparent approach. Also a good number of our staff come from government in the first place and are able to maintain their links . . . Most NGOs are regarded with suspicion but SCN has a good reputation, it is not linked to any political side. It also helps that although we are an international organisation we are run by local people and from the government perspective, this is seen as capacity building, empowerment and ownership. We are looked at differently from other international orgs – the government sometimes gets angry with other NGOs but welcomes SCN. The main things that have helped facilitate this relationship are (a) transparency; and (b) humble approach – we do not pretend to know everything, if we are wrong, we accept we are wrong, we are not arrogant and the government sees we genuinely want to participate in development.” (TEC interview with Zimbabwe country staff)

This approach and positioning seems typical of a number of other programmes. While it may help to ease relations, it may possibly have some repercussions in terms of the way SCN is perceived and may compromise its stated commitment to the best interests of children.

Permanent coordination mechanisms should be set up

Coordination mechanisms with government departments should be set up in order to make contacts more institutionalised and less person-dependent. This was identified as a problem in Nepal,

“The ministry occasionally seeks SCN's comments on their documents and invites in meetings. SCN also invites the ministry in appropriate forums to share their ideas. But due to frequent change of government and its staff, it was not easy dealing with them and its bureaucracy.” [Nepal report]

Disunity in government can be an impediment

Fractured relationships between different government departments can also make it complicated for an external organisation like SCN to find an entry point. The Ethiopia evaluation notes that SCN's efforts to collaborate are impeded by the lack of strong linkages between government departments responsible for juvenile justice, police, court and hospital, and it is hoped that one of its projects, CANU, will help improve the situation.

Commitment of government departments helps

Government interest in the issue in question can be a determining factor. In Zimbabwe,

“When the Child and Law Foundation started, the political environment was conducive. There was keen interest from government and other stakeholders”, [Zimbabwe report] but this has weakened with other socio-economic problems rising to the fore, the emergence of HIV/AIDS and the skills shortage. Countries in SE Europe have also benefited from an open attitude as their initiatives have fitted with the external political agenda in a timely way. Even where governments are interested they may have their own priorities and focus. In Nicaragua, government agencies are mainly interested in commercial sexual exploitation but not other forms of violence.

5) RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

All country programmes understand the importance of fostering good relations with other organisations and are participating in external networks where they exist. However, it often seems difficult to establish positive and close working relations with other international organisations despite the obvious benefits in terms of avoiding duplication and maximising leverage and effectiveness. Some positive examples were found in SE Europe, e.g. good collaboration and division of labour with IOM in Albania or the initiation of the first networks on child-trafficking in Romania, but this could be due to the high level of political interest and resources available for child-trafficking in the region. Some other country programmes expressed hindrances in establishing strong relationships.

‘My family looks down on me.’ ‘My father calls me stupid and my brothers call me dumb, dimwit.’ ‘My teacher hit me and forced me to kneel down because I failed to read the vowels.’ ‘One day when I was lighting the fire to cook I dropped a cooking pot and my mother beat me...’ ”
(Adolescent girls stress both physical and psychological violence)
Girls, Nicaragua report

KEY LEARNING

Competition is a barrier

Competition among international organisations appears to be the main impediment to closer collaboration. International agencies are competing for resources, permission or even local partners in many places. The Nepal evaluation notes the problem of working with local partners who have multiple funders,

“If SCN would not provide according to their terms, they would turn to other issue-based donors who were always ready to provide according to their demands. There was in fact a stiff competition among donors to find few noted NGOs and fund them.” [Nepal report]
Nepal's experience of joint funding partnership's has not been very positive,

“ . . . since different donors have different policies regarding the amount of funding, provision of facilities, administrative vs. program costs, such joint funding partnership can be mired in disagreements over salary scale, modalities, and lack of openness in dealing with partners, etc.” [Nepal report]

The Nepal office has taken the initiative of establishing a Donors' Forum for each partner in which all donors funding the local partner meeting annually to discuss common approaches which has helped communication and sharing of responsibility among donors.

Government can ease coordination

Relations between international and local organisations can be considerably facilitated where government is able to play a strong coordinating role. In Ethiopia, a strong government education department has resulted in good NGO coordination and division of labour between agencies and an active interest in initiatives by SCN. By contrast, the social affairs bureau is not supportive of projects concerned with VSA and has not taken a lead in coordinating work in this area.

6) INTERACTION WITH HEAD OFFICE

KEY LEARNING

Clarity of policies

SCN policies are consciously broad with the aim of accommodating a range of initiatives, they do not give strict direction but are intended as guiding principles with the inherent flexibility required by different situations. Some country programmes appreciate this approach feeling it grants them flexibility to tailor interventions to their context,

“ There are no binding policy documents from Oslo – there is nothing so restrictive. SCN is less prescriptive than other organisations and is pragmatic about the way decisions are made, what one can and can't do. One is free to do something different if it's reasonable and can be justified. [TEC interview with Country Programme Staff]

Others feel that such broad policies require more definition if they are to be useful

“Oslo sends policies that are very broad in which any level of position can be contained. This gives one the flexibility to do what we want. It is OK to have broad policies but one needs more specific thematic dialogue and guidance also”. [TEC interview with Country Programme Staff].

These broad policies appear to result in confusion among some country programme staff who feel that there are a lot of 'unwritten rules' about what is and isn't allowed. The Mozambique evaluator noted a,

“lack of clarity in relation to Oslo policy and the perception that the problems cannot be presented openly. . . . [and a] . . .lack of discussion internally of the various aspects linked to SCN's policy”. [Mozambique report]

The report cites various examples of activities which are perceived to be prohibited even though there is no clear instruction to this effect, e.g. SCN does not fund income generation, pay salaries of partner organisations, or work with fledgling community-based groups. The Mozambique country programme responding to the global evaluation felt it was more an issue of different interpretations of policy from one country to the next, with some activities prohibited in one country but not another. It should be noted that the comments made in this section refer to SCN policies generally and not only those related to VSA.

Policy development and formulation

There was little feedback from the reports on how HQ consults the field in policy development although it seems usual practice to consult the field and there seems to be a good two-way flow in terms of ideas. The Nepal report remarked that the field seemed to have influenced the formative stage of global policy development in the thematic area whereas developments in the Cambodia programme were triggered by head office policy.

The TEC observed that there were a proliferation of documents relevant to this thematic area such as the strategy, programme handbook, policies, status reports and then further documentation developed specifically for this evaluation - TOR, Framework, KQE. Given that these documents are largely similar with subtle differences, it seems important to rationalise the documentation and clearly build on wording that has gone before. A rationalisation of existing and future documentation would make it easier for staff and partners to grasp the essential points. In addition, more attention could be given to conceptualising and formulating the "Policy on opposing violence against and sexual abuse of children" to make it clearer and more cogent e.g. differentiation between the sections on "policy declaration" and "implementation" is not clear as in some parts they are repetitive; definitions and types of abuse could also be more clearly categorised.

Technical support from head office

All country programmes expressed the need for more technical support from the thematic section of head office,

"technical staff in the thematic area of violence and sexual abuse receive little technical support in relation to the thematic area on the part of the colleagues at central level or in Oslo, and there is no training or retraining programme aimed at supporting the technical staff at national and regional levels." [Mozambique report]

Other country programmes such as Ethiopia and Zimbabwe concur adding that this is negatively impacting on the ability of programme staff to provide support to project partners,

"Interviews and literature review showed that while there has been little programme information between SCN-Z and their partners, the same could be argued for SCN-Z and SCN in Oslo. There was very little evidence that program advisors in Oslo provided technical support to the local office. Some staff interviewed said that there had been increased program support to SCN-Z after the Madrid workshop of 2003. There is room for more programme support from Oslo to SCN-Z. SCN partners would want to see Oslo facilitate sharing of more information on their project partners around the world." [Zimbabwe report].

The need for capacity building of SCN country programme was mentioned across the board including by programmes which have a developed in-country capacity such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Nepal. Some head office interviewees also agreed that there is inadequate technical support to the field.

The thematic advisor has provided support to the field which has involved *inter alia* numerous field visits as well as training. The Sri Lanka evaluation report mentions training provided by Oslo to staff, partners and authorities on psychosocial responses. Appreciation was expressed for the inputs provided by the thematic advisor into the Albania programme and the Norwegian child-trafficking work. In addition, respondents found the thematic advisor very responsive and prompt in answering questions. As a practical point, some country programme advisors requested that they be contacted directly as messages sent through the office hierarchy tended to take a while to filter down.

Country programmes call for various forms of support including access to reference materials, assistance with developing training on specific technical issues e.g. psycho-social support, and opportunities to share and learn from experiences of other country programmes. Further specific suggestions made include: more frequent visits; more information on external developments but with an emphasis on quality information rather than just volumes; more capacity building in terms of locating and sharing materials, and project support. The topic network shows useful potential for global exchange though staff time and availability to fully participate is an issue. Some suggested that the current dissemination of documents

should be reviewed as they were finding very large documents difficult to download and that shorter summaries would be more useful. (Intranet developments may help to overcome these problems and include possibilities for discussion forums, posting documents etc.)

As part of the function of head office is to support country programmes, it is reasonable that support is expected - the question is how much and what kind of support can reasonably be expected and why the type of support that is wanted is not being given at present. A number of issues are relevant here.

Firstly, support for country programmes should come from a variety of head office units and many different lines of communication and advice. The TEC noted that the issue could benefit from being more mainstreamed at head office level as many of the staff interviewed, especially the regional coordinators, were not fully aware of the VSA programme. In addition, the hierarchy of the country programmes themselves has a responsibility in providing support to country programme advisors. Therefore, while the country evaluations only reported on their expectations of the thematic advisor, the wider web of relationships and responsibilities should be recalled.

Secondly, the room for internal capacity building is recognised at head office,

“if we concentrate on few areas, we can pool resources and be on the cutting edge but this requires good dialogue and sharing professional experiences and models across the globe. We will not be on the cutting edge if people doing the work never share their thoughts. We need to improve our capacity to share. We need to improve our capacity to monitor what is happening to children, what impact there is. We need to build an internal dynamics for sharing, capacity building and professional strength. We aim to do this in various ways – e.g. global evaluation itself; intranet; currently under development; and the development of regional networks”. [TEC interview with Jon-Kristian Johnsen, former Programme Director]

While the need for capacity building is agreed, it is unclear who is responsible for this. To some degree, training of country thematic advisors is left to individual country programmes. There is an in-house training module called “Common Ground” which the TEC was unable to access. A variable picture emerges in terms of what and how much training country programme staff receive. The Albania programme, for example, seemed to have benefited from a conscious investment in capacity building of local staff through on-the-job training etc. when international staffing was phased out.

The exact role of thematic advisors in capacity building and supporting country programmes also seems unclear. The role of thematic advisors in relation to country offices appears to be circumscribed by two factors. Firstly, SCN perceives itself as a decentralised organisation where maximum responsibility is given to its country programmes,

“One of the strengths of SCN is that the organisation is fairly decentralised – flexibility and field level decision-making is our strength ... what head office may see as support, the field may see as control – it is a fine balance.” (TEC interview with Tove Romsaas Wang, Assistant Secretary-General)

There is a perception that support should be provided in a way that empowers the country programmes to help themselves. The second constraint is lack of capacity and/or time. SCN has limited human and financial resources, and each advisor cannot be in two-way communication with all country programmes. The thematic advisor for VSA, for example, felt it was not feasible for her to be an expert in every professional field and to give solutions on everything. There is not enough time for advisors to learn enough about each local context to provide the concrete advice that is needed. As such they seek to bridge these gaps by concentrating on specific countries, helping programmes to help each other, by identifying local resource persons in the region, by facilitating attendance at courses,

discussions and workshops, by encouraging country offices to support their own staff and through the Topic Network. This evaluation in itself has been initiated with the intent of identifying gaps and helping programmes learn from each other.

The mandate of the thematic advisor for VSA covers a wide range of tasks spanning support to the field, advocacy, networking, researching and writing policies and documents, participation in international events etc. An important role is to promote the issue with donors and take part in all relevant in house processes to support the advancement and inclusion of VSA. More than half the mandate appears to relate to processes at head office and work with Norwegian institutions. Within this broad framework, the role of individual thematic advisors is flexible and can be moulded to the personality and experience of the incumbent.

Although each thematic advisor has some freedom to define his/her role, the TEC observed that there was some similarity in the approaches taken in the thematic section. There appeared to be a commonly held view that thematic advisors are unable to provide training to country programmes on a systematic basis though ad hoc training as well as support in terms of advice, literature and ideas can be given. Practical support to projects is also considered outside the remit of thematic advisors who see their role more as providing analytical support as country programme staff are better-placed to carry out practical work. It is not seen as feasible that everything is provided by Oslo: each programme needs to work in its own setting with Oslo facilitating access to that which is difficult to obtain. As some field staff have expectations that thematic advisors will provide certain kinds of support, this can result in some confusion and also scepticism at times about their role,

“they are able to contribute little, they come from Oslo to learn, they used to be more dictatorial but at least are more humble now, they are still at the stage where they are learning from us rather than us from them”. (TEC interview with Senior Country Programme Staff).

This suggests that there is an issue requiring further exploration by the organisation about how the role of the thematic advisors is defined, how this is conveyed to the field and how the expectations of the country programmes can be met within the resources available.

Whilst noting the constraints faced at head office, it seems to the TEC that more resources could be invested at head office level to provide support to country offices. While she agrees that country thematic advisors could be assisted to help themselves, she tends to the views of the Nepal evaluation – a programme where staff have helped themselves to the optimum extent possible but still feel the need of additional support,

“It [is appreciated] that the country thematic manager [is] left [to] her [own] discretion since she [is] in a better position to understand the country context and thus devise ideas and programmes accordingly. However, the role of the thematic advisor from the head office could be effective in more technical aspects or giving quality to projects [by] exchanging ideas and information about innovative approaches and activities from the experience of different countries, setting monitoring tools and indicators in the thematic area, and giving inputs and information for carrying out baseline surveys and research on the issue.” [Nepal report]

Country office staff are themselves very stretched and cannot easily access internationally produced literature and materials. Even internet access is difficult and unreliable in some locations. It also makes little sense for country programme officers to duplicate efforts in looking for training materials or other forms of programme support when these could be centrally produced. This type of activity should not be seen as centralisation but rather as support. The interpretation of the role of thematic advisors in general seems restricted in

some ways. For example, while advisors cannot provide individual training to all country programmes, they can play a central role in coordinating common training approaches across country programmes. Likewise, while they may not be able to get involved in the day-to-day detail of individual projects, they can provide general guidance at critical stages e.g. providing comments on project proposals or helping country programmes to identify persons who can give such feedback if they are unable to do so. A head office level understanding of the projects seems important if the aim is to help programmes review these experiences from a more over-arching perspective (rather as this evaluation is doing) as the reality is that most country programmes are primarily a sum of the projects they administer.

The TEC also notes that while this is partly a real question of lack of resource, it is also a question of choice. Considerable emphasis is placed on international networking e.g. Second World Congress on Commercial Sexual exploitation of Children in Yokohama (2001), UN study on violence against children, various Alliance initiatives etc, and this affects the time available for country programme support. This has been a choice of the organisation as the position of TA on VSA was set up in response to the Yokohama conference and since 2002 has evolved into a full-time position encompassing other duties. This evaluation did not evaluate the impact of international activities – it was not part of the TOR and would have involved extensive interviews with external actors in order to demonstrate the impacts and benefits of such events. The thematic advisor for VSA firmly holds the view that this aspect of the work is highly beneficial. The matter is raised as something the organisation may wish to examine further if limited resources are available and choices have to be made between programme support and international networking. Alternatively the organisation could consider whether there is a need for additional staffing to meet this diverse range of needs.

The Norwegian domestic programme has also takes up a certain proportion of time and is difficult for the TA to disengage from. Although it should be noted that the TA has stressed that such work is time-limited and that the child-trafficking work in Norway has a much broader international scope. The organisation may also wish to consider the balance of this work vis-à-vis country programme support.

