

A program evaluation of projects implemented in Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine 2013-2015

For Save the Children in Kosovo

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29 September 2016

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Executive Summary

In January 2013 Save the Children International's country office in Kosovo (SCiK) took over the management of three partners from Save the Children Sweden's former Europe Regional Program. These partners are the Child Rights Centre in Serbia (CRC), the Children's Rights Information Centre in Moldova (CRIC), and Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU). Since then these organizations compose the regional program of SCiK, supported by SC Sweden. This evaluation covers the first period of the regional program (2013-2015) and the assignment is to analyze the performance of the organizations in relation to:

1. The regional program and the outcome of the advocacy work at regional level.
2. The relevance of the achievements in each country context in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
3. SCiK's support to the development of the organizations' competence and capacity during the period.

The most important findings in relation to the above points are presented below.

The regional program and the outcome of the advocacy work at regional level: The regional program started with SCiK taking over the administration of SC Sweden's former partners in the context of a new international entity, Save the Children International. This demanded from SCiK to adjust to and monitor the implementation of new administrative routines that came with the new international structure, and to start walking in the shoes of a highly appreciated donor. SC Sweden and Sida remain as donors and SC Sweden has continuously backed up with technical support during the period. However, discussions with CRC, CRIC and WCU indicate that the new regional program is owned by SC, but not by the organizations in the program. This had implications for what could come out of SCiK's ambitions with advocacy work at regional level.

The relevance of the achievements in each country context in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability: *Effectiveness* is in this evaluation understood as *doing the right thing* in relation to working with policy as well as practice in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means working at both national and local level, or work in a tight relationship with other organizations at different levels. The coalitions in Serbia and Ukraine might have a potential for developing comprehensive programs for children's rights, building on expertise from local to national level. Alternatively, to improve their own effectiveness, the Child Rights Centre in Serbia and Women's Consortium in Ukraine might have to develop more focused strategies with national level advocacy combined with local level monitoring and implementation. Here, CRIC's program in Moldova is the most comprehensive within the area that the organization works, with strong links between policy and practice.

Efficiency is related to strengthening civil society organizations to *do it right*, which here means to do their work with higher quality. The purpose of Organizational Capacity Development is to strengthen civil society organizations in their own right and has been a key component of SC's support during the period. While administrative and financial procedures are important, organizational development is also dependent on democratic structures. The development of an organization as a strong civil society actor requires an open and democratic dialogue in learning processes that cover voices from staff as well as target groups. Democratic internal structures as an aspect of OCD might need to be better understood by the partners of SC – and perhaps also by SC staff.

Sustainability is interpreted as what may remain of an organization's achievement when the scaffolding is removed, and in this evaluation the focus is on *child rights based approaches and attitudes*. Strong links between policy and practice will not change much if practice is not grounded in the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. There are various examples of how the organizations work with an approach that is guided by the general principles in research, when working with capacity building of adults and in child-led monitoring of children's rights. When working with children's participation one challenge is to make sure that groups include girls and boys whose perspectives are rarely taken into consideration and who are often discriminated. This is an area of work that constantly needs to be reflected upon. The question to repeatedly ask oneself is: in whose interest do children participate?

SCiK's support to the development of the organizations' competence and capacity during the period: SC Sweden and SCiK are highly appreciated for the empowerment of the organizations via the OCD-support. While other donors are perceived to impose their areas of interest, requesting specific results in relation to that interest, SC Sweden is commended for always having acted with respect for the perspectives and experiences of the local organization. Interests are shared in dialogue and are adapted to the partner's competence, knowledge and own interests. Furthermore, SC is appreciated as the international organization most visible in child protection.

In general, the regional meetings and workshops organized by SCiK are perceived to be useful and inspiring. The many opportunities for capacity building are appreciated, while sometimes perceived as too much of a good thing. SCiK is very ambitious in its efforts to give the organizations in the program what they need in order to develop and become stronger in their respective national contexts. The impression is that SCiK might even work a little bit too hard, which may result in overlooking the importance of listening to what the organizations' needs are. The continuous support from SC Sweden is important for SCiK to reach out to other actors in the future, and to absorb and interpret experiences and ways of working in the sensitive and challenging areas in which SCiK and the partners in the regional program work.

1. Introduction

Save the Children Sweden (SC Sweden) began supporting organizations and emerging Save the Children (SC) members in Eastern Europe in 1990 and established a Europe Regional Program in 2006. In 2009 SC Sweden became the managing member of SC's office in Kosovo. In 2012 the office in Kosovo was transformed into a Save the Children International country office (SCiK), and SC Sweden closed the Europe Regional Program, which until then had included SC members and partners in the Baltic States, Central Europe, and the Balkans. In January 2013 SCiK took over the management of those partners of SC Sweden's former Europe Program that now qualified for financial support from Sida's Civil Society Organization Appropriation Grant. These partners are the Child Rights Centre in Serbia (CRC), the Children's Rights Information Centre in Moldova (CRIC), and Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU). These organizations became the regional program of SCiK, supported by SC Sweden.

