

DRAFT Terms of Reference

SCN's thematic evaluation of cooperation with partners

Background

Building local and national capacity to secure child rights is a key working principle in SCN's global strategy, as it has been since the 1990s. SCN's global strategy 2010-2013 states that: 'Our primary goal is achieving results for children. Lasting change is dependent on building local capacity and, in certain situations, increased capacity for partner organisations are in itself a goal.'

As a working principle, 'building local and national capacity' acknowledges the role of local duty bearers and civil society in advocating for children's rights and achieving sustainable results for children in the long run. Local ownership is essential to this thinking. SCN aim to strengthen local and national authorities as well as civil society including child-led groups, both in terms of their administrative capacity and competence, their professional skills, and capability to plan, implement, monitor, coordinate and interact as stakeholders in the development processes. Furthermore, a specific objective on building local capacity is set in the Child Rights Governance thematic priority area in the strategy: "strengthened capacity within civil society, including child led groups, to promote children's rights". SCN's Policy for Strengthening Local Capacity (2007) gives guidance to how country programmes should approach and engage with local partners.

In Save the Children International's Global Strategy 2010-2015 the Theory of Change puts building partnerships at the centre when exercising SC's role as the innovator, the voice and the organization that achieves results at scale for children. In the strategy, it is stated that SCI will "collaborate with children, civil society organisations, communities, governments and the private sector to share knowledge, influence others and build capacity to ensure children's rights are met."

Challenges

Building local and national capacity is essential for a locally owned and sustainable development and yet very complex and challenging to achieve. SCN want to assess how and to what extent our strategies and policies are being implemented and effective in strengthening local capacity in the countries where SCN work, and how partnership cooperation could develop in the future in order to maximize the development effect.

INGOs' added value in development in general and more specifically in building the capacity of governments and civil society is central to both public and professional discourse in Norway and globally. Some voices from the South and North alike are critical to what could be called an INGO-fication of development countries and lack of local ownership, the taking over of development agendas, the outside influence on power structures, the asymmetry of partnerships, etc. Donors have multiple interests in terms of strengthening local capacity

whilst also requiring value for money, efficiency and results corresponding to their home public and donor development agenda and requirements. Issues such as corruption and financial control have increased the technical requirements on partners. This focus is paralleled by a drive in many development countries to take control over the development agenda, and also some times over the understanding and implementation of human rights. Many countries have issued laws and restrictions on INGO influence and activity. An INGO like Save the Children has to constantly prove our added value both to donors, host governments, partners and the children we work for. Additionally, SCN has to balance the roles of being both a trusted capacity building partner to governments and conducting the 'watchdog role' together with local and national civil society as advocates for child rights. Therefore, we need to understand and develop the way we cooperate with partners under different and changing contexts to maximize the positive effects of partner cooperation and avoid unintended negative effects.

In the evaluation of SCN's cooperation with partners conducted in 2001, the evaluation team (INTRAC), made several recommendations addressing key challenges in North - South partner cooperation:

- the need for more flexibility in setting objectives in order to be more responsive to local needs and initiative and not stifling local ownership
- the need for long term development with partners, a broader and more coherent approach to capacity building
- a need to redefine SCN's role in the capacity building of partners and especially the role as facilitator rather than 'manager' or 'supervisor'.

In Norad's Organizational Review of SCN, conducted in 2008, the review team found some evidence of instrumental relationships with civil society partners in the two programmes studied. In some cases, partners seemed to be considered a means to reach Save the Children Norway's own objectives, while the team emphasized that strengthening the capacity of local partners should be an objective on it's own. Norad strongly emphasizes the need for partnerships built on equality and transparency, respecting local ownership. Building the capacity and competence of partners should contribute to building a strong civil society in the countries where Save the Children Norway operates. These findings and comments have already had an impact in the way SCN defines its goals related to building local and national capacity, by feeding into the discussions and drafting of the global strategy 2010-2013. As shown in quotations from the strategy earlier, SCN concluded that it is legitimate to say that in some instances building capacity of partners is a means to an end, a way to ensure that we reach our target groups and in other instances it is the building of capacity which is the end. The review findings were nevertheless of such an importance to SCN that further follow up is needed to assess the impact (both intended and unintended, positive and negative) of SCN partner cooperation, hence reflected in this evaluation.

Fundamental to any relationship between SCN and a local partner (whether government or civil society) is to define the objective for the relationship: What do SCN and the partner want

to achieve? Whether the objective is to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of children's rights in a particular target group, provide a service to children or it is to strengthen a particular partner as a voice for children in a society, capacity building should be packed and parcel in order to increase the likelihood that these objectives are achieved effectively in a sustainable manner and the partner is strengthened as an actor in the local development process. The main question is if and how SCN actually add value to the partners in terms of strengthening them in delivering on their objectives, and beyond that, as empowered, competent and sustainable actors anchored in the development process in their societies.