A further area meriting greater delineation is where the responsibilities of the TA for capacity building of country thematic advisors begins and ends as compared to other head office units. Clearly, many of the needs expressed by country programmes e.g. monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, resources etc. are contingent on other head office units as well as the hierarchy of country programmes themselves and not only on the thematic section. It should also be noted that the question of the degree of country programme support is not limited to this thematic area but appears to be an issue in other thematic areas also such as children affected by conflict and disaster (see Children affected by conflict and disaster evaluation); and also child rights (see section on Rights-based approaches).

7) INTEGRATION WITH OTHER THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The integration of VSA with other thematic areas and crosscutting issues is considered important but is not happening sufficiently in most places. The best examples of integration are to be found in Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Cambodia and this is likely the result of the way the country programmes are structured as discussed below in Key Learning. Integration is inadequate in other country programmes.

Basic education: The links between VSA and education are manifold. Schools can be useful places for awareness-raising activities. Education can also act as a form of protection by empowering children, by providing them with alternatives as well as spaces where they can be safe from harm. Educational establishments themselves can pose risks e.g. abuses by

teachers. Oslo admitted that its thinking on the links between education and VSA was at a nascent stage. The current work on education mainly involves using schools as mechanisms for passing messages about child sexual abuse. Corporal punishment either by teachers or parents rarely seemed to be addressed by the country programmes.

There are some interesting linkages with education in the country programmes. The Sri Lanka programme has a school social work programme, which directly addresses issues of abuse through a link social worker in each school to follow-up on individual cases. The Uganda programme trains teachers as counsellors and has a letter counselling scheme where children can report abuses in writing. In Cambodia, schools are a key partner in the implementation of the Village Safe Net Program. The Nicaragua programme has taken a more indirect and long-term prevention approach which focuses on changing child-rearing practices mainly through school and pre-school related activities and groups. The potential of the education system in addressing VSA should be exploited to the maximum extent possible. It offers an optimum level of coverage (providing other projects are addressing out of school children) and a potentially sustainable system.

Child rights: Activities in the child rights thematic area provide an important vehicle for awareness-raising on VSA issues but only a few country programmes seem to be taking advantage of these opportunities. In Mozambique and Uganda, SCN has initiated children's clubs and committees (some school-based) where child-rights, including VSA, is apparently discussed. Evidence of integration in Nepal is more explicit,

"In the area of child rights, SCN was working with community-based organizations in 32 VDCs from five districts, and with 387 child clubs with more than 12000 children. The issue of child sexual abuse was discussed by clubs and in the district of Udayapur they have taken the sexual abuse case to the district court. The selected child club facilitators were also given orientation on the issue. The FM radio program in the district of Palpa run by children and the 'Hatemalo Sanchar' Kathmandu-based child club also discussed the issue often." [Nepal report]

Child rights is a natural fora for addressing VSA in a wider discussion and is a potentially non-threatening way of broaching such subjects.

Economic exploitation of children: Integration with this thematic area is especially weak given the considerable risks faced by child labourers. Nepal has just begun a programme for child domestic labourers building on previous experiences with child workers. The Nicaragua programme has also integrated VSA into its work on economic exploitation.

Children affected by armed conflict, displacement and disaster: Clearly there are strong substantive links between the two thematic areas as children affected by war also suffer from abuse and violence. However, practical exchanges and learning at field level appear absent e.g. in Uganda, the extensive psychosocial rehabilitation work for children used as sex slaves and teenage mothers infected by HIV/AIDS does not appear to be linked to the programme on VSA. In this case, the evaluations have been carried out in tandem with the aim of identifying links and learning from each other during the process.

Children affected by HIV/AIDS: There were few details of how HIV/AIDS is integrated with work on VSA save for training sessions for staff, in Nepal for instance. A number of evaluations raise questions about SCN's policy on HIV testing and the rights of abused children to have/or not have a test. The Mozambique evaluation raises the question of the violence against the girl child and the link with higher prevalence of HIV/AIDS as well as the need for treatment of HIV positive child victims of sexual abuse.

Causes of poverty and economic exploitation: This issue is currently little addressed by either the HQ thematic section or the country programmes which is surprising since it is one of two over-riding global objectives and therefore presents a significant gap in understanding,

“thematic areas not able to relate overarching global objective related to structural causes and poverty – end up being too narrowly focussed and not able to see broader context. That analysis is missing from work in thematic areas”. (TEC interview with staff from thematic section)

Disability: Though not one of the six main programme areas, a number of countries are interested in disability issues and a few tentative links are being made with VSA in places.

KEY LEARNING

Structural organisation can facilitate integration

The way responsibilities are apportioned among staff can help to enhance staff understanding of other thematic areas as shown by the experience of Ethiopia,

“The assignment of programme coordinators in a thematic area other than their own is also a practice recently adopted by SCNE. This practice has two advantages as clearly indicated by the programme staff of the organisation during the evaluation. First, it creates a strong team spirit among the programme coordinators through close working relationship while the second one is the opportunity it provides for the PC [programme coordinators] to widen their experience and knowledge in the different thematic areas”. [Ethiopia report]

The Nicaragua programme has not had a separate programme on VSA and most of its work has been carried out through other programme areas including education and economic exploitation. This approach has led to some creative thinking and interesting initiatives across all thematic areas on the integration of VSA.

8) RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The reports generally mention child rights in a limited way. It is described as the *raison d'être* of the domestic programme in Norway,

“Since we define ourselves as a child rights rather than a humanitarian organisation, it means we have to see abuses of child rights in own country and are under an obligation to fight to change those rights.” [TEC interview with Country Programme Staff, Norwegian domestic programme]

The Ethiopia evaluation appears to merge the language of rights and basic developmental needs. It criticises the country programme for failing to fund the FSC Nazareth street children project to provide food and shelter which are basic necessities for survival whereas other services such as guidance and counselling, education, skills training, medical support, health education, contraceptive provision, recreation, shower and laundry are provided,

“The staff as well as the children strongly acknowledge that lack of meal and shelter are the main factors for the low attendance rate of children in different programmes. . .It would be unrealistic to expect regular attendance and participation of children in the programme in a situation where there is no dependable source of food, where children are unable to get enough sleep and decent place to spend the night free of abuse and physical threats”. [Ethiopia report]

SCN has denied funding on the basis that handouts create dependency while the country evaluator argues that these services must be provided even if given in a way that fosters self-sufficiency.

The Nepal report cites the example of a project following a rights-based philosophy,

“Shakti Samuha has provided a best practice example of rights-based approach with survivors’ program. In their understanding rights-based approach is the one that does not look at rehabilitation and rescue as welfare but as the right of survivors and done as per the wishes of the survivors rather than forced by the institution.....” [Nepal report]

The Zimbabwe and Mozambique programmes refer to rights-based approaches but it is unclear how these are translated into programming on the ground. A few of the evaluations do not mention rights at all.

Given the limited discussion of rights in the evaluation reports, the lack of a common definition as to what a rights-based approach means or any explanation as to what it means to each country evaluator, the global report cannot make a firm determination as to whether the VSA programmes are rights-based and how this is manifested. Nevertheless a number of key issues do emerge regarding SCN's use of the child rights framework.

KEY LEARNING

Need for common definition

There appears to be considerable conceptual confusion surrounding rights-based approaches. At present, programmes are often using the terminology either without thinking through what it means or by developing their own interpretations. The SE Europe report contains various interpretations of child rights which range from addressing those most in need, to looking at the effects on child-trafficking. The report also contains a definition agreed by the regional programme itself at a Save the Children meeting in Rome in January 2004 which decided that a rights approach to child-trafficking involved: a focus on children most vulnerable to child-trafficking; an active identification of factors contributing to vulnerabilities and situations; a focus on the most pressing hurdles to the realisation of children's rights; the promotion of child-participation; the implementation of responses *“in the context of the child's family”* i.e. take into account family dynamic.

Some country programmes are taking what might be seen as a rights-based approach through projects based on child participation or strong advocacy work without referring to them as such. This suggests it is important to clarify whether SCN sees a rights-based approach mainly in terms of legal texts and lobbying of government duty-bearers or whether it perceives it as a complex set of interactions and relationships involving all levels of society. In the latter approach, the inter-relationships between children and their parents, families and communities becomes an important vehicle for promoting children's rights. This seems to typify the approach of a number of country programmes even if is not couched as such. The Cambodia programme focusing at this level through the Village Safety Net Program stresses the need to bring definitions down from the abstract level to real-life situations especially when teaching communities about rights.

SCN does not have any official papers on what is meant by a rights-based approach although there is some internal thinking at head office level (not yet shared with country programmes) which was summarised as follows by those in charge:

“(a) Base: Children's needs and development;

(b) Principles: Children have rights; authorities have duties; four principles in CRC: - the right not to be discriminated against, the best interest of the child, the right to life and development, the right to be heard;

(c) Implications: situation analysis should be carried out in relation to fulfilment of children's rights; causes for lack of fulfilment of children's rights should be focused on; seeking sustainable solutions; work for political changes; work on different levels (practical, implementing projects/supporting structures and mechanisms/building support and awareness)."

There is clearly a range of thinking and interpretation around this subject in SCN. While it is important that different interpretations are taken on board, a common definition should be agreed and disseminated as too liberal an approach to definitions risks undermining the concept and diluting it so that it ends up meaning everything and nothing at the same time.

Rights and responsibilities

The definition needs to consider whether children are only the holders of rights or also the bearer of responsibilities. Most of the emphasis in the evaluations is on the rights of children. Only the Nicaragua report highlights the fact that some local organisations have adopted a 'rights and duties' approach. It suggests that an emphasis on the responsibilities of children themselves may undermine obligations of duty-bearers towards them. However, this can depend on how such discussions are carried out, as asserting the responsibilities of children can help to empower them as individuals and equalise them with other members of society.

Another issue is the responsibilities of non-state actors in upholding children's rights. The CRC refers to governments as the duty-bearers but the views expressed by some SCN staff also refers to the moral responsibilities of a wider set of duty bearers (parents, families, teachers, communities etc.) towards children. SCN's own responsibilities could also be better defined. Some of SCN's Key Quality Elements, for instance, are couched in very broad terms and suggest that programmes should be responding to all rights e.g. "*The programme is based on an integrated understanding of Child Rights and Child Development and uses approaches which recognise the indivisibility of children's rights and child development*" or "*The programme addresses the rights and needs of children in all phases of development.*" Child rights covers a very wide spectrum and more guidance is needed on how programmes should prioritise and share roles and responsibilities with others given their limited resources. Programmes inevitably have to be selective while maintaining a regard for the overall picture.

Translation into programming

More thinking is needed on what practical difference is made to programmes by a taking a rights-based approach as opposed to a needs-based one. A recent evaluation of the Ethiopia country strategy noted the lack of an operational definition of the concept and sought to define how the two could be differentiated. The evaluation settled on four distinguishing characteristics: child participation; equity and non-discrimination; indivisibility of rights and the need to monitor impact on the whole child to ensure there are no unintended consequences; and strengthening the response of duty-bearers and holding them to account. [Ethiopia Strategic Plan 2002-2005, Mid-term evaluation, December 2003] This is a helpful frame of reference but thinking needs to go beyond this level to concrete examples of how individual projects can be adapted in terms of their objectives and indicators to follow a rights-based approach.

Child participation

See section on 'Child participation' for a discussion on this as a core facet of a rights-based approach.

Advocacy

See section on 'Advocacy vs. service delivery' for a discussion of the implications of a rights-based approach emphasising advocacy directed towards duty bearers.

External culture

The external environment may facilitate a rights-based approach. Although this does not emerge as an issue in the evaluation reports, it is worth considering to what extent the currency of rights and the strength of civil society in parts of Latin America and South Asia have facilitated rights-based and participatory work.

Capacity building needed

A number of evaluations highlight the need for capacity building of SCN staff and partners on child rights. The Nepal evaluation points out the conceptual confusion among partners concerning child-rights and recommends the need for more partnership orientation on this subject. Some materials on child rights appear to have been circulated by head office but it is not clear what the contents of these were or to what extent they were used or understood. SCN staff appear to have accepted child rights as the base of their work but they are often dealing with resistance among partners and wider society and therefore require a good understanding themselves if they are to persuade others.

Integration between VSA and child-rights programmes

See section on "Integration with other programme areas" for overlaps at programme/project level.

Child rights and other frameworks

The fit of the child rights framework with other discourses on international assistance and models of child development needs to be considered. The merging of child rights and child development in the 'Key quality elements' is one such example. The fusion of both terms into one key quality element, in particular, adds to this conceptual confusion especially as neither are defined in the documentation. Consideration needs to be given as to whether one schema (i.e. CRC) is better than two and whether and to what extent "child development" can be absorbed or related to specific provisions of the CRC. The CRC is a very wide-ranging framework and can be an umbrella that brings together a variety of concepts. It can be interpreted in such a way that it encompasses issues of concern to child development. In any event, irrespective of the conceptual order in which they are placed, explanations need to be given of both schema along with the KQE. This is especially the case with child development as there is no internationally recognised reference document, unlike the CRC, which can be consulted. The concept of "holistic" is also introduced by the KQE and considerations should again be given as to how this can be absorbed into the internationally recognised language of the CRC, for instance, ideas of indivisibility of rights.

9) CULTURAL APPROPRIATENESS

Cultural factors clearly play a critical role both as a cause of VSA and in the possible response to such abuses. However, most of the country programmes have not explored these links to their fullest extent and the conclusion from the Mozambique report may well apply across the board,

"cultural aspects are not yet interpreted in an efficient way". [Mozambique report]

Cultural factors can be a root cause as discussed earlier. In addition, cultural factors can influence the types of interventions that are possible. In Nicaragua, conservatism was found to be an impediment to the introduction of VSA into the school curriculum (though the evaluation notes advances have been made),

“The Ministry of education always deals with this topic as something that must be dealt within hiding, at home, behind closed doors”. [Nicaragua report]

The utilisation of local culture and beliefs to address VSA is rarely mentioned. Cambodia is the only programme which has sought to adapt child protection messages to the local culture e.g. by drawing on Buddhist philosophy, concepts and priests,

“Rather than talking about the CRC and the international legal framework, we teach them that children belong to the community, the responsibility is on their doorstep, that parenting is a common responsibility for the community as we are all interconnected”. (TEC interview with Country Programme Staff, Cambodia).

Country programmes could more fully explore the use of local cultures in psychosocial work. As noted by the Sri Lanka report,

“Experience elsewhere in the region teaches us that our societies have indigenous ways of facilitating healing and recovery of inner wounds of people. Work in this area of [SC] should consider looking into strengthening positive dimensions of Sri Lanka's ways of coping and healing and at the same time, learning from developments in other countries (western and eastern) in the field of psychosocial help.” [Sri Lanka report]

10) FLEXIBILITY

The Norwegian internet pornography programme has demonstrated its adaptability and responsiveness on various occasions especially given the newness of the subject it was dealing with. One particular moral dilemma was the running of the hotline which involved receiving reports of pornographic images. As the programme progressed, it began to ask itself whether this was a legitimate activity for a child rights organisation since it involved downloading illegal material. In addition, there were other risks with taking on an investigative role of this type in terms of dangers to staff and also inadvertently contaminating evidence that could be used in criminal trials. In 2001, a decision was taken to hand this aspect over to the police which involved lobbying for resources for the police to set up an appropriate unit. Now the project focuses more on advocacy work.