During the period 2013-2015 the support to the above organizations focused on the following general outcomes: More Children actively participate in the monitoring of the Child Rights Convention; More Civil Society Organizations have the capacity to independently influence Governments to fulfil with the CRC, and Schools and Education Departments are better equipped to respond to cases of violence between children. Strategic priorities were:

- Development and dissemination of monitoring and follow up, including child-led monitoring, on the UNCRC monitoring process.
- Joint advocacy based on data from Child Rights Situation Analyses and assessments of General Measures of Implementation.
- Organizational Capacity Development.

1.1 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covers the period 2013-2015, and the assignment is to analyze the performance of the three organizations - Child Rights Centre (CRC), Serbia; Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), Moldova; Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU) – in relation to:

- The regional program and the outcome of the advocacy work at regional level. Has the voice of civil society become stronger in the region, and have coordination and collaboration between national and regional coalitions improved and created synergies?
- The relevance of the achievements in each country context in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, including major challenges and how these were addressed, the main success stories and whether these could be replicated elsewhere.
- SCiK's support to the development of partner organizations' competence and capacity during the period.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation is based on a desk review and interviews with staff of the organizations and their partners. The desk review covered the following materials:

- SCiK regional plans and annual reports, consisting of compilations of the three organizations' individual plans and reports
- External Assessments
- Publications and reports available in English.

Visits to Moldova and Serbia took place in late June/early July 2016, and visits to Ukraine and Kosovo took place in mid-August. The visits to Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine lasted three working days. Interviews were arranged following a general request by the evaluator and by choice of the

organization. The evaluator met with local and national partners from government authorities and civil society, with the exception of Ukraine where no meetings could be arranged with government representatives. All visits included meetings with children engaged with the organization. One full day was spent with the staff of the organization working with the SC Sweden funded projects (split into two half days at the beginning and the end of the visit). The last visit was made to Kosovo to share impressions and reflections so far, a visit that was requested by the evaluator. This visit lasted two days and included a meeting with one local partner of SCiK and a group of children, as suggested by SCiK. All interviews followed a semi-structured format with open-ended questions that evolved around important achievements as perceived by the organization and its partners, challenges, regional perspectives and the support from SC. Additional information on SC Sweden's role and support was collected from Ulla Armyr and Andreas Dolk at SC Sweden's Head Office in Stockholm.

1.3 The structure of this report

The report begins with an account of the achievements and challenges as perceived by the three organizations. The organizations are presented in alphabetical order and the chapter begins with the Child Rights Centre (CRC) followed by Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), and Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU).

The presentations are identically structured under the headings 1) Work with legal and policy frameworks, 2) Child Rights Monitoring via the National Coalition, 3) "Child-led" monitoring, 4) Capacity Building, and 5) Regional Collaboration. These headings capture the expected general outcome and strategic priorities of SC Sweden's support during the period. On these separate descriptions of organizational achievements follows a presentation of a quite uniform account of the organizations' relationships with SC and the support that SC offers.

The next chapter consists of an analysis and discussion on the achievements and challenges as perceived by the organizations. The analysis is based on the notions 'effectiveness', 'efficiency' and 'sustainability'. Effectiveness is in this context understood as *doing the right thing* in relation to working with policy as well as practice in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Efficiency is related to strengthening civil society organizations to *do it right*, which here means to do their work with higher quality. Sustainability is interpreted as what may remain of an organization's achievement when the scaffolding is removed, and the focus here is on *a child rights based approach and attitudes*. These must be grounded in the general principles of the UN Convention in order to make children's rights real in their daily lives. Lastly, the chapter discusses the regional perspectives of the program during the period 2013-2015.

Finally, some recommendations are suggested for the future based on the reality check that this evaluation offers SC and its partners in the regional program.

2. Achievements

2.1 Child Rights Centre (CRC), Serbia

Introduction

Child Rights Centre started in 1997. It consists of a group of 6 lawyers and 3 administrative staff in its core team and a professional network of around 60-70 people from fields like law, psychology, education, and social work. The Centre draws on the various fields of expertise in the professional network to contribute in working groups for amending legal texts, as trainers, lecturers, and for presentations at conferences. The Centre is also supported by an Assembly (45 people) and a Board (5 people) providing input and feed back to the development of plans, strategies and activities of the Centre. The Supervisory Board (3 people) oversees the implementation of the Statute of the Centre and reviews its financial report.

Child Rights Centre works primarily at national level. Its main expertise lies in the integration of the rights of the child in the legal framework and in policies for implementation of the Convention. The Centre is recognized as the expert organization on legal and policy perspectives of children's rights in Serbia, and is considered to be highly professional and reliable.