As Save the Children has come together as one international organisation, SCN identify the strengthening of local and national capacity as a key working principle which we would like to see develop in this new fellowship. Several Save the Children members (SC Sweden, SC UK and SC US) as well as several of the country programmes supported by SCN have engaged in evaluations and studies in this field lately, hence the interest to contribute to an increased understanding and development of partner cooperation is shared by many.

This evaluation will build on previous evaluations and studies, e.g. SCN's thematic evaluation of cooperation with partners in 2001, conducted by INTRAC, and coordinated with recent and ongoing work in other SC member organisations.

Purpose/Objectives

The main purpose of this evaluation is to provide an insight into SCN's work with partners, **build learning and ensure accountability** by:

1. Providing evidence of **impact** (positive and negative, intended or unintended outcome/impact) of SCN's cooperation with partners in five different countries; to what extent and how a) partners have been strengthened as providers of and advocates for children's rights, and b) how SCN through partner cooperation has added value to the overall capacity of key actors in the society where we work to address and fulfil children's rights.
2. Provide an oversight of different implementation models and identify and **document good practices** in cooperating with partners, both government and civil society, appropriate to the aim of the partnership and capacity building of the partner. This assessment should also provide evidence of enabling versus obstructing factors in different context and discuss how this could be taken into account when setting the objective for partnerships and selecting partners and modalities.
3. Contribute to **increased knowledge and understanding** by bringing the organisation up to date on research/evaluation findings on partner cooperation (short state of the art report) and bring insight into and awareness of different and sometimes multiple objectives in partner cooperation.
4. Based on the above, provide input to the **formation** of future partnership cooperation in SCN supported programmes and SCI.

This evaluation will go parallel to and be informed by an ongoing SCN mapping of administrative routines in partner cooperation in supported country programmes, aiming to identify gaps between current practises and the new requirements coming with the roll out of SCI programme administration and suggest corresponding adjustments.

The evaluation will start out with a desk review to 1) provide a short update on literature and knowledge on partner cooperation, 2) review SCN (HO and CPs) and SC policies in this field, and 3) map the nature of SCN partnership across supported country programmes, examining numbers and types of partners, etc., complementing the information gathered the above mentioned mapping.

Scope

Four country programmes where SCN have presence or provide support are invited to participate in the evolution as case countries: Nepal, Nicaragua, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Additionally, Ethiopia will be offered financial and technical support to conduct a parallel external evaluation/study designed particularly for a context where government has applied an NGO law restricting the cooperation between local civil society and INGOs.

These cases are chosen because all have considerable experience in partner cooperation that the whole organisation can learn from and they differ on several dimensions assumed to influence on the implementation of good partnerships, helping to illustrate possible models in different contexts. Relevant dimensions are: conflict/post conflict/stable context (hence illustrating differences in partner cooperation in humanitarian versus long term interventions); # and nature of partners (government vs. civil society partners); level of government regulations and control of civil society; different level of civil society activity; SCN holds different roles (Managing member/Participating member/SCN country programmes), only to mention some. An acknowledgement of the uniqueness of each country context in which SCN work has lead us to play down the comparative approach and concentrate on analysing the impact, relevance and potential of partner cooperation in each case country.

The evaluation will cover both government partners (duty bearers), civil society partners in general and child organisations more specifically (representing right holders).

The evaluation will look at partner cooperation per 2011, selecting examples of both

- 1) long term partnerships, dating back to the previous strategy period 2006-2009 and before, to assess impact and identify good practices, and
- 2) partnership established since the beginning of the new strategy period 2010-2014, to assess if any changes in practises has taken place and give input to the formation of future partnership models.

Examples should be drawn that illustrate a wide range of partnerships. Criteria for selection of sample partnerships has to be carefully developed, but important dimensions are differences in terms of implementation of humanitarian and long term development interventions,

small/large partner, different thematic areas (education and CRG are strategic priorities), delivery of services to children vs. innovation vs. advocacy/awareness raising, etc.

In search of good practises, examples can be drawn from both SCN partnerships and those of other SC members present in a country.

The question of self implementation versus working through partners is not within the scope of this evaluation. Although SCN promotes implementation of development projects with local partners, there are circumstances where self implementation is the only choice (unable or unwilling state actors, non-excising or weak civil society etc).