11) INNOVATION

There is a premium placed in SCN on playing a pioneering role by identifying new problems, piloting solutions and then handing them over to governments or others for scaling up. The SE Europe commends Save Children's pioneering work in this area in which actions needed to be invented, concepts created and structures set up, *“what Save the Children has achieved is admirable”*. Research conducted by SCN in Albania in 2001 was *“not initially welcomed by the Albanian government”* but it played an important role in addressing the child-trafficking issue by raising public and government awareness. The Norwegian domestic programme has an impressive track record of pioneering work. Just one example of many was the highlighting of the connection between child pornography and the internet for the first time by SCN and the Norwegian government at the 1st world congress against commercial

‘I used to date a boy who was very domineering, jealous and possessive. He didn't like my friends and wanted me at home all the time. He kept watch on me, talked to me with crude words and used to say that I was a flirt, so I broke up with him.’ ‘My husband use to humiliate me. I stopped accepting financial support from him because he threatened to take my son away from me the minute I decided to leave him. He was violent and used to brag about his lovers...’ (Authoritarian and domineering attitudes on the part of boys stand out as concerns violence between boy and girls in a relationship or between couples) Girls, Nicaragua report

exploitation of children held in Stockholm in 1996. The Village Safe Net Program devised by the Cambodia office represents an innovative and ambitious approach to child protection. In Ethiopia support for a clinic providing emergency medical care for sexually abused children, is the first of its kind in the country.

B. RESOURCES

1) HUMAN RESOURCES

KEY LEARNING

Difficulties in finding people with the right skills

This is a problem common to all country programmes. Zimbabwe is country experiencing a severe skills shortage as a result of the current socio-economic crisis. It had a skilled workforce and a well-resourced system but is now struggling to maintain a system dependent on the availability of professional human resources. The report comments,

“[the] brain drain has brought about brain exodus of trained and skilled expertise to meet children’s needs e.g. lack of psychosocial support and lack of follow-up of children receiving help”. [Zimbabwe report]

Other countries have never had the kind of professional expertise needed for such comprehensive VSA interventions. In Ethiopia, psychologists are in very short supply (apparently only one child psychologist in the country) which is impeding the level of psychological support that can be offered to cases coming to the CANU emergency medical treatment project. The FSC street children drop-in-centre project suffers from a shortage of social workers. Albania, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka and Cambodia all cite similar problems in terms of the lack of in-country professional capacity and opportunities for education in social work, teaching and related fields.

Given the lack of human resources, country programmes need to be adaptable and train up people with commitment and interest who lack formal training to do the jobs required. The Ethiopia report notes that the CANU medical treatment project is limited by its thinking that only a professional psychologist can do the job,

“the delay (in recruitment is) related to... thinking which considers that a clinical psychologist is the only professional that can handle counselling service complicated the situation. However, this can be solved with upgrading of psychologists available in the country and referring serious cases to other organisations that have similar tasks”. [Ethiopia report]

A similarly pragmatic approach was adopted in Albania where non-social workers were hired and their capacities increased over the years through participation in training courses.

Dedicated staff

The dedication and motivation of many staff in the country programmes is readily visible. The need to recruit and retain staff of this quality is a direct consequence of the move away from self-implementation,

“It was a deliberate personnel policy from HQ and the Resident Representatives to find good national staff as we were dependent on them as an organisation. Other agencies send out international staff which does little to empower national staff. Also in this period, we saw and increased delegation of responsibility to country offices. Country staff have to accept

responsibility and use it rather than referring back to HQ. Consequently senior local staff are not disempowered in usual way where they can be when over-ridden by HQ." [TEC interview with Jon-Kristian Johnsen, Programme Director]

Burn out and other risks

Staff working in this thematic area face various risks. Those at project level may be especially vulnerable to burnout when dealing with traumatic difficult to solve cases on a daily basis. In Ethiopia, staff of the street children drop-in centre were said to be frustrated and discouraged by setbacks experienced in trying to change attitudes and behaviours. This was said to be compounded by criticism, from evaluations for example, which fail to understand the constraints they are working in.

"A woman used to offer up her 10-year-old daughter to a man in exchange for money. One day the man did not pay the amount of 2 million meticaís (83 USD) that she wanted so she went to the police to complain. Both the man and the mother were arrested. The child remained with the family"

Mozambique report

Stress management programmes for staff are needed but donors are reluctant to fund such activities. The Albania programme has sought to help project staff cope with burn out by encouraging the creation of self-help groups and by providing support from professional psychologists. Former staff from the Norwegian internet pornography programme received personal threats from criminals given the vested interests and money involved. SCN is paying for regular psychological support for current staff in order to deal with the stress caused by their work.

Child Protection from staff and partners

The programme handbook prescribes ethical principles for the conduct of staff and clear prohibitions on child sexual abuse, the use child pornography, physical and psychological violence against children, and involvement in the commercial sex trade. These are all mandatory principles which must be observed at all times. There are additional guiding principles covering other subject areas which may be adapted to the local context. A document containing these principles is supposed to be annexed to employment contracts for SCN employees and consultants. However, it is questionable how systematically these procedures are followed as the TEC did not receive a copy annexed to her contract.

Virtually none of the country programmes have developed a code for protection from abuses committed by employees. The childcare sector is rife with scandals of sexual abuse by employees. The West Africa and subsequent scandals and the implication of Save the Children Alliance employees in these, is well known. Another scandal in recent years involved the infiltration of Terre des Hommes Ethiopia programme by a paedophile ring. Responsibility for implementation may have devolved to partners but SCN retains the moral if not legal, responsibility to ensure the protection of children in the care of projects that it funds. The importance of this must be impressed upon country programmes who in turn need to adopt a firmer policy and make acceptance of these provisions a condition of their partner agreements. Other governmental and institutional donors as well as international NGOs have made this aspect a contractual condition in agreements with partners since the West Africa scandal. Save the Children UK, for example, has developed elaborate materials and training programmes on this. The child protection policy is best applied in Sri Lanka and Cambodia but even here the evaluations found that not all partners were fully aware of it. The rigour in SCN policy on financial regulation of partners should be emulated in this area.

SCN should also carefully review the standards it is proposing to ensure maximum protection to children is ensured as, for instance, attempts to extend moral restrictions on employee behaviour too far (e.g. prohibiting use of adult sex workers) may undermine the ability to advocate for a complete prohibition on relations with children. However, it should maintain its position against arguments citing cultural differences as these are often used to

undermine child protection. As its Programme Handbook, section on “Ethical principles” says,

“SCN employees and consultants shall observe the laws, customs and traditions of countries worked in or visited. In cases where such laws, customs or traditions contravene the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the rights of the child shall prevail”.

Child protection from abuses by staff is not only relevant to SCN and its partners but in a host of other contexts, such as schools and institutions, that SCN is associated with.

Over-dependency on one person

A number of projects are heavily dependent on one individual for their success. The substantial achievements of the Child and Law Foundation in Zimbabwe, for example, can be credited to its director. This can have severe implications for the continuance of the work. The Uganda report also mentions that this can also inhibit the development of the overall staff team.

2) FINANCIAL RESOURCES

KEY LEARNING

Country programmes generally give VSA lower priority in terms of funding than some other thematic areas. Questions of prioritisation and budget are left to the discretion of country offices and not centrally decided. The TEC was unable to obtain a breakdown from all country programmes of the percentage of their overall budget allocated to VSA. Two country offices with major VSA programmes provided some figures: Nepal says it devotes 14% of its budget to VSA while Albania commits 8.8%. In any event, the TEC cannot comment whether country programmes are allocating an adequate proportion of the overall budget to VSA as this would involve a full understanding of the entire programmes and their contexts to understand why these priorities have been made. However, it would appear that country programmes are generally allocating less to this thematic area than to some other programmes. The Mozambique evaluation, in a conclusion which may well apply to some other countries states,

“that the amounts invested in the area of violence and abuse are extremely limited”
[Mozambique report]

and demonstrates that VSA only gets 2% of the country programme budget as opposed to 50% given to basic education (though it should be noted that the country programme stresses the difficulty of disentangling allocations to VSA from other expenditures).

Whatever the sums involved, the next question is whether the sums allocated have been used cost-effectively. It is impossible for the global evaluation to make a judgement, as the country evaluation reports did not include full assessments of cost-effectiveness. SCN decided not to prioritise this as an evaluation question given the difficulties of assessing cost-benefit in social care projects. Various questions arise in this context e.g. how to convert all SCN inputs into monetary terms; how to disaggregate SCN costs of supporting one project vis a vis other projects and also other donors; how to take

‘Because we hang out with friends’. ‘For refusing to do household chores.’ ‘For stealing, lying failing our exams, taking drugs and breaking trust placed in us.’ (As regards the causes of violence, they highlight problems between their parents, jealousy, addictions, male-oriented attitudes, gangs, relationships that are not based on respect, conflicts between families, type of education, and the temperament of adults. Furthermore, they associate their own behaviour with the use of violence, though to a lesser extent)
Boys, Nicaragua report

account of depreciation; how to define proper indicators e.g. how many children were protected from trafficking; how to take account of indirect as well as direct beneficiaries; how to capture intangible benefits for beneficiaries especially in terms of personal and social development etc (see also Monitoring and Evaluation section later).

In a more general sense, this report documents some examples of inspiring and pioneering work by SCN on VSA. One can nevertheless question whether SCN is doing as much as it can and if it is neglecting these more challenging and difficult issues in favour of less controversial matters such as education. Child abuse is a disturbing and highly personal issue which society would gladly brush under the carpet. In Norway itself there is much resistance and denial surrounding the issue and the legal and welfare system is inadequately responding to such cases at present. These kinds of taboos and inaction are only likely to be compounded in other countries in which SCN works given the cultural differences as well as the paucity of state welfare provision in general.

SCN recognises that it is easier to fund-raise for education programmes,

“It is not an easy theme to report, children have to be protected and the public would rather read about children in schools. Marketing education is easier and heavy subjects tend to deter people”. [TEC interview with head office staff]

Even within the area of VSA, some subjects are easier to raise money for than others. Reliance on interest-driven external funding is a constraint for the Norwegian domestic programme which finds itself limited in the types of issues it can address,

“Earmarked funding for specific projects is an obstacle – it is easier to raise money from private companies for child pornography than for abuse in families. We therefore end up with more money for problems which potentially affect fewer numbers of children”. [TEC interview with staff from Norwegian domestic programme]

Nevertheless, there was some regret that this issue is not given more visibility and recognition that making a difference in this area can be very rewarding,

“When you reach children in this area, you really do give valuable assistance and support. Take Nepal where we are helping girls who've been returned from brothels in India – it really does save lives”. [TEC interview with Tove Romsaas Wang, Assistant Secretary-General]

A returnee from circus wants to be able to earn a living by learning sewing

Deepa Nepali is an 18 years old girl from Padam Pokhari Village undergoing anti-trafficking training under Maiti Nepal. Here's her story: "I was a school dropout from 5th grade. My family was very poor. My father always used to drink and did not take care of the family while my mother used to sew clothes and support our family of five but it was not enough. Then one day my father died and my mother also became sick. A villager by the name of Dhan Bahadur then enticed me saying that he would find me a job that could earn a monthly income of Rs2000-3000 and I could eat well and dress well. I also thought that since my mother was sick, I would rather work and earn and send money to her. With him I went to Uttar Pradesh in India. I worked in circus there. There I learnt that circus was very risky job. I was given to eat at 9 in the morning, then only light food in the afternoon, and then I could eat only at 9 in the evening. For whole day I had to work. If the girls are beautiful the ringmaster used to keep them at night but ugly girls had to wash dishes, and clothes. For a single performance I was given only Rs2.00. What can I do with that money, neither can I save nor was it enough to eat? For three years I worked like that. Then suddenly my hands and feet became numb. Still I worked for seven years doing light works. One day I met a person from my village; he had come to meet his daughter. I told him that I wanted to go home with him. When I told the ringmaster, he gave me permission to go home since I could not work properly but he did not give me single penny except the transportation cost. When I came home my mother had married another man but my stepfather was nice to me. I met a staff from the organization called PLAN. She told me that Maiti Nepal helped persons like me and told me that there was also training. With her I came to Maiti. Now I want to be able to earn my own living from sewing. Here I have so far learnt about child-trafficking and discipline. I want to warn against child-trafficking to others in the future."

Nepal report – Maiti Nepal project

C. ACTIVITIES

This section is organised according to different kinds of activities that are carried out to address VSA. It is not feasible to go into detailed descriptions of projects. Instead, a summary is given of the countries carrying out particular types of activities with key learning and best practice emerging from the reports. This will provide a checklist which can indicate where more information can be found.

1) COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Community mobilisation or participation can cover a range of aspects from passing information to community members and consulting with them, involving them in implementation of activities, to handing over full responsibility and ownership of the issue. It can involve work with specific groups such as children's clubs or be expansive and cover all community structures and sectors. Specific activities might include awareness-raising through workshops and information materials, or running centres and groups.

The Village Safety Net Program in Cambodia is the most comprehensive community mobilisation activity being carried out by SCN. It has an impressive outreach: the cumulative number of children reached since the start of the project in 2002 is 35,353. Moreover, the evaluation notes that the local communities have a "*high sense of ownership*" over the initiative. It is impossible to do justice to the project in the space available in this report (see Cambodia evaluation for full details) and some key lessons learned from this experience are mentioned below and elsewhere in this document. Nepal, Uganda and Sri Lanka also have strong community mobilisation activities.

KEY LEARNING

Community participation is a new concept

Community involvement is new to some countries especially those which have lived under authoritarian regimes,

“Coming from a socialist regime, community members were used to things being taken care of by the government . . . The idea of child participation and in general community participation in planning activities and projects were completely new for the community members . . . [The] . . . Communities...did not understand and approve immediately the fact that the groups of children with whom Save the Children in Albania would work as needing special attention. The community reaction changed through a process and needed some time”. [Albania report]

Mobilisation of affected groups

The engagement of affected groups can be a particularly successful approach according to experiences in Nepal,

“The initiation of the project with the involvement of a homogenous community with their common background helped to develop a strong sense of commitment and ownership of the project by the community. This was shown by the SAFE project in Nepalgunj. Badis have become conscious of their exploitative state and felt very strongly about the cause they were working with especially with the denial of children's rights to citizenship. With homogenous community it was relatively easier to form community support groups and widen the networks. However their effective mobilization and wider participation could further strengthen the project.” [Nepal report]

The Nepal programme also had positive experiences in mobilising survivors through the empowerment of the Shakti Samuha trafficking survivors' project.

Outcomes of awareness-raising prevention activities

A number of programmes are engaged in awareness-raising prevention activities such as youth centres and education facilities intended to provide a safe environment and raise awareness on VSA at the same time. The critical issue related to these types of activities is whether they have the intended effect in terms of ensuring that VSA is prevented. In Albania, the youth centres were reported to have various outcomes in terms of personal development but the links with prevention of child child-trafficking appear tenuous. Given the lack of tangible VSA-related outcomes of these types of activities, some reports question whether awareness-raising is not better carried out in other ways e.g. TV, radio rather than time-consuming and labour intensive group work.

Ensuring most vulnerable are reached

Successful prevention also means that those who are most vulnerable should be targeted. In Albania, it is not clear that the children attending the youth and socio-educational centres were those most vulnerable to child-trafficking. In Nepal, the Maiti Nepal training programme was consciously tailored to those most at risk through a careful selection of districts and families.

Need to address root cause of poverty

Some reports identifying poverty as a root cause, suggest that simple community-based awareness-raising does not address underlying root causes and such activities can be at cross-purposes with what communities need and expect from projects. Referring to the Maiti-Nepal project, the Nepal evaluation noted the need for income-generation,

“The trainees were obviously from poorer sections of the society. Although some guardians mentioned that they expected their daughters to learn how to protect themselves from child-trafficking they also expected them to be able to earn a living and supplement their meager family income.This raised the question whether it would be fair to expect these girls from poorer families to contribute voluntary time and resources to carry out the activities as Biswo Khadka, the director of Maiti puts it, “Making activists do not fill up the stomach.”...”
[Nepal report]

The report concludes that efforts need to be made to meet the expectations of the community and donor by carrying out skills training (other than sewing) and involving girls in savings/credit schemes at the same time as providing training on child-trafficking.

Remuneration of volunteers

A related dilemma is whether community volunteers should be paid or not. There are inspiring examples of volunteers working without any support e.g. in Nepal girls trained by Maiti carried out community awareness-raising activities on a volunteer basis; Cambodia Village Safety Net Program is primarily implemented by community members who do not receive any form of payment for work they do on an almost daily basis,

“The main reason for such high level of commitment of the community partners is that the program has proven to serve the goal of protecting their own children in the community.”
[Cambodia report]

Addressing other root causes of violence

Some country programmes are experimenting with more indirect and long-term strategies aimed at addressing other causes of VSA. The Nicaragua programme focuses on changing child-rearing practices through activities and groups.

“the emphasis is on working with fathers, mothers, teachers and young children as a means of preventing VSA by changing child-raising patterns. In this respect, advances have been made toward incorporating a prevention and self-care approach to the pre-school education curriculum. This approach includes understanding that the capacity to ask for help as a protection factor is limited due to the prevailing child-raising models that subject and ridicule children, or question the truth of what they are saying”. [Nicaragua report]

Some say that this approach is too subtle and avoids express mention of violence and abuse due to restrictions imposed by the government. Also the impact of this approach in terms of reducing VSA has not been tracked. Moreover, there appears to be a lack of shared understanding and definition among partners of what the prevention approach means. Despite these provisos, this approach provides an interesting model for changing attitudes on a long-term basis.

Importance of holistic intervention

One of the key strengths of the Cambodia Village Safety Net Program is that it comprises various elements aimed at both prevention of VSA through a community-based surveillance mechanism as well as a protection system for children who have suffered or are at risk of suffering abuse through a referral system and the provision of centre-based care. It is not carrying out isolated activities e.g. awareness-raising, forming children's clubs but instead takes a holistic approach. The interventions in Sri Lanka, Uganda and Nepal are also notable for being multi-faceted and ensuring provision for referral, follow-up and intervention in cases of VSA.

Need for strong community and family ties

The need for community-based activities to foster strong ties with the wider community and family is recognised as important. In the youth centres in Albania, the support of the community was actively sought,

“Embedment in the community was accomplished in two ways: first, by spreading information in the community by children and young people who members of the centres; second through visible activities tailored to the uniqueness of the respective communities. It deserves be mentioned that the centres have earned good reputation and are widely recognized.” [Albania report]

The engagement of the school with the wider community was considered a particularly good practice of the school social work programme (SERVE).

Commitment and investment is required

Successful community mobilisation requires committed engagement. The Zimnamh project in Zimbabwe, though relying on the support of Homestart volunteer community workers, appears to be providing little more than a one-off training session, with community members complaining that even letters requesting support remain unanswered,

“This has resulted in feelings of neglect and perceptions of insincere commitment to development. One male respondent noted that it is important for NGOs and donors not to pay lip service to development work. Before organisations set up projects they must consider the implications of the interventions, and be committed to them or not start at all [with the evaluation concluding] . . . *In places like Porta Farm where there is a strong movement of parents and children against sexual abuse, it has been by the initiative and persistence of the local development committee and not Zimnamh”.* [Zimbabwe report]

Experiences from Nepal confirm that efforts to win community support can make all the difference to the success of a project. In one site of the Nepal Safer Environment project, considerable time was spent at the beginning building a rapport with community members which helped to ease anxiety and unease about allowing girls to participate in the project. Lesser efforts were made in other sites as teachers were not brought on board early enough and children were left to brief parents themselves, resulting in less community support.

Strategy for community mobilisation needed

The Nepal report, reflecting on the difficulties in mobilising communities experienced by the Maiti Nepal and Shakti Samuha projects, suggests that this could in part be due to the fact that the projects were not clear on the mechanism for community mobilisation - how it would be done, who would be involved, how field staff would be trained and oriented etc.

“A girl of seven was raped by her uncle. She is now 14 years of age, attending 4th grade at School X in the City of Beira and living with her parents and siblings. Both the school administration and the school community are unaware of the case. Only some of her schoolmates know since they are neighbours at home. The child has been receiving support from MULEIDE since the rape occurred.”
Mozambique report

Risks in working with communities

Dangers can also exist given that organised crime may be at work according to the Romania evaluation.

2) ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS

These are facilities/mechanisms offering immediate support and treatment to victims but without facilities for longer-term stay. Romania, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia are engaged in providing such assistance.

KEY LEARNING

Psychosocial support needed

Such support should be on hand for victims who are being seen at a time of crisis. This was not covered adequately by the CANU project in Ethiopia due to a shortage of skilled professionals.

Referral system required

There needs to be a referral system after emergency treatment has been provided as there will be continuing welfare and legal needs that are not being met e.g. CANU project in Ethiopia is planning to establish short-stay facilities on site to house victims in severe need. In the meantime, given the lack of state welfare and legal services in Ethiopia, victims are simply sent back to their families, even in cases of incest where this means returning the child to the abuser himself.

Basic needs should be met

Children in such circumstances require the most immediate and basic assistance. This was noted to be lacking in the FSC drop-in-centre for street children in Ethiopia where meals and shelter were not being provided. The evaluation comments that partial rehabilitation does not work.

Payment for services

The issue of whether victims should pay is a real one in some countries where free medical treatment is not provided as raised by the CANU project in Ethiopia.

Voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS

The Ethiopia report raises the question as to what should be the policy and provision regarding access to HIV/AIDS testing for victims of abuse.

Coordination with external actors valuable

The Ethiopia report points out that such facilities require good coordination and links with the external world as the project participants require other forms of support. The CANU project needs strong coordination with external government departments and NGOs involved with the law and social sector as well as improved internal coordination with other hospital departments. The FSC project in Ethiopia requires more efforts to engage private and government institutions to offer employment opportunities to children from the drop-in-centre as this would facilitate their rehabilitation.

Special treatment areas for children

The Ethiopia report notes that gynaecologists from the CANU project mentioned the awkwardness of examining children alongside adults as this made them feel uncomfortable and called for the allocation of special treatment areas.

3) RESIDENTIAL CARE

Nepal, SE Europe and Cambodia provide residential facilities for children who have suffered or are at risk of violence and abuse.

KEY LEARNING

Difficulties in maintaining family connections

All projects describe difficulties in engaging project participants with their families. The Romania programme said that participants usually come from families in conflict or families involved in child-trafficking and in most cases refuse to go home. The Albania report also notes the intensive support needed to reintegrate girls with families in terms of field visits, follow-up visits and counselling.

The Badi girls' hostel in Nepal faced difficulties in reintegrating girls as families were unwilling to take the girls back given the perceived benefits from staying at the hostel. In addition, girls who were returned home were often unhappy as the atmosphere and facilities were less conducive than the hostel,

“Although the reintegration of children with families was emphasized in the project, it was not easy since families were reluctant to take children back until they completed school education. In the last 11 years the record showed that only 54 children (11 boys and 43 girls) were reunited with the family and most of them were reunited after completing school education.One of the reasons for the difficulty could be the lack of proper environment at home. During the meeting with the recently reunited children they seemed very unhappy with their situation. All of them said that they had some difficulty adjusting back home, as there was not enough space and no toilets. Many family members had to share a single room, thus there was no environment for study. Some households even did not have electricity. Moreover, children could not be aloof from the disturbance when guardians or neighbours drank and picked up fights.” [Nepal report]

The FSC Nazareth drop-in-centre for street children in Ethiopia does not offer residential care but raises similar dilemmas about engaging with parents given the nature of the child-parent relationship and possible abuses that may have gone on. The Cambodia report noted that the centres were not maintaining meaningful links with the children's families. Parents often did not know what plans were being made for their children, some had only seen their children a couple of times in two years and often lacked the financial means to be able to visit.

Targeting the most vulnerable

Reaching those most in need can be an issue in this type of intervention also as the Nepal report found that admission criteria were not followed which meant that the Badi girls' hostel was not necessarily catering for the most vulnerable. One particular good practice of the Village Safety Net Program in Cambodia has been the creation of an assessment tool for verifying whether a child is in need of alternative care provided by the centre with some clearcut guidelines on whether a child should be admitted.

Follow-up after departure required

There was an impressive rehabilitation rate in the Romania project as 93.33% of assisted cases were successfully concluded by the end of the project. However, the evaluation notes that there is no guarantee of sustainability of results as there was no structured monitoring post-intervention system. Follow-up activities were poorly developed due to lack of resources.

Community ownership

The Badi girls' hostel represents a model of community ownership as the hostel is run by SAFE whose staff are members of the same community. However, the Nepal report comments that community support appears to be diminishing as donor support increases.

The Cambodia evaluation recommends that although community involvement in the Village Safety Net Program is strong overall, community participation in the running of the centres could be strengthened. It asks whether such centres should become community “owned” in the future.

Residential care has a place

These experiences suggest that residential care can play a valuable role in certain circumstances and that the way this care is provided can make all the difference. The Nepal report comments,

“In special circumstances institutional care of children with child participation could protect as well as empower them in terms of education, and involvement in extracurricular activities thus helping in their proper development. This best practice experience was provided by transit center for Badi girls in Nepalgunj. But as a lesson, proper criteria for the enrollment of vulnerable children in transit center, involvement of family and community in their integration with family and proper monitoring were needed to help adjust children in the family.” [Nepal report]

The Cambodia report adds that an independent refuge may also be necessary sometimes to allow abused children to speak up,

“Sometimes, children who are abused will not inform anyone or will try to hide the fact from everyone, for various reasons. It is only when we allow them the space and the time to live in an environment where they feel safe and be with people that they can trust that they will entrust their secrets to you. That is why having a shelter for those identified as vulnerable or at risk is important in order to offer them a possibility of healing the wounds that they prefer to keep hidden.” [Cambodia report]

Interim solution

The Cambodia evaluation emphasises that centre-based care should be seen as a temporary measure while the problems in the community and family are being resolved. However, the evaluation found that children were being placed in the centres without parallel efforts being made to resolve the situation back home.

Root cause of poverty needs to be addressed

The Cambodia evaluation remarked that sending children to centres is perceived by their parents and the community as more of an ‘opportunity’ to attain better economic security for the family rather than a measure to reduce risks of sexual abuse of children. The Badi girls’ hostel in Nepal experienced the same problem in trying to reintegrate the girls back home as mentioned above. The Mozambique programme questions whether reintegration is feasible without income-generation in cases where poverty is a factor.

“Girls say that people who exercise violence against them are their fathers, brothers, stepfathers, employers, foremen, coffee pickers, aunts, mothers, stepmothers, partner, boyfriend, neighbours, strangers, gang members, drunkards, and boys hired by bus drivers to collect fares on buses. . . . Boys are in agreement over the perpetrators but add the police, friends, and merchants and cooks in the public markets.”
Boys and girls, Nicaragua report

Psycho-social support required

- see following section

Project participants need some independence

Albania considered it important that girls had the freedom to leave if they wished, as they needed to feel a sense of control over their lives and not as if they are staying in a prison.

Location in familiar environment

The Cambodia and Romania evaluations stress the importance of locating centres in an environment that is similar to that which the child comes from in terms of location and surroundings.

Standards of care should be set

The Cambodia evaluation recommends that minimum standards for care in shelters be developed concerning admission policies, physical care such as nutrition, health etc, daily living arrangements, educational opportunities, contact with families, community integration, child participation etc.

4) JUSTICE SYSTEM

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka have considerable expertise in this area. Mozambique and Cambodia also provide legal support for victims of VSA. A number of other programmes recognise this as an area that needs to be improved.

KEY LEARNING

Community empowerment to access justice system

The Zimbabwe experience suggests the importance of strengthening the legal framework and accessibility at the local and not just central level. Initiatives were carried out to empower the community to understand and use the policy and law to obtain support.

Reporting and confidentiality important

In Zimbabwe, clear policies about confidentiality, report and referral were developed.

Follow-up mechanisms required

The Mozambique and Uganda programmes cite the need for follow-up mechanisms once victims have left the police station. Given the taboos surrounding the subject, the victims tend to disappear once they leave the police station. There is no organisation involved in the referral and follow up of these cases and poor linkages between bodies dealing with the matter.

Child offenders need to be addressed

This issue is rarely touched on by the programmes. In Sri Lanka, the LHRD project, apart from providing legal aid to abused children, is also looking at the rights and treatment of child offenders.

Issues concerning offenders

Some evaluations stress the need for more thinking on offenders e.g. what to do when offenders are parents, when offenders are people from the local community (rather than foreign paedophiles), or when they are young people themselves.

5) PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

SE Europe, Uganda and Zimbabwe have experience in providing psycho-social support.

A number of evaluations identify this as a gap in programming.

“I am kept on a leash in terms of time available to participate in activities, despite the fact that I do all domestic chores at home.” “My mother didn't want me to participate in NGO activities. My older sister says I will end up pregnant.”
Girls, Nicaragua report

Expectations raised by project must be met

In Uganda, an elaborate “letter link” project has been established whereby children receive counselling by letter from their respective school counsellors. It is an innovative approach which has helped to break the silence surrounding abuse by creating a channel for communication. However, the overall quality of the intervention is poor as there is a serious mismatch between the numbers of letters being sent (2-4000 per term from different schools) and the low availability of professional counsellors to respond to these. The project has created expectations that are not being met and is endangering the trust of children due to delays in responses. It was also noted that children prefer face-to-face communication rather than a letter link.

Interlinkages between different problems and issues

The Uganda ‘Letter link’ also shows the need to be prepared to deal with a wide range of issues that can come up even if they are not related to VSA

Limitations in capacity building of non-professionals

Capacity building of non-professionals has its limitations according to the Uganda evaluation. Teachers were given training in basic counselling skills which was inadequate for the kinds of complex emotional problems they were faced with. Consequently there were reports of teachers giving bad advice.

Aim to strengthen coping and resilience

The Sri Lanka and Cambodia evaluations stress the need for projects to strengthen resilience through an approach which views children as survivors and not only victims and as participants in their own healing and development. They give examples of how various projects strengthen resilience e.g. ensuring that adults working with children listen to them thus providing a role model for other adults in their lives; by promoting dignity and confidence of children; providing alternative dispute resolution skills; building supportive relationships and systems; and providing actual spaces.

Culturally appropriate psychosocial care

In Romania, a classic psychotherapeutic model was adopted which offered a great deal of individualised and tailored attention to each case. Complex social enquiries were conducted within families and some cases families were included in the assistance projects with the aim of facilitating reintegration. Counseling centers provided an example of good practice and involved a team of professionals using complex intervention methods adapted to the specific development needs of child. Interventions covered psychological, social, medical, juridical, pedagogical aspects. Detailed case recording was kept covering psychological and clinical diagnosis; and therapy contract. Several techniques were used such as individual psychotherapy (cognitive-behavioural, play therapy, art therapy, analytical therapy, experiential therapy, existential therapy) and group therapy (systemic family, psychodrama). Also special recovery therapy used the following techniques – speech therapy, development areas stimulation, and educational individual programmes. Counseling included individual, family and organizational counseling.

Classical psychological interventions ranging from therapy to counseling, even if available, may not be appropriate in every cultural context and may be too “western”. (see earlier Part IV – Programme Implementation “Cultural appropriateness” section) Although no good examples are mentioned in the reports, it’s important that country programmes seek culturally relevant interventions. This is especially the case as most countries lack in-country professionals with traditional qualifications (see earlier Part IV – Programme Implementation “Human Resources” section)

Community-based psycho-social support

The Uganda programme has experimented with mobilising community volunteers to provide psycho-social support to abused and vulnerable children.

6) MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH

Zimbabwe has the leading experience in this field,

“The multi-sectoral approach is considered the best practice, in that it takes a holistic view in dealing with violence against and the sexual abuse of children. The Child and Law Foundation strategy is an integrated, three-pronged approach, looking at the law, structures of justice delivery and community mobilization and education.” [Zimbabwe report]

KEY LEARNING

Facilitating factors

A number of factors have facilitated the significant achievements of the Child and Law foundation in Zimbabwe: availability of skilled human resources; staff commitment and passion for children's issues; dynamic and visionary leadership; good government relationships; commitment of the government to children's issues and rights, demonstrated by the fact that the government was already working on the issue; proper research and documentation; good resource management; inclusiveness of everyone who wanted to work on child sexual abuse and ownership of the project by consortium members; transparency; close relations with government; functionality of government departments; documentation of processes. Although a multi-sectoral approach is desirable in many locations, it cannot be replicated in the same form everywhere due to the particular facilitating factors that were present in Zimbabwe.