Objectives and Key Evaluation Questions

1. Assess **impact**:

- a. What impact has different modes of partner cooperation had, and how, on the capacity of partners, both government and civil society, to implement and advocate for children's rights?
- b. How effective have SCN's support been in terms of strengthening the capacity of each individual partner organisation beyond the achievement of the defined/common objectives for the partnership?
- c. Has SCN through its cooperation with partners contributed to the overall capacity of society in general, and civil society in particular, to voice, address and fulfil children's rights?
- d. To what extent are clear and consistent objectives set for the partner cooperation in each case, which impact can be assessed against? And are the objectives known and shared by HQ, Country Offices and partners?
- e. Are SC partnering with key actors in government and civil society when compared to the actual child rights issues in each case country? Which processes are followed in order to assess and select strategic partners corresponding to the human rights situation and the intended objectives for partner cooperation? Are the selections of partners ensuring sustainability as well as strengthening the new and weaker voices and actors in the field of child rights?
- f. Are there any negative or unintended effects to be found in the selected sample of partner cooperation? Special attention should be paid to the most prominent known pitfalls of INGO presence.

Impact should be assessed against intentions/objectives for the partnership, and the contextual and organisational setting. Key dimensions of impact are *relevance* and *sustainability*.

2. Document **good practices**:

- a. Through a mapping of partner cooperation in practice and the assessment of impact, identify and document some good practices which could serve as

examples to be replicated. Examples should apply to government and civil society cooperation respectively, and illustrate different contextual settings.

3. Contribute to **increased knowledge and understanding**:

- a. Produce a short 'state of the art' on partnership cooperation, based on acknowledged research, evaluations and studies.
- b. Structure the different intentions/objectives for partner cooperation found at different levels of the organisation (in writing and in practice) and discuss (i) potential conflicting vs. mutually reinforcing objectives and (ii) how different modes of partner cooperation contribute to the different objectives.

4. Input to **future partner cooperation** policy and practice:

- a. Based on finding in this evaluation, with a special request for input from children, partners and stakeholders in general, what changes should be made to current modes of partnership cooperation in order to strengthen local capacity, ensure local ownership and sustainability in the future?
- b. Which modes of partner cooperation are particularly strengthening civil society in promoting child rights?
- c. Are modern technology and social media offering any potential to strengthen or change the way SCN work with local partners and networking?

Methodology

The main focus of this evaluation will be on how SCN has and can strengthen local capacity through partnership. With capacity we mean both the capacity of partners (both government, private and civil society) to implement development projects effectively, the capacity to play a role/be the voice as advocates for children rights in line with the common objectives of SCN and the partner, and the ability of the partner organization to develop, define and perform according to their own full mandate (to manage their affairs successfully, to perform the functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives for themselves in a sustainable manner).

Assessing impact will mainly focus on the change in the capacity and potential of partners to perform better according to the common objective for the partnership. Capacity and potential will be analysed as strategic and organisational, relevance, sustainability and independence. This evaluation will not be a full assessment of partners' impact in terms of positive changes in the lives of children and society as a whole. Nevertheless, secondary sources (evaluations, project reports etc) and stakeholders should be consulted to a certain extent to get an impression of partner's ability to deliver according to their purpose.

The methods for data collection, analysis, review process and participation will be detailed in a dialogue between consultants and as outlined in the evaluation plan (Inception Report) to be produced by the consultants. A key principle in SCN evaluation is, however, child

participation, which should be integrated in the research methodology. The methods will be finalized in detail in start up workshops in each country. Selection of sample cases of partnerships will be done by the consultants with assistance and advice from CO staff, based on pre-approved criteria for selection.

Deliverables

- Evaluation Plan / Inception Report to be approved by the Steering Group
- Participatory workshops/meetings
 - Start up workshop in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nepal and Nicaragua, settling the evaluation teams and involving stakeholders, and detailing/adopting the evaluation plan and data collection in country
 - Sharing findings and analysis with SMTs and staff upon return from data collection
 - Share draft reports and facilitate participatory review processes
- Data collection in the four case countries
- Draft and final country reports and global synthesis report
 - The country report should present the main findings, lessons learned, analysis and recommendations in accordance with the TOR and IR per country
 - The final global synthesis report should not exceed 30 pages, including an executive summary of 2-4 pages.
- Presentation of the final report(s) at one workshop/conference

All documentation and reports should be in English, and the Inception Report and final reports will be subject to approval by the Steering Group.