Research to feed into policy

In recent times, research has not fed into policy according to the evaluation, though in earlier days this was a particular strength of the project,

“The researches done so far do not seem to be effectively ploughed back into the consortium's knowledge base or benefit the whole thematic area of sexual abuse and exploitation. . . There have been missed opportunities to inform policy through the studies of the Child and Law Foundation e.g. findings to the effect that children are sexually active from a very early age and yet the Ministry of Education policy thrust is abstinence as a policy to prevent HIV/AIDS in schools. . . .Poor coordination has resulted in lost opportunities to influence child friendly policies in the different sectors represented in the consortium”. [Zimbabwe report]

The evaluation commented that there was not sufficient learning and sharing from the experience in the consortium

7) CAPACITY BUILDING IN KEY PROFESSIONS

SE Europe, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka are engaged in the capacity building of professionals such as police, social workers, lawyers, doctors etc.

KEY LEARNING

Ensuring right participants

Romania notes that representatives attending training and capacity building sessions are not necessarily those for whom training would be most useful as they are selected arbitrarily by the institutions they work for.

Retraining and follow-up needed

Zimbabwe and Mozambique highlight the need for follow-up trainings.

Training should be broad

Training needs to be broad and cover issues of VSA causes, manifestations, risk and protective factors, psychosocial issues, sexual and reproductive health, STDS and HIV/AIDS (Mozambique report); one day is too brief to achieve anything substantial (Zimbabwe); and participatory methodologies should be used to greater effect (Sri Lanka).

Follow-up procedure for individual cases

In Nicaragua, partner organisations say it is not unusual to find out about specific cases when giving training and organisations often fail to respond adequately when this happens. Though not in the context of capacity building, the Norwegian domestic programme also receives ad hoc reports from children citing abuse but no systematic follow-up has been agreed with the authorities for the child to be referred on.

Disadvantages of cascade model

The Zimbabwe evaluation warns against using the cascade model of training as quality tends to diminish as training flows down the cascade.

Professional networks are important resource

Sri Lanka cites the establishment of a lawyers network for children's rights developed by LHRD as an example of good practice as it reaches children from very remote areas who lack access to professional services; it gives credibility with official justice and law enforcement structures which enables access; it helps to mainstream the cause among a wider group of professionals; and also augurs well for sustainability as capacities of group of professional enhanced on a long-term basis.

8) ADVOCACY

The programme handbook defines advocacy as

“a social change process affecting attitudes, social relationships and power relations, which opens up the democratic spaces. Actions are aimed at changing the policies, positions and programmes of governments, private sectors, institutions and organisations”.

The term “advocacy” is often used in a broad way to cover two different types of activities: changing government policies, legislation, action, and commitment; and changing and awareness-raising in communities. Only the former is covered in this section as the latter comes under community mobilisation (earlier in this part). Most programmes are engaged in advocacy to some degree. Particularly strong examples include advocacy in SE Europe, Norway, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka.

KEY LEARNING

Need for definitions, strategy and capacity building

A number of country advisors expressed not understanding what advocacy was and how to go about it calling for increased capacity building in this area both for staff and partners. In addition, a number of evaluations stress the need for a proper advocacy strategy that sets out clear objectives, activities and indicators and based on evidence and sound research. The need for advocacy to be strongly grounded in evidence and first-hand experience was stressed.

Pro-activity in drafting texts helps

The Norwegian evaluation notes that SCN was influential in part because it proposed draft texts for policies and legislation, rather than simply advocating a position. SCN provided wording and text suggestions which proved invaluable to officials.

Coordinating advocacy position with other actors optimises influence

Norway stresses the importance of coordinating viewpoints with other actors as a way of optimising influence when trying to change the law e.g. Internet pornography programme coordinated with Norwegian Police and Criminal investigation services when trying to influence changes in legislation.

Involvement of SCN project partners

Mozambique notes that there was no adequate coordination of advocacy at the central level linking with the work of the projects. Partners in Mozambique are carrying out many advocacy activities but the programme is not capitalising on these opportunities. In Nicaragua, the opposite appeared to be the case with SCN pressing partners reluctant to join in advocacy efforts which raises questions about whether it is always appropriate to try and get partners to collaborate.

Extraneous factors can influence outcomes

External interest can clearly increase receptiveness to advocacy work and some of the most successful initiatives e.g. Zimbabwe and SE Europe have coincided with government concern for the subject.

Lessons on working with media

Little mention is made in the reports of the use of media in advocacy work. Lessons learned from the SE Europe experience include:

- Media are interested in facts and cases but not in theory, though some conceptual background is important for them to have;
- Radio is more accessible in rural areas than the newspapers;
- Campaign should approach one or two daily newspapers, one radio station and one television station – but not more since they are also in competition;
- Media will be very interested in disseminating the conclusions of a debate involving important politicians.

Positioning of SCN

(See Part IV, Programme Implementation, 'Relations with Government')

Target all levels – local, national, regional, international

Norway stressed that advocacy at different levels can help e.g. OSCE lobbying can affect the domestic context and vice versa. The SE Europe evaluation found that regional level guidance for advocacy for policy and legislation can be helpful in setting minimum standards expected from national laws and policies.

Part V PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This part is divided into 3 sections:

- Monitoring and evaluation – looks at how monitoring and evaluation is carried out by country programmes
- Feedback on this evaluation – from the perspective of the country evaluators and the TEC
- Documentation – relevant at all stages of programming but included here to fit into the structure of this report and as one of its main uses is for the purposes of keeping a record and reviewing what has been done and how.

1) MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Most country programmes have inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems either for evaluating their own work or their partners. The Cambodia programme perhaps represents the most comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. The Village Safety Net Program has developed a system of semestral and annual reviews as part of its strategy which include measures for effectiveness. Considerable efforts have also been made in SE Europe and Sri Lanka. Elsewhere, monitoring and evaluation seems absent or ad hoc at best.

‘Because adults enjoy abusing children.’ ‘Because they dislike and envy us.’ ‘Because they are not clear about children’s rights.’ ‘Because our parents don’t listen to us.’ ‘Sometimes parents have problems and take it out on their children.’ ‘Because we do things they don’t like and consider bad.’ (Boys show greater awareness regarding the adult’s share of responsibility in the use of violence)
Boys, Nicaragua

KEY LEARNING

Poor programme and project design

Programme/project design at the initial stages is intrinsically linked to poor monitoring and evaluation (See Part III – Programme Initiation) for a variety of reasons. The lack of a proper situation analysis and baseline data makes progress difficult to measure. The Zimbabwe and Romania reports observe incoherent project design with the lack of logical links between activities, expected results and objectives. Indicators tend to be poorly formulated on the whole and Nepal stresses the need to involve project participants in indicator setting. In Nicaragua, the evaluation team found significant discrepancies between the stated commitment of projects to VSA and a corresponding lack of activities or different activities to those one might expect.

“Girls say their feelings include guilt, uncertainty, helplessness and self-destructive attitudes: ‘I feel like hurting myself.’” (Girls and boys react differently to violence.)
Girls, Nicaragua

Systems for carrying out monitoring and evaluation vary

Systems vary between country programmes. In Cambodia, monitoring is carried out at various levels, schools, communities, NGOs as well as SCN through periodic site visits, reports, meetings, external evaluations etc. In addition a set of indicators have been developed to facilitate monitoring by schools and communities on a monthly basis (though the evaluation noted that there were some gaps in terms of VSA). Albania also has a well-

developed system. By contrast, Zimbabwe relies on periodic reports from the partner and does not usually visit communities or projects or participate in any activities run by partners. Occasional visits which take place are not guided by monitoring guidelines. The lack of visits can mean a reliance on perceptions of partner staff located at the central rather than field level which is not sufficient. Monitoring and evaluation was identified as a major area for improvement in the overall Nepal country strategy but insufficient progress seems to be made so far.

Lack of staff capacity to monitor and evaluate

Staff capacity emerges as a major problem and seems partly due to the absence of a culture of reflection and thinking around issues and interventions but also a lack of know-how and understanding about what monitoring and evaluation entails. The Programme handbook gives some guidance but is not basic enough in some ways. It emphasises the key principles SCN values in monitoring and evaluation such as cooperation with partners and child participation but otherwise takes a non-prescriptive approach and leaves it to country programmes to develop their own methods. Senior management added,

'My brother hit me because I refused to do farm work'. 'My mother beat me because my girlfriend is older than I am.' 'My parents hit me because I was playing.' 'I had a fistfight over a girl with a friend.' 'They offended me and I reacted by hitting them and won.' 'There was intra-family violence at home when my father used to beat my mother with his hands and fists.' 'I have seen my grandfather hitting my mother.' 'Sometimes my father tells me dirty words in front of my mother...'(Adolescent boys consider that the family and community environments, and their relationship with friends are sources of violence.)

Boys, Nicaragua report

"We could improve our monitoring systems for self evaluation. We have deliberately chosen to address this by guidelines and are not developing a set of indicators and procedures which are pushed down as this will end up being a form-filling exercise. It depends on local management how to develop this." [TEC interview with Jon-Kristian Johnsen, former Programme Director]

There seem to be some sporadic efforts to improve staff capacity e.g. Cambodia pilot project 'Monitoring changes in children's lives'; or participation of staff in global evaluations, but there is clearly a need for more standardised training.

Staff responsibility to monitor and evaluate partner projects

There seemed to be hesitancy in places as to how SCN should be monitoring partners. With the change from direct implementation to implementation through partners, some staff have not understood what this entails in terms of monitoring partner performance. This hesitancy is reflected at the global level and seems to lie in the tension between being perceived as an equal partner on the one hand and a donor concerned with the effective use of funds on the other. The emphasis on equal cooperation can conflict with the role of monitoring,

"Save the Children Norway has chosen a method of work where responsibility for achievements is shared between partners and Save the Children Norway. Save the Children Norway's role is to support the partner with economic and professional assistance to the development and implementation of projects."

Capacity building of partners needed

Partner capacity-building is clearly much needed in all countries. The Programme handbook supports the idea of capacity building of partners but couches this in a hesitant way,

"Many partners will already have established monitoring and evaluation guidelines and systems..... Capacity building may include facilitation of partners' monitoring and evaluation activities. In order to enhance partner autonomy, support from a third party should always be considered as an alternative."

One might question whether SCN should take a more systemised approach and pro-actively introduce effective systems to its partners where these are not in existence. At present capacity building of partners takes place on an ad hoc basis and depends on the skills and motivation of the SCN office involved e.g. Albania, monitoring and evaluation was covered as part of the on-the-job training given to partners; Nepal, one staff member from Shakti Samuha was involved in this evaluation as a capacity building exercise.

Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis of social care projects especially in the international development field can be very complicated to carry out as discussed in the earlier section on “Financial resources”. Although it may be impossible to carry out a full cost-benefit analysis, the approach followed by the Nepal report is worth replicating as it gives some sense of inputs vs outcomes. The emphasis in the report on documenting impact (albeit through self-reports of beneficiaries) set against project costs per beneficiary at least provides some sense of ‘value for money’. The value of the Badi girls’ residential hostel is evident when one compares its outcome in terms of preventing cases of sexual exploitation (see section on “Impact”) as compared to the cost per child of US\$214 per year (minimum cost - see discussion in box below).

Costs of running a hostel for girls	
<p>“Regarding the question whether girls’ transit center in Nepalgunj or prevention center in Makawanpur was cost effective, one cannot really calculate the costs of protecting a girl from sexual exploitation or from being trafficked since it is difficult to determine the monetary value for such benefits. Moreover the costs of running a transit centre alone cannot be looked at in isolation since it was a part of the overall project and its expenses. The average cost of running a transit centre (for 2002 and 2003) comes to about US\$ 8558.00, i.e. US\$214 per child but if the whole project cost—both direct and indirect—is taken into account the cost runs much higher. Here is a look at the actual number of beneficiaries of the project and the overall funds already disbursed to partners minus costs at SCN itself relating to the program on this thematic area.</p>	
<u>Project activities</u>	<u>Number of children that were directly affected ('97-2003)</u>
Girls hostel, <i>Nepalgunj</i>	84
Educational support.....	72
Nine child clubs.....	115
Early childhood center.....	126
Vocational training to adolescent girls.....	15
Prevention center, Makawanpur.....	146
Eight adolescent girls’ groups in slums.....	200
<i>Total</i>	<u>758</u>
<u>Others directly or indirectly affected</u>	
Women groups in five districts.....	195
People taking part in CRC training, <i>Nepalgunj</i> (estimated).....	200
Women provided legal support at Maiti.....	40
Awareness raising programs, Makawanpur (estimated).....	500
Awareness raising programs in carpet factories.....	120
<i>Total</i>	<u>1055</u>
<u>Source: Annual reports, and various records maintained by partners and interviews.</u>	
<p>There are approximately little bit below thousand children directly benefiting from the project in seven years of the project period especially with SAFE and three years with Maiti and two years with Shakti. The total costs come to around Rs29,263,000 or US\$418,043. . . . The project coverage seemed to be limited and there are limited efforts at documentation and dissemination of experiences and best practices for replication and scaling up.”</p>	
<i>Nepal</i> evaluation report	

2) FEEDBACK ON THIS EVALUATION

Feedback on this evaluation from country reports

A few country reports gave comments on this evaluation:

Evaluation framework: Little feedback was received on the evaluation framework but it seems that nearly all evaluations used the framework as a reporting tool as well as a planning tool to a greater or lesser degree, with some country programmes closely following the original framework and others adapting it to their use.

Structure of evaluation: The Ethiopia report commenting on the overall structure of the evaluation from global to national level found 'the involvement of different actors, internal and external helped to minimise the bias of external evaluators; that there had been careful planning and clarity of roles but it took time for the evaluators to understand and follow the plan'. It concluded that the "evaluation was a learning exercise and an innovative approach". [Ethiopia report]

Child participation: Whether children were involved in the evaluations is summarised in section 1. However, no feedback was received on these experiences. These experiences should be documented for future learning. The Mozambique, Nepal and Nicaragua evaluations give voice to the children's experiences and views of VSA and these accounts have been absorbed into the global report.

"Ever since I gave birth to a son I have felt embarrassed wearing the school uniform and making presentations in class because they don't call me by my name anymore. They use nicknames alluding to the radical change in my life. I was forced to wear long socks when I was pregnant and that was a traumatic experience to me."
Girls, Nicaragua report

Key quality elements: The KQE were used extensively by the Cambodia and Sri Lanka evaluator both as a planning and reporting tool. They were used more as general themes rather than specific indicators. Some other evaluations used the KQE as a planning tool but less so as an organisational or reporting framework. Some commented on the difficulty of using them as post-facto measure given that the programmes had not been set up with them in mind. The Norwegian domestic evaluation found that some of the KQE posed "unrealistic ambitions" e.g. "child participation in all phases of the projects", "developing approaches to justice for children in ways which fully respect the rights of children...", and recommends the development of more concrete goals.

TEC comments on this evaluation process

Breadth of evaluation: The evaluation covered a very broad range of topics, all countries engaging in work on VSA, and all forms of VSA and types of interventions. The programme handbook defines 3 types of evaluations, thematic evaluations to focus on one of the global objectives and /or basic global working principles; administrative evaluations; and strategic evaluations. This evaluation began with the broadest possible definition of thematic evaluation and then also encroached on other forms of evaluation as defined by the programme handbook e.g. administrative subjects (such as documentation, staffing); and strategic issues (such as the role of SCN, strategy implementation in the given context, the choice of and cooperation with partners, the relevance of the strategy according to the situation for children and the general situation/trends in the country). In addition, there were expectations that the evaluation would deliver answers on technical good practice as well as an analysis of the issue of VSA per se. Latterly, the use of the evaluation as a public relations and reporting document was also raised.

There is inevitably a trade off when there are too many or conflicting objectives for an evaluation. Breadth can be at the cost of depth when there is limited time and resources available; and external use of the evaluation may be at the cost of honest insights. The range of subjects covered may have resulted in a lack of in-depth learning on specific subjects and also a lack of comparability as inevitably country evaluators had to choose their particular focus. It is suggested that the guidance given in the Programme Handbook be followed in future thematic evaluations in order to avoid the evaluation becoming too broad and something of a 'catch-all',

"... it will most probably be sensible to focus on a limited number of critical topics/questions within a global theme. A thematic evaluation may be designed to yield information on e.g. short and/or long term impact on children, effects of different methods and/or approaches, financial and other resources spent in relation to plans and impact, relationship to partners, role and competence of partners - or other questions corresponding to our needs."

Role of team members: The advantages and disadvantages of involving staff/partners as opposed to 'outsiders' in evaluations needs to be better understood. Generally the advantages of using external persons are increased objectivity, the willingness of respondents to be more open and frank in confidential interviews with outsiders and consequently a fuller understanding of the issues. The advantages of using internal persons would be their in-depth knowledge of the situation (though partisan) and their commitment and ownership of the process which is essential for implementation of the findings.

'Lack of patience and understanding.' 'Because adults see other people as objects.' 'Because they look down on us. They don't respect us.' 'They see us unable to defend ourselves.' 'Because they have economic problems.' 'Because they don't have anybody to advise them.' 'Because they experienced violence in their childhood and now they replicate it.' 'They don't know how to deal with their children.' 'They were treated in the same way they treat us.' 'They now want to vent their anger with us.' 'Because they want our own good.' 'Because we are unruly.' 'Because we refuse to fulfil household chores.' 'We are ill-treated because we behave badly. We yell at them. We are rude to them. We raise our voices to them, say dirty words. We don't do as we're told or grumble about it.' " (Causes of violence according to girls)
Girls, Nicaragua report

The perception in SCN appears to be that 'participatory' means that everyone should do everything without any division of labour (which was the implication of the original TOR). This issue was discussed at the Madrid meeting and some agreement was reached that staff and partners should not ideally be involved in controlling or carrying out the research and analysis process. The blurring of boundaries and the involvement of SCN staff and partners in the Zimbabwe evaluation did give rise to such complications.

The Programme Handbook is currently not very clear in explicating how roles and responsibilities should be divided. It should suggest alternate models, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and review its use of the terminology of evaluation to draw two distinct categories:

- participatory learning review to mean exercises where staff/partners are involved in research, data analysis and report-writing and where outsiders can be called upon to assist;
- independent evaluation carried out by external consultants with SCN and partners playing a supportive and advisory role but remaining detached from the research process.

It is appreciated that the language of participation has in part come about as evaluations can be threatening processes. However, there needs to be a balance between a cooperative, learning exercise and the need for impartial checks and balances. In the absence of a strong inspection system, it seems important that at least some evaluations are truly independent if for no other reason than to ensure the protection of children in the care of projects. In

addition, the programme handbook should suggest a procedure for resolving disputes between and within the office/evaluation team.

Quality in qualitative research: All of the reports use qualitative (rather than quantitative) research methods which is typical and appropriate for these types of evaluations. In addition, the research was carried out within certain constraints, lack of baseline surveys against which to measure progress, lack of monitoring indicators, purposive rather than random selection of interviewees etc. Current trends in social science research call for more 'quality' in qualitative research. The UK government Cabinet Office, for example, has published "Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence published by the UK" which provides a list of appraisal questions and quality indicators for judging qualitative research (available at http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/docs/a_quality_framework.pdf)

Some of the reports already followed good practice in this area. The Nepal report especially provides excellent qualitative back-up of its claims. The Nicaragua and Cambodia reports are also always careful to give supporting data/quotes and to attribute these to particular sources so that a judgement can be made by the reader as to the credibility of the evidence. Some other reports provide virtually no back-up for their claims. This is not good practice and conclusions presented in such a way will suffer from a lack of credibility. They will tend to be accepted unless they are critical (as can be seen from the Zimbabwe report) when in fact even positive conclusions should be subject to the same rigorous questioning if evaluations are to be a real learning process.

Key Quality Elements: The KQE appeared useful as a planning tool with a number of countries commenting that it helped them think of issues to be covered. The KQE in their current form are not suitable as a specific monitoring or reporting indicator. Some appear as too vague and idealistic in the sense that they can never be met given the need to make programming choices e.g. on certain "phases of development", certain "major issues", certain "child rights" and so on. Some of the KQE need to be reworded to reflect realistic goals and objectives. The KQE should be harmonised with the policy and working principles and flow recognisably from those. They should be edited for conceptual clarity as a number of the elements are repetitive, contain numerous ideas and lack focus. It should also be pointed out that they are not exhaustive and there may be other aspects programmers may need to think of.

Structure: The overall structure of the evaluation appeared to work well, giving country offices the lead in carrying out the evaluation while at the same time bringing an international perspective through the involvement of head office and the TEC. The TEC found the visits to country programmes important in terms of coordinating a common approach and obtaining a first-hand view of the situation on the ground. The recruitment of a global coordinator early in the process proved valuable though the TEC would suggest that this should happen even earlier in future evaluations i.e. before the terms of reference have been disseminated widely as a number of issues could have been resolved prior to the Madrid meeting. The evaluation framework could also be tighter in future evaluations in line with a narrower terms of reference as this would facilitate a more coordinated approach and more readily comparable data. The evaluation would also benefit from the support of cross-sectional steering committees at head office level to ensure objectivity as well as mainstreaming of specific issues.

3) DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is relevant from the inception of the programme and not simply in the monitoring and evaluation phase. It is included in this section to fit in with the overall structure of the report and because documentation becomes most important when it comes to reviewing and assessing the programme. There are various types of programme documents - case records; project management, including monitoring and evaluation; strategy and planning documents; training and guidance materials; research papers and literature.

The Zimbabwe Child and Law Foundation project has been very strong on documentation which has included policy pieces, training manuals, literature reviews etc. Albania is reported to keep 'very professional' documentation which comprises of plans of activities, files for each child, monthly reports, training materials, publications. These are translated into English and used for advocacy purposes when needed. Otherwise documentation is a weak area in most country programmes.

KEY LEARNING

Standardisation of documentation

There would be some benefit in developing standard guidance on the type and contents/format of project and programme documents. As SCN staff themselves seem to be unclear as to what is needed, they are unable to guide the projects properly. In Ethiopia, it was noted that the FSC Nazareth project had done its best to put in place a system of recording and documenting necessary information but that information on individual children was limited as regards performance, progress, follow-up from school, attendance etc.

Confidentiality to be maintained

The need to maintain confidentiality is highlighted in the Ethiopia report which pointed out the risk with regards to the CANU emergency medical treatment project as advice was being given in corridors without regard to sensitive issues and also as some children's cards were misplaced.

Sharing resources among partners

Sharing resources among partners was highlighted in various programmes. In Zimbabwe,

“Some partners felt that the information function at SAVE Norway offices is currently under-utilized. The information office should be a key function in promoting Program integration, receiving reports and information from partner organizations and then sharing this information through reports, bulletins as well as through the Partnership Forum. This office, it was argued, should serve as a conduit for program information from the worldwide SAVE Norway family. Partners felt they are currently not benefiting from the knowledge and experiences generated within the wider Save Norway family and its networks because the information is not reaching them.” [Zimbabwe report]

Uganda and Nepal have identified similar gaps and are investing in shared resource centres.

Part VI PROGRAMME IMPACT

1) INTRODUCTION

This part of the report reviews the impact of the programme from two angles:

- impact on project participants (children especially but also families, communities) – whether the programmes have had a significant impact on the lives, situations, personal and social development of individuals and in particular if they have changed the trajectory of children's lives in a visible way;
- impact on wider society – changes in laws, policies, attitudes, public opinion.

The programme handbook defines impact as,

“lasting or significant change or effect arising from accumulative programme or project results, Save the Children Norway aims at achieving positive impact on the life and development of children”.

Examples of impact are included with a number of provisos:

- Measurement of impact is generally problematic in evaluation especially in matters of international development where there are multiple actors at play. It is difficult to attribute change in a particular policy, community or individual to interventions carried out by SCN especially when there is joint donorship involved. Generally speaking, change, even in one life, can be the result of a myriad of personal, environmental and genetic factors.
- The country evaluation reports tend to make general claims about impact but do not often produce any evidence in support. This may be because the evaluator did not seek this information or because it was not available – it is certainly true that the evaluations were carried out in contexts where baseline information and ongoing monitoring were lacking making it difficult to evaluate the subsequent impact of the programme. Some country reports, like Nepal, place more emphasis on documenting impact and are therefore more fully reflected in this section.
- Where country reports do provide back-up evidence this mainly comes from qualitative information gathered in interviews and focus groups which give the respondents' impression of impact. Such information is not as objective as that which might be gathered using quantitative methods e.g. before/after measurements using internationally recognized scales for social/behavioural development, educational attainment, health, cognitive development, languages skills and so on.
- The lack of common standards or methods makes it difficult to make global comparisons. As the reports are giving the evaluator's subjective assessment of impact, this will inevitably vary from person with person – these claims cannot be verified and we cannot know if we are comparing like with like.
- Even fewer country reports address the opposite side of the equation - non-impact i.e. where the programme failed to impact when it might otherwise have been expected to do so. The SE Europe and Nepal reports raise questions about the programmes intended effect of reducing child-trafficking. The Nepal report discusses this aspect in relation to an anti-child-trafficking project,

“Is girl child-trafficking reduced? There still seemed to be considerable cases of child-trafficking from the district. If we look at the reported missing cases, it is difficult to say child-trafficking is under control. According to the project coordinator at Maiti, 18 girls were reported missing in 2003 but in 2004, in the last four months alone 20 cases have already been reported. Recently a dozen girls were rescued from the Great Roman Circus in Uttar Pradesh, India at the initiation of Nepali and Indian NGOs and most of these girls were from Makwanpur district and the agents are still targeting many young girls to be taken to circus (Kantipur, June 26, 2004; The Himalayan Times, June 28 and 29, 2004).” [Nepal report]

- Moreover, while the programmes may have general beneficial impacts e.g. teaching skills to children in a community, they may not be impacting on problems of VSA as such. The discussion below points out direct impacts on VSA where these are evident. It should also be noted that this gives examples of impact and not simply outputs of the programme e.g. training courses.
- This short version of the report can only include a few examples of impact for reasons of space. The longer version of the report contains more details.

2) **EXAMPLES OF IMPACT ON PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AND WIDER SOCIETY**

- There are some inspiring examples of programmes directly intervening in situations of violence and sexual abuse with life-changing effect. The programme in SE Europe is providing a haven to victims of child-trafficking through a number of shelters which aid recovery and reintegration,

“for them it is a safe place where they found love, understanding and support. Most of them, which have lived in dysfunctional families, considered the shelter as the only place where they felt loved” [Albania report]

In other places, programmes are providing immediate assistance e.g. medical treatment to victims of sexual abuse in a first ever hospital unit of this kind in Ethiopia, or legal redress for hundreds of children in Sri Lanka.

- The Badi girls' hostel in Nepal provides the most striking example of prevention in action. The hostel houses girls from a low caste community whose women are traditionally destined for a life in prostitution - the project has been able to completely alter the trajectory of these young girls' lives by offering alternatives in terms of education, skills training and a safe and supportive environment,

A girl who wanted to be a lawyer when asked why she wanted to be a lawyer replied, "I had heard about the rape of a small girl. That had left a deep scar in my mind. Our community is far behind in education and very much ignorant. So I want to be able to advocate on behalf of my community."
Girl from Badi hostel for girls, Nepal

“ The girls in the hostel were confident and their ability to express themselves was impressive.One girl in the hostel said, “We became free (from commercial sex work), it was like a dream.... Most of the girls aspired to develop their career as a nurse, lawyer, police, teacher, and social worker.” [Nepal report]

- Other projects are impacting more generally by empowering children and young people. The Sri Lanka programme has had a “*tremendous*” effect on children’s sense of identity and dignity, especially those who are abused or from marginalized communities.
- The programme interventions have sometimes had a wider effect on downtrodden communities. The Badis in Nepal have been radically transformed from a marginalized segment of society to one that is increasingly respected – many of its women have given up the sex trade, and prejudice against them is diminishing as witnessed by the integration of Badi children into regular schools. Although the project was not initiated by SCN and is supported by other donors, the evaluation attributes significant credit to SCN for its work and influence. The Shakti Samuha project also in Nepal, has helped give a voice to a group of young survivors of child-trafficking.
- In other places, interventions have co-opted the broader community into playing a role in protecting children from violence and abuse. In Cambodia, the Village Safety Net Program has forged community networks and is,

“visibly influencing the daily life of a significant number of communities, schools, families and children.” [Cambodia report]

Community-based projects in Uganda are likewise said to be having a notable effect. In addition, a number of projects report changing attitudes towards child victims, for instance, among bar owners in Ethiopia, teachers in Sri Lanka, and police in Nepal.

- Some programmes have had an important influence on national law and policy. The Child and Law project of the Zimbabwe programme has been able to contribute to fundamental changes to the legal system through the enactment of new legislation and guidelines to protect victims of sexual abuse as well as the establishment of a Victim Friendly Court system. The Norwegian domestic programme has been at the forefront of influencing law and policy on new and emerging issues such as internet pornography and child-trafficking. The Sri Lanka programme is credited with contributing to raising the awareness of the judiciary and law enforcement on the rights of child victims. In SE Europe, the programme has helped put the issue of child-trafficking on the agenda, ensure that government policies are child-focused and that government interventions follow models of good practice.

Voices of girls from Nicaragua

‘My stepfather used to fondle me. He used to ask me for a kiss and since I didn’t accept, he forced me to kiss him...’

‘I know of a father that used to beat and rape his daughter. She died of internal haemorrhage. And in another case, this guy got her daughter pregnant and she killed her baby.’

‘My grandfather (R.I.P.) used to abuse his three year old granddaughter. We found out until one of my aunts told us what was happening. A similar problem had occurred with one of my uncles a long time ago. I now am seventeen years old. When my grandfather attempted to abuse me instead of telling my mother I ran away from home...’

‘There’s a cousin who likes to spy on us girls when we are dressing. He even attempted to rape me in the bathroom but couldn’t do it because it was early evening and I called my grandmother...’

‘A friend was raped by her father. Charges were filed but he was friends with the former mayor and that saved him from going to jail. So he raped her daughter and got her pregnant. She had to drop out of school.’

‘I failed a course one semester. The teacher offered to help me solve my problem and asked that I visit him. I didn’t accept his offer and had to repeat the school year.’

‘Sometimes boys make passes at us girls on the street. When we tell them to leave us alone they beat us. Two of them say that they will get even with me and two of my friends and have threatened to rape us.’

Nicaragua report

Part VII PROGRAMME FUTURE

1) SUSTAINABILITY

This part of the report looks at the future of the programme in terms of sustainability and long-term perspective.

KEY LEARNING

Concept of sustainability

Most programmes are struggling with the concept of sustainability. The programme handbook defines sustainability as,

“Impact, activities and processes are considered sustainable if they can be maintained over time without Save the Children Norway”.

Sustainable programme interventions are not a realistic prospect in most countries in which SCN is working. Indeed, the concept of sustainability is a paradox in itself as the sustainability of the programme interventions means that the problem has also persisted. The real goal must surely be to eliminate the problem. The Nepal programme presents a rare example of a project intervention which has made such a permanent change that the intervention is no longer required. Discussions about the future of the Badi girls' hostel are underway as it seems to have outlived its use,

“Girl's hostel has been the highlight of the project and it was seen as a model of success. However at least in Nepalgunj its relevance seemed to have decreased since most Badi women in the area have given up the job of sex trade and no younger generation Badi girls from the area will be involved in the trade. In that respect project impact has been sustainable.” [Nepal report]

This seems to have come about purely because of the success of the intervention rather than an exit strategy on the part of SCN.