Criteria for selecting international consultant(s)

- Proven record of excellent competence in evaluations and assessments
- Excellent competence in development partnership models and practices involving both civil society and government partners, as well as capacity building with partners.
- Good team leader skills
- Good writing skills
- Preferably have knowledge of SCN and/or child rights' programming (at least one of the consultants) Preferably be familiar with the concept of children's participation (at least one of the consultants)
- Preferably have knowledge of Spanish/(Portuguese) (at least one of the consultants)

Reference documents

Key documents, but not exhaustive:

SCN strategies, especially 2006-2009 and the current strategy 2010-2013

SCN's Policy for Strengthening Local Capacity (2007)

Norad's 'Organisational Review of Save the Children Norway' (2008)

INTRAC's 'SCN- Thematic Evaluation of Co-operation with partners' (2001)

Time Frame

December 2010 – January 2011	Case Country to confirm participation and give input to evaluation questions Set Evaluation Organization Finalize Terms of Reference
February 2011	Call for consultants Decide Evaluation Team Desk review
Mach 2011	Inception report/evaluation plan First kick off workshop in one case country
March – June 2011	Field work and data analysis
July – August 2011	(Summer vacation in Europe) Draft country reports due by end of August
August – September 2011	Sharing and discussing findings with stakeholders and Reference group
October 2011	Draft Global Report and review process
November 2011	Final country reports and global report
December 2011 (January 2012)	Approval and sharing

Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities

Please see the organisational set up for a detailed outline of the formal organisation of the management of the evaluation. In brief, the evaluation will be anchored with the SCN International Programme Director, Gunnar Andresen, as project owner. The evaluation process will be managed by a project group, headed by the project manager. Most communication within the project group will happen by email and telephone, but we aim at 1-2 F2F meetings. A steering group will make decisions about budget, consultants and approval of reports, based on input from the reference group. A reference group with representatives from among SC staff from SCN HO and CPs, from other SC members and NORAD, will input to the substantial discussion on ToR, draft findings and conclusions. The Terms of Reference is approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of SCN and the Board of Directors will be kept informed. The organisational set up for the evaluation in Ethiopia will be decided by the SMT there.

This should be an external evaluation, and external independent consultant(s) (hereafter called international consultants) will lead the evaluation process, analyse the data, and write up country reports and a final global report. Details will be outlined in a contract between SCN and the international consultant(s). To assist the international consultant(s), local national consultants and data collectors can be hired. As always in SCN managed evaluations, the evaluation will involve staff and stakeholders' participation, and special efforts will be made to ensure meaningful child participation. Evaluation teams will be set up for each country. One SCN focal person has been appointed in each of the case countries and in Ethiopia to facilitate the process in countries. These focal persons are also part of the project group. Although participation is encouraged, it will ultimately be the external global consultant's

responsibility to ensure an independent and high quality evaluation process and reports. The SCN organisation will support them to the best of our ability to reach that end.

The interest and dedication of Country Directors and SMTs are always highly conducive to good evaluation processes.

Budget

All costs will be covered by SCN HO, including approximately 80 days of consultancy (international consultant(s); local consultants and assistants; travel and stay during field work, within a total budget of NOK 1,569 000.

Organisational set up for SCN's management of the evaluation

<u>Project owner :</u>	<i>Gunnar Andersen</i> , International Programme Director SCN
<u>Project manager:</u>	<i>Ingunn Tysse Nakkim</i> , Special Adviser Evaluation and Documentation, SCN HO
<u>Project group:</u>¹	<i>Ingunn Tysse Nakkim</i> <i>Ann M Stewart Pedersen</i> , Adviser Planning and Reporting / Partner cooperation, SCN HO <i>Dahilon Yassin Mohamoda</i> , Adviser Partner cooperation, SCN HO <i>Mario Malespín</i> , SciNicaragua <i>Tarun Adhikari</i> , SciNepal <i>Ana Dulce Guizado</i> , SciMozambique <i>Sibangani Shumba</i> , SciZimbabwe <i>Solomon Kelkai and Mohammed Jemal</i> (SCNiEthiopia)
<u>Steering committee:</u>	<i>Sigurd Johns</i> , Director Policy and Development, SCN HO <i>Ingunn Tysse Nakkim</i> <i>Anne Pedersen</i> , Regional Director for Africa, HO <i>Yngve Seiersted Stokke</i> , Director of Finance
<u>Reference group:</u>²	<u>SCSCN Internal (HO and CP):</u> 2 Regional Directors SCN HO (coordinated by ULT LT) 4 Regional Coordinators (Nepal, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia – Mozambique RC in the project group) Eva Johansen, SCN HO Finance department 1 Representative from the Information and Advocacy department 1 Representative from the Funding department 1 Representative from the domestic programme department 2 Resource persons in CPs; Senait Gebregzaibher (Programme Director, SCiCambodia) and Kristian Høyen (Partnership/Civil Society Advisor, SCiUganda) CDs in Nepal, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Ethiopia or their designated repr. <u>External:</u> Norad: Anne Elisabeth Ødegaard SCUK, SCUS, SCD, SCS and SCIndia <i>Confirmation from some of the members of the Reference group are still pending</i>

¹ The **Project group** will work together through email, teleconferences and 1-2 F2F meetings (se budget)

² The **Reference group** will be consulted at strategic points during the evaluation, and will communicate by email and tele- and videoconferences. No F2F meeting budgeted for.