Different forms of sustainability

Financial sustainability - Defined in its narrowest sense, sustainability in financial terms is generally not a viable prospect in most countries that SCN is working as they are not affluent enough to assume this responsibility themselves.

As the Ethiopia report concludes,

“[there are] generally poor prospects for sustainability as lack of funding and unlikely to convince government or community to accept responsibility. Problem with most pilot projects in country is a failure to sustain initiatives.” [Ethiopia report]

Prospects are better for more mainstream initiatives implemented through government partners, e.g. in Mozambique. Scaling-up of projects as such is not much addressed in reports. Scaling-up is primarily seen in the context of piloting initiatives that are then taken over on a larger-scale by government authorities. Inevitably the government's ability or

“A girl of seven years of age was kidnapped by a 30-year-old man in the City of Beira. The girl gave birth four times, the first time when she was eight years of age. The girl is now 14 and has a 4-month-old son fathered by the man. One day she found out that there was a person from Beira in the neighbourhood, so she went to tell them of her plight. The person contacted the girl's family, who in turn contacted the police. The Coordinator of the Office for Attending to Women and Children, together with the girl's sister, went and rescued her. The man is under arrest”.

Mozambique report

desire to assume responsibility in economically impoverished countries cannot work every time, a win in some areas, for example education or HIV/AIDS, may mean a loss in others, like VSA, as governments seek to prioritise use of their resources. Some programmes seek sustainability by finding other donors e.g. in Albania, Save the Children has helped the Hearth shelter gain support from other donors but this can only count as passing the responsibility. The Mozambique programme mentions the innovative attempt by some projects to carry out profit-making activities but it appears that these will not secure enough income to sustain the work.

Institutional sustainability – e.g. building capacities of state institutions - police, judges, prosecutors, psychologists and social workers – is being done in several countries. In Sri Lanka, the organisation of a lawyers network coupled with the usual training and capacity building has the potential for sustainability beyond the life of the project.

Legal/policy level sustainability – changes in national law and policy are seen as ways of effecting long-term change and is a course pursued in all country programmes. Significant changes have been noted in Romania through contributions to the national plan and strong partnerships between Save the Children, the responsible state agency (the General Direction for Countering organised Crime and Drugs) and IOM.

Individual sustainability - Sustainability can also be considered from the perspective of impact on individual lives and the changes that can be sustained through them, their relationships and communities. The Nepal programme provides good examples of lasting impact of this kind,

“For instance, Badi girls were protected from being sexually exploited by giving them institutional care and access to education that made them change their attitude and understand their rights. The impact of this child-focused program was seen in the Badi community as well since they have realized the need to take alternative jobs to sex trade. So the project has long-term implications.....” [Nepal report]

Also,

“if the impact of the project is felt even after the donors withdraw from the project, then the project can be called sustainable in terms of impact. In that respect the impact of the project has been positive and may remain so...feeling of ownership of project and commitment of girls, parents and other stakeholders was a good indication...with some further impetus the programme could survive in the long run”. [Safer Environment for Girls report]

Civil society sustainability - Garnering the consensus/support of other organisations for a particular intervention can help ensure its sustainability. This is generally very challenging as shown in Nepal by efforts of the Safer Environment for Girls project which sought to “sell” the project to other agencies by organising meetings where no international organisations showed up, and local agencies who attended were unwilling to commit to the issue.

Community sustainability: The idea of sustainability through the community is the most promising approach and is being explored by a number of country programmes. The Nicaragua report highlights this angle,

“work with teachers, mothers, children/adolescents, and the setting up of community networks with participation of children/adolescents, mothers, fathers and teachers in order to ensure a stable presence in the community, reduce reliance on NGOs and enhance human and material resources to promote children and adolescent rights in several settings”. [Nicaragua report]

The Zimbabwe and Cambodia reports comment on the considerable potential for sustainability through existing community-based projects. Other countries such as Nepal and Uganda which have experimented in more depth with such initiatives are more sceptical,

“[the] experience in most African countries have witnessed that the commitment of local community by itself cannot at all guarantee sustainability. . . . the strengths and weaknesses of the community leaders in taking over the responsibilities should be thoroughly assessed”.
[Uganda report]

Part VIII GLOBAL PROGRAMME CONCLUSIONS

1) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of recommendations made by the global evaluation is the responsibility of various parts of the organisation. It is left for SCN to prioritise which recommendations are to be followed up and to allocate responsibility accordingly.

PROGRAMME INITIATION

SITUATION ANALYSIS

- A full situation analysis is not always carried out by country offices before embarking on work in this thematic area (barring a few good examples from *Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Albania, Sri Lanka*). This has implications for effective programme/project design as well as for the credibility of SCN advocacy. This situation is compounded by the lack of externally available data and information especially when dealing with new and emerging issues.
- Situation analysis needs to be carried out more systematically at the start of a programme and on an ongoing basis. The situation analysis should be at 2 levels:
- broad study – national trends and issues in VSA, external resources (government, community, civil society, other international organisations); internal resources and SCN comparative strengths; possible intervention areas
 - project specific study in each project site – causes, risk factors, local resources, strengths, challenges etc, organisational assessment of partner capacities.
 - research should draw on direct experiences of those affected by VSA

“Susmita Nepali is 18 years old and has studied up to 10th grade in the hostel. Since her father brought second wife, her mother lived with her maternal grandparents. Her mother had three sisters, the second sister used to do sex trade. She started to live with her grandmother and the stepmother while her father and stepmother lived in India most of the time. Then her grandmother brought her to the hostel and she studied up to grade 10. Now she is working as a volunteer in a small NGO. She says, “I feel that the society still looked at us negatively. When I was in the hostel, boys used to say that they’ll give me money, come with us.”
Nepal report

ROOT CAUSES AND PROGRAMME THEORY

- Addressing root causes is strongly emphasised in SCN global policy. Country programmes do not appear to be predicated on a strong understanding of the relational links between root causes and interventions. Where root causes are mentioned, they appear to be more assumptions than grounded reasoning.
- Programmes need to be more aware of the causal associations surrounding the incidence of VSA as this impacts on effective programming and is certainly important for policy level advocacy work. However, given the complexities of societal level analysis, programmes are probably best advised to place their emphasis on understanding causal links and conceptualising the problem in the particular communities they are working in by ensuring that a localised analysis is carried out before embarking on an intervention.

OVERALL THEMATIC STRATEGY

- Strategic planning in the thematic area is weak in most country programmes with a few exceptions such as *Cambodia* and should be improved.
- Country programmes should develop an annual strategic plan for this thematic area outlining clear objectives and goals for programme staff.

ROLE OF NGOS – ADVOCACY OR SERVICE DELIVERY

- Programmes should maintain the balance recommended in SCN global policy between practical work and advocacy and place value on the difference that can be made even to one child's life.
- Service delivery should be planned carefully to ensure that it builds on community and local resources.

IDENTIFYING PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

- Decisions concerning what kinds of projects to initiate and where to work are very much contingent on partner selection and availability. Generally SCN is working in areas where there is low or variable local capacity. A pro-active approach to partner selection as practiced in some countries (*Albania, Sri Lanka, Cambodia*) whereby SCN identifies gaps in provision and then “headhunts” partners with the requisite profile appears to work well and should be replicated elsewhere.

TARGET GROUPS

- Ensuring the focus of the programme targets the most vulnerable under 18 year olds in a non-discriminatory and gender-balanced way is inadequately considered in most countries.
- SCN should be aware of its role as a child rights agency first and foremost and safeguard its funding and advocacy for children as far as possible. Where projects are addressing women's and children's issues jointly, SCN should seek joint funding arrangements with donors interested in women's issues and carve up the budget proportionately.
- Programmes need to be more gender balanced which means taking stock of gender relations and their impact on VSA, addressing the needs of boys as victims of VSA, and carrying out holistic programming that is inclusive of men and boys as potential perpetrators of abuse and also as important supporters in the fight against VSA.
- Programmes should be aware of the non-discrimination principle in their work and seek to ensure that the needs of marginalized groups are met.

DEFINITIONS

- Given the different perceptions of violence and sexual abuse among project partners, SCN and the public, country programmes should seek to understand these perceptions better and reach a common understanding with partners in order to design an effective and relevant strategy for combating VSA in their contexts.

TECHNICAL FORMULATION

- Programme/project planning documents need to be more carefully formulated with clear, achievable objectives and indicators.
- Given the apparent lack of in-house expertise, support for reviewing project documents can be outsourced to suitably qualified experts. This support should be time-limited and take the form of on-the-job training with the aim of teaching SCN and partners how to draft and appraise planning documents themselves.
- Consultation with communities and other affected stakeholders should take place in the planning stage, and decisions should be taken on how and if these views should be integrated into programme/project planning.

PILOTING

- Piloting of project interventions happens irregularly and should be instituted more often as a good practice in project development.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

- SCN's adoption of the partnership approach provides an inspiring model of development cooperation which is focused on building local capacities and ensuring sustainable change. The practical transition from self-implementation to partner implementation has taken several years and is now complete. However, the transition at a conceptual and behavioural level may still take time and there appears to be much uncertainty and confusion as to what this approach means and how staff should conduct themselves with country programmes and staff adopting considerably different approaches.

While flexibility is important, there is also room for more conceptualisation and harmonisation in terms of what SCN means by a partnership approach, which model it favours and how staff should conduct themselves. In the view of the TEC, the intensive model appears a more original, responsible model of donorship which yields more results in terms of impact on VSA and country level capacity building e.g. *Albania, Nepal, Cambodia*. If one compares the achievements of two country programmes: a supportive model can lead to progress across all project partners, as seen in *Nepal*, whereas a more laissez-faire approach will only be able to show gains where the partner already has the innate capacity and competence e.g. *Child and Law in Zimbabwe*. (See Part VI – Programme Impact) Other country programmes fall halfway along the spectrum providing support in some areas and not others.

- It is for SCN to decide and give guidance to its country programmes accordingly. SCN should carry out further consultations among programmes and further define its position on what the partnership approach means and how it can practically be implemented.
- Some programmes need to improve coordination among partners to ensure an efficient division of labour, equal treatment and good relations.
- Examples of responsible donorship which leads, guides and supports local agencies should be followed.

CHILD PARTICIPATION

- Some country programmes (*Nepal, SE Europe, Sri Lanka*) demonstrate excellent expertise in child participation which ultimately appears to reflect on the greater impact these programmes are having on beneficiaries (See Part VI – Programme Impact). A number of country programmes are struggling with the concept and require further guidance and support to make it a reality.
- More guidance on the meaning of children participation and ideas on how it can be implemented at different stages of the programme/project cycle needs to be given as otherwise programme and project managers are likely to remain wary of initiating participatory activities or opt for those which are tokenistic and ad hoc.
- Project planning documents should specify how and when child participation is to be engaged.

RELATIONS WITH SAVE THE CHILDREN ALLIANCE

- There is positive collaboration with Alliance members which appears to be enhancing and facilitating work in this area.

RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

- SCN has positive relations with government in most countries through a judicious management of its profile and position. SCN has a primary duty to ensure the best interests of children are met and should therefore be aware of maintaining its independence and its need, at times, to act as a watchdog and an advocate for change.
- Maintain a balance in terms of relationship and funding to both civil society groups and government bodies as recommended in the SCN global policy. Country programmes need to be mindful of ensuring that this balanced is maintained.
- Endeavour to set up permanent inter-agency coordination mechanisms which are more institutionalised and less person-dependent given the vagaries of relying on systems of personal contacts in environments where staff are constantly changing and contacts need to be renewed.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- Coordination with other international organisations is often difficult due to a sense of rivalry and competition that can exist within agencies. SCN should continue to encourage the development of networks and forums of international and local organisations where possible. However, SCN is not always in a position to take on a coordinating role and nor does it have the international mandate to do so.
- In such circumstances, the best approach would to encourage and support governments to assume their coordination role of international and local organisations to ensure an efficient division of labour and a sharing of information and experience.

INTERACTION WITH HEAD OFFICE

- The TEC concludes that head office needs to play a stronger role in providing technical support to country programmes. This is all the more necessary given the broad approach to policy-making. A bridge needs to be made between the sometimes 'academic' approach of head office and the practical need of the field for concrete guidance and advice.
- Head office should provide increased support to country programmes both on project management issues (programme design, monitoring and evaluation, indicators, partner relations etc.) as well as technical matters related to VSA. This support may come from a variety of head office sections and can be provided through various means:
 - training materials and guidance notes, tools which focus on the practicalities of "how to" deliver programmes on VSA – these should ideally follow an interactive, distant learning model to optimise learning. They should also comprise "training of trainers" elements since country programme staff in turn need to build the capacity of partners.
 - priority areas for training and capacity building of country programme and head office thematic staff include monitoring and evaluation, and programme/project design
 - Topic network – should be developed as planned in order to enable country programmes to share and build on each other's experiences. There is important expertise in the global programme on some areas and focal points could be appointed on certain issues so that staff could share and seek advice on project documentation etc. visits and exchanges between country programmes should be arranged. But given the time and resources constraints, other methods of exploring work in country programmes should be explored e.g. videos (informal).
 - sharing academic and practitioner research on VSA, root causes etc. This should go beyond material that is usually circulated in international fora in child rights circles as this may miss the latest thinking and innovative approaches that are occurring at national level.
 - reviewing and compiling a list of international resources
 - irrespective of decisions taken regarding the role of the TA, external expertise will be required on an ad hoc basis given the scale of support required and the specialist areas of knowledge.
- Country programme thematic staff should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning with the support of their country offices. They should play a more active and direct role in policy research by seeking to increase their understanding of their country contexts, issues and resources as far as possible. They should also visit projects more frequently (a few times a year at least as yearly visits are not sufficient) and become acquainted enough with the hands-on work to be able to provide ideas and support to project partners.
- Time for staff development, learning and sharing e.g. through the topic network should be built into country programme manager and head office thematic advisor job descriptions as it is less likely to take place to the extent needed if it is simply an add on.
- The organisation should consider the role played by thematic advisors and decide what the appropriate emphasis of these posts should be. This should include a clearer delineation of needs to be met and an allocation of responsibilities between head office units and country programmes on what is expected of whom. Ways need to be found for better mainstreaming the issue at head office level.

- Policies and documents from head office should be more clearly formulated and rationalised so that they build on previous material.
- The new strategy (2006 to 2009) should:
 - focus on the desirability of making situational analysis before embarking on new projects (already proposed)
 - underline the importance of ensuring a learning process through monitoring and evaluation and sketching the possibilities for scaling up of projects and reaching more children (already proposed)
- Country management should:
 - encourage programme managers to utilise existing possibilities for capacity building.
 - give support to programme managers to strengthen the different aspects of programming
 - communicate their interpretations and decisions on global policy to country staff
- Regional coordinators and thematic advisors at head office should routinely discuss support needed by country programmes.
- See also other sections on partner relations, monitoring and evaluation, activities (advocacy) etc. for other areas requiring input.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- Integration with other thematic areas and cross-cutting issues is generally lacking at both head office and country level (except Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Cambodia) and should be improved to optimise learning and effectiveness.
- Structural changes, incorporation into objectives, and planned events can help to maximise integration between thematic areas and cross-cutting issues.
- Integration of VSA with education is a particularly promising avenue in terms of reaching significant numbers of children (providing provision is also made for those out of school) and in terms of ensuring sustainability through government mainstream activities. This integration can range from awareness-raising initiatives to more concrete support and intervention in individual cases.
- Awareness-raising activities should also be coupled with child rights programming initiatives where these exist rather than setting up new and separate initiatives. It seems most cost-effective and appropriate to introduce VSA within a broader discussion of issues of concern to children. Special awareness-raising activities are only warranted where there are specific and urgent threats of VSA.

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

- Country programmes seem familiar with the terminology of child rights but there appears to be uncertainty as to what this means and what practical difference a rights-based approach makes to programming. The lack of a common understanding means that different interpretations are being developed which risks diluting the concept to the point that it can mean everything and nothing.
- SCN should clarify what it means by rights-based programming and disseminate this understanding to country programmes so that a common approach is adopted.

- There is a need for capacity building on child-rights across the board among partners and SCN staff.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATENESS

- Traditional coping strategies, such as the Buddhist belief in karma, have played an important role in helping populations overcome horrific events such as the Cambodian genocide. It is essential that these traditional methods are understood and utilised in addressing distress and trauma as Western models of psychotherapeutic care (including counselling) may not be appropriate and may in fact undermine indigenous approaches. The country programmes do not appear to be exploiting this potential to its maximum extent. A comprehensive understanding and utilization of local culture and beliefs is beneficial from a programme point of view in order to convey messages about child protection that are culturally relevant, understandable and acceptable.
- Country programmes should carry out a cultural audit as part of their situation analysis to fully understand how cultural factors interplay with VSA. In particular, they should consider how interventions can build on and capitalise on traditional coping methods.
- At the same time, country programmes need to be aware of international standards and be clear in challenging harmful traditional practices in line with SCN's policy on "Ethical principles" contained in the Programme Handbook which states that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child prevails over local laws, customs and traditions (see following section on "Human Resources")
- Head office should commission a study on how psychosocial work can be carried out using traditional coping methods and approaches to deal with traumatic life events. It should draw on academic research as well as examples of good practice and innovation from other organisations.

FLEXIBILITY

- Flexibility is an important programme trait especially when working in new and emerging areas and is well-demonstrated by country programmes (*Norway* and *SE Europe*) which have been confronted with novel issues.

INNOVATION

- SCN has carried out some innovative and pioneering work (*Norway, SE Europe, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique*) which has, at times, put it at the cutting edge of work on VSA.
- While innovation is clearly valuable it should not be an end in itself since the main objective ought to be designing interventions that are in the best interests of children whether they be innovative or traditional.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Staff recruitment, training and retention are issues in all programmes.
- Greater investment in staff support and capacity building is required. More attention should be given to providing staff support both at programme, and especially at project level, given the traumatic subjects they are expected to deal with.

- Country programmes need to be adaptable in situations of scarce human resources and seek to develop the potential of staff who may not have the requisite educational or professional background.
- Policies on child protection from staff and partners need to be urgently implemented particularly in terms of being incorporated into partner agreements. This should be accompanied by training, guidance and monitoring of projects for abuses.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- The amount of budget apportioned to this area appears limited. It is an area which generally receives inadequate attention either from government services or voluntary bodies compared to say education or health which are more “amenable” to a wider range of agencies. SCN should therefore ask itself whether it is taking the “easy route” by focusing most of its energies on these less controversial areas.
- Increase in budget allocation to this thematic area is warranted as can be seen from the general conclusions of this report, the overall global programme as yet is unable to maximise its potential through lack of resources.

ACTIVITIES

- Community mobilisation is central in terms of making a lasting sustainable impact on VSA. The role of communities in outreach, surveillance, monitoring, data collection, referral is key in ensuring that receive the care they need. All country programmes recognise the value of community mobilisation and have experimented with various initiatives. There has been some important learning in this area (Cambodia, Uganda, Sri Lanka, Nepal) but there is more that can be done given that community initiatives are potentially the most cost-effective and sustainable forms of intervention that SCN could undertake.
- Awareness-raising prevention activities carried out in isolation and without sufficient community links have an intangible and indefinable impact on prevention of VSA. They may have other positive effects and add value to the community but a question mark remains over whether they sufficiently target VSA or those most vulnerable. Also, awareness-raising in itself does not alleviate root causes such as poverty which might predispose certain children to VSA.
- Rescue work is generally not being carried out and is difficult for NGOs to do without state support.
- Assistance for children who've suffered abuse is the most direct way of impacting on VSA. The main issue with such services appears to be making them comprehensive enough to meet the needs of children in such dire circumstances.
- Residential care can have something to offer children without alternatives and the experiences suggest the way in which this is provided, particularly in terms of being child-friendly and participatory, can make all the difference to the social development of the child in that context.
- There are a few examples of work in the justice system but this was an area recognised by most programmes as requiring more investment.

- Psycho-social support was found to be lacking in a number of programmes mainly due to lack of know-how on how to provide it and lack of in-country expertise. Ways of providing psycho-social care that are culturally appropriate and responsible way but light in terms of resources and expertise need to be explored.
- The multi-sectoral approach has been very successfully instituted in Zimbabwe and despite the desirability of adopting such an approach in other locations, its replicability remains an issue given that a number of particular facilitating factors allowed it to flourish in Zimbabwe.
- Capacity building of professionals is taking place in various places and care needs to be taken in terms of the content and follow-up of such training.
- SCN should community mobilisation one of the top intervention strategies. It should develop a model for community work on VSA based on pooling its own experiences as well as seeking out successful approaches from other organisations. This model should be implemented globally and continually refined and upgraded. Holistic interventions (like Village Safety Net Program in Cambodia) which carry out both prevention and protection activities for children in distress appear to work best rather than isolated disconnected activities which only concentrate on awareness-raising or setting up clubs for example.
- Head office should commission some work on culturally relative psycho-social work to help country programmes to identify innovative solutions to a problem that is being faced everywhere.
- Most country programmes identify a need for developing clear advocacy strategies that identify goals, objectives, targets, and methods. The importance of a strong evidence base for advocacy was stressed. In addition, a number of staff expressed confusion as to what it means and how to go about it, suggesting the need for a harmonised understanding and guidelines on the subject as well as training.
 - An advocacy policy should be developed by the programme department at head office to be adapted in Norway as well as to different country contexts.
 - Country management needs to encourage the development of holistic advocacy plans/policies.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EVALUATION

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Monitoring and evaluation systems are almost universally weak (except *Cambodia, Albania*) partly through an absence of a culture of reflection and partly through lack of technical know-how. There is insufficient guidance and support given by head office.
- A more systematised approach should be developed with commonly agreed standards and procedures for monitoring and evaluation. This approach should take a simple and straight-forward approach to monitoring and evaluation given that this is a field which can appear excessively complex and intimidating for non-specialists.
- Training and capacity building of staff on monitoring and evaluation should include the development of interactive training materials and guidance notes as well as training sessions. It should also include 'training of trainer' elements as country staff will need to

provide training to partners. External support will probably be needed to provide this scale of capacity building.

- A preferred set of procedures and standards should also be developed which specify how partners should be monitored and evaluated e.g. frequency of visits, what should be done during the visits, who to talk to, what to ask, what documents to prepare etc. This should be seen as guidance for country programme staff for the benefit of their own programmes rather than a bureaucratic imposition from head office. Such procedures can be developed by looking at good practice from country programmes themselves.
- A specific methodology should be developed for evaluating and monitoring VSA projects taking into account the different kinds of activities that may be carried out and specific sensitivities of monitoring in this area.
- The monitoring and evaluation section of the programme handbook should be strengthened with more basic information, guidance and ideas on “how to” carry out monitoring and evaluation.
- Programme and project planning, design, setting of indicators should be improved – see recommendations earlier.

FEEDBACK ON THIS EVALUATION

- The evaluation became very broad and wide-ranging. It is suggested that future thematic evaluations be more focused (either in terms of types of projects, regions, issues etc.) in order to facilitate an in-depth learning of certain key subjects.
- Roles of team members should be clarified to ensure that the costs and benefits of involving staff/partners vs. outsiders are understood. The Programme Handbook should be amended to explain the differences between a participatory learning review and an independent evaluation.
- Some of the country evaluation reports did not adequately back-up their conclusions with supporting evidence which weakens their credibility. More stress should be placed on ‘quality’ in evaluations in line with current thinking on ‘quality’ in qualitative research.
- The KQE should be refined and improved if they are to be used as indicators for programme planning and evaluation.
- The structure of this evaluation combined the benefits of a national and international perspective and could be repeated in future evaluations with a few modifications.
- Full set of evaluation reports from this global evaluation – all country reports and both versions of the global report – should be put on a CD for circulation to country programme staff.

DOCUMENTATION

- Documentation and record-keeping is a persistent problem in most country programmes (with the exception of the Child and Law project in Zimbabwe, and the Albania programme).

- Examples of good practice from country programmes on what documentation should be kept and how should be shared.
- SCN should provide some standard guidelines on maintaining documentation. These guidelines need not be seen as a bureaucratic imposition but as a way of sharing ideas and best practice.
- SCN should help its staff to provide guidance to partners on the types of documentation that should be kept by them.
- Country programmes should develop a system of sharing documents of common interest among partners.

PROGRAMME IMPACT

- There are some inspiring examples of the ways programmes especially from *Nepal* or *SE Europe* are changing the course of children's lives. In other places like *Ethiopia*, *Sri Lanka*, *Cambodia*, programmes are impacting in the immediate term and giving much needed medical assistance to children. The *Zimbabwe* and *Norwegian* domestic programmes can demonstrate a significant contribution to the change in national law and policies. In terms of achieving the most tangible impact, the evaluation shows that direct interventions providing intensive support to children who are victims or at risk of being victims are likely to have the most visible effects on children's lives.
- Monitoring and documentation of impact is generally weak however and should be improved in line with other aspects of monitoring and evaluation.
- Effectiveness, efficiency and cost-benefit were not considerations in this evaluation but should form part of any monitoring and evaluation training that takes place.

PROGRAMME FUTURE

- Sustainability is a challenge in most country programmes due to the broader macro-economic environments in which they are working. Sustainability is a multi-faceted concept that should be considered in a broad way rather than in terms of financial or institutional sustainability alone. Programmes interventions impacting on individual lives may create long-lasting ripple effects in families and communities and should be valued as worthwhile.

2) OVERALL ASSESSMENT

SCN is working in some of the poorest countries in the world in situations of severe lack of capacity and resources that are often compounded by political and military instability. The external environment carries many risks of violence and abuse and offers little in the way of protection or recovery. Operating in such a climate, SCN has carried out some pioneering work to break the silence surrounding abuse and to offer support to victims.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are some visible strengths in SCN's violence and abuse programme which have helped contribute to these successes. There are also some areas for improvement which if addressed, could lead to greater impact and more effective programming. In some ways it is simplistic

to talk of strengths and weaknesses from a global perspective, as there are few areas that are weaknesses in all programmes – in this sense the organisation has the internal experience to address most issues and the possibility of country programmes being able to guide each other. Nevertheless some overall trends can be noted.

The main strength of SCN is its participatory and inclusive relationship with partners, collaborators and communities. This is most evident in its model of implementation through local partners: an approach which fosters local capacity and helps ensure sustainable change. Some country programmes (Cambodia, Nepal, SE Europe) have provided intensive support to local partners which has been highly appreciated,

“One of the biggest accomplishments of [SCN] is considered to be the fact that partners believe there has developed a relationship based on mutual trust and learning between them. The existing partners of [SCN] say they have a special kind of relationship compared to the donor-recipient relationships with other donors,” [Albania report],
and in Cambodia,

“[partners] often repeat[ed] that in Cambodia it is only SCN that provides such consistent level of support for capacity building and program development, allowing Cambodians to take a lead in developing strategies, supporting them through the process, standing by them in periods of conflicts and helping them find ways for improvements themselves.” [Cambodia report]

However, this approach is not followed everywhere and some country programmes such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique take a more hands-off approach. The findings of this evaluation suggest that the more intensive model yields more results in terms of impact on violence and sexual abuse and local capacity building. If one compares the achievements of two programmes, the closer engagement of the Nepal programme results in achievements across the board by all project partners, whereas the more laissez-faire model adopted by Zimbabwe, in recent times, tends to show significant gains in one project where the partner already had the innate capacity and competence. Other country programmes fall halfway along the spectrum providing support in some areas and not others.

Child participation is another area of expertise particularly in the country programmes of Nepal, SE Europe, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. In Nepal, child participation has meant giving children real ownership in the management and running of projects. The children are visibly empowered and have become confident enough to stand up for their own rights and the rights of others, e.g. in one case a girls' group rescued a 12 year old girl from child marriage by persuading her family that this was unacceptable and contrary to the law. In Cambodia, child participation integrated into the Village Safety Net Program, has also resulted in children developing a positive sense of responsibility towards fellow children,

“Many children go beyond reporting. They organize small activities to help poorer children in school, giving them books, pens, clothes. In one school, the children organized a money bank, with each child contributing 100 real each. The amount is pooled together and is used to help school children in emergency situations.” [Cambodia report]

Despite these positive experiences, some country programmes are struggling with the concept and require further guidance and support to turn child participation into a reality.

A number of programmes have experimented with community participation and mobilisation recognising that the setting up of such grassroots networks is perhaps the best and most sustainable way of protecting children from violence and sexual abuse. The programmes in Cambodia, Uganda, Sri Lanka and Nepal have been particularly effective in this regard.

Relations with government partners and other Save the Children Alliance members are generally good across the board and have helped to facilitate SCN's work in this area.

Conversely, SCN's main weakness in this thematic area appears to lie in its lack of internal cohesion. At present, different parts of the organisation are not working together in a way that optimises their effectiveness. In some respects, head office appears out of tune with the needs of country programmes. In addition, there is a lack of integration between different thematic areas (except in Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Cambodia). SCN has the benefit of many very dedicated staff but a lack of capacity building and support is limiting their ability to make the most of their work.

More attention needs to be paid to strengthening internal systems and processes concerned with programme management. While there are some notable exceptions (Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Albania, Sri Lanka), country programmes are not habitually set up on the basis of a comprehensive situation analysis, conceptual understanding and overall thematic strategy. This can result in passivity in identifying partners and interventions as well as weaknesses in the design and formulation of projects. Monitoring and evaluation systems are generally poor (except Cambodia, Albania) and documentation is inadequate in most places (except Albania, Zimbabwe - Child and Law Foundation). More strategic thinking is needed on how SCN can reach the most vulnerable under 18 year olds in a gender-balanced way, using rights-based approaches, and capitalising on local and indigenous value systems and support mechanisms.

These gaps in internal processes may partly be due to SCN being a decentralised organisation where maximum authority is delegated to country offices. However, this has resulted in an uneven development of programmes. The most consistently strong programmes are those that have been able to develop adequate internal processes at country level. However, this is something of a hit and miss approach as it depends on the capacities and priorities of individual staff and particular country programmes. There is room for head office to play a stronger role in developing common systems and methods as part of its support function in relation to country programmes. A strengthening of these internal systems and processes would necessitate an increase in budget. Although SCN is at forefront of tackling this issue in a number of countries, the overall allocation of budget generally remains low as compared to some other programme areas. It may be worth considering whether more resources can be devoted to tackling this most difficult and damaging threat facing children.

How hostel saved a Badi girl from unsafe environment at home and gave her better options in life.

Mina Nepali (Name changed): Mina is 17-years old Badi girl. She lives in a family of five with grandfather, mother, elder sister and a small brother. Her mother was involved in sex trade, so both her sister and herself were kept in the hostel. Her elder sister and herself completed 10th grade in the girls' hostel. She had come out of the hostel only 10 months back. Her grandfather used to work as a watchman in Bombay, India. Later her mother left sex trade and went to India when she was in the hostel.

Now Mina works for Seto Gurans (an NGO) as a community facilitator and earns Rs 800 per month. She says proudly, "I am supporting my family. Although my sister was married she was separated since she had difficulty staying in the family that accused her of not bringing dowry, so she also stays with us. Our brother is in school and we are supporting him."

Because she had the opportunity to stay in the hostel, she felt she could get education and able to work and support a family. She also takes it positively that in the hostel she could mingle with other children and visitors and broaden her outlook to the world. She feels that her family economic condition is still poor but much better than before.

Nepal report – Badi girls project