Work with legal and policy frameworks

The Centre is often the initiator of processes for creating or amending laws and protocols. These initiatives are generally preceded by research on which advocacy messages are built with recommendations for legal improvements. As the advocacy messages are supportive rather than antagonistic in their tone, they often have resulted in the invitation of CRC by government institutions to be involved in working groups for the development of laws and protocols. The most important areas of work during the period 2013-15 have been to establish a child friendly legal system and a policy framework for the protection of children against violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Child Rights Centre is very active in the field of Child Friendly Justice, which was considered by the organization to be a strategic area to focus on in Serbia's process of joining the European Union. A policy paper on Child Friendly Justice published by the Centre was used to lobby the EU delegation in Serbia and the EU Commission in Brussels. This resulted in The European Commission pointing to the importance of ensuring the implementation of a juvenile justice system that is in line with EU standards. Child Rights Centre is now involved with various governmental actors as well as being the main partner to UNICEF in transforming the existing justice system. The aim is to develop a child friendly system that respects the rights of the child in criminal as well as civil law, and in improving the cooperation between the justice system and the social protection system in criminal and civil proceedings.

Besides criminal and civil justice, the main area for Child Rights Centre's work during the period 2013-15 has been the development of a child friendly legal and policy framework for the protection of the child from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Inspired by Save the Children's work in Sweden against violence in sports and recreation activities, Child Rights Centre did a research study which confirmed that this is an area that should also be covered by a Protection Protocol. The Centre initiated a working group consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education (the Protection Unit), Ministry of Interior (the Police), the Sports Association, teachers and trainers in sport, lawyers, and psychologists. In addition, a consultancy process with focus group

discussions to influence the content of the protocol were held with youth athletes, their parents, sport professionals, journalists and other relevant actors. The result is a model protocol on the protection of children and youth from violence in recreational and sporting activities that is now in place. The protocol not only creates a legal framework but also calls for regulations to be developed for sports teachers and trainers on violence prevention in recreation and sports, a work which is waiting to be initiated.

Child Rights Monitoring and the National Coalition

Serbia has ratified eight out of nine core human rights conventions. Child Rights Centre is involved in several reporting processes to human rights bodies where a child rights perspective needs to be included, with the greatest efforts made in relation to the reporting processes to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Periodic Review.

The Centre's work to monitor children's rights in Serbia follows the cycle of the Human Rights Committees' calendars for general reports and optional protocols. The Centre is the main driver behind civil society's alternative reports to the CRC Committee. The Centre initiated an NGO Coalition for monitoring the rights of the child in 2007, when the first periodic report of the government to the CRC Committee was due, and the first alternative report was written. During November 2015 the Child Rights Centre in cooperation with the Coalition finalized the *Second and Third Alternative Periodic Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Serbia (2008 – 2014)*. In June 2016 the report was presented at the Pre-session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

An area where the Centre has recently identified a path to link national level monitoring with local level monitoring is in relation to free legal aid, a system which is undeveloped in the country. Besides learning from the experiences of a university institute whose law students provide free legal aid in family law and child rights, the Centre itself offers free legal aid on-line and over the phone twice a week. Furthermore, the Centre offers capacity building to a network of NGOs and municipalities involved in providing free legal aid. The plan is to more strategically use the Centre's free legal aid service to monitor the situation for vulnerable children and their families in different parts of the country, and their level of access to support from authorities.

Since the start, CRC has offered numerous trainings to build the capacity of the Coalition members in reporting procedures. Over the years some organizations have left, while others have grown with the Centre in the monitoring process. The Coalition is today stable with eight core members and a number of smaller local organizations. Coalition members have their own projects and research activities within their areas of expertise, but work in teams during the reporting process with others engaged in the same area of work. Coalition members sometimes collaborate in national level awareness raising campaigns and events and produce annual reports and reviews on current child rights issues. In local practical work, there is very little collaboration among the members. In an interview with staff from CRC and one of the Coalition members the need for the Coalition to work more on follow-up was discussed. There was a sense that the Coalition ought to become more practical, and ought to have more regular meetings and work more together. After promoting the Concluding Observations it should support the government with implementation. A question was whether the Coalition should become formalized with a MoU and an "operational unit".

“Child-led” monitoring

Some of the Coalition members organize groups of children as part of their activities (children aged 13-18 years). The first alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child included information from these groups on how children and young people perceive their rights. As part of the second reporting process, a group of children produced their own report, *Child Rights from the perspectives of children and youth*. With support from the Coalition the group lobbied the Government to include their findings in the government’s report to the CRC Committee. This resulted in the inclusion of children’s recommendations into the official report submitted in December 2014. For this reason, children were not part of civil society’s meeting with the Committee on the Rights of the Child that took place in June 2016, but will be heard during the official meeting in Geneva in early 2017, either by joining the government delegation or participating through a web link.

Children’s perspectives are not only heard in the formal monitoring processes of the Coalition, but are also included in the Centre’s approach to strengthen the legal and policy framework. For instance, in the effort to develop a Model Protocol on child protection in recreation and sports, children’s experiences and ideas were heard and taken into consideration by the Centre in the research foregoing the process, as well as in the focus groups discussions.

Child Rights Centre also has its “own” group of children and youth. In 2002, a group of youth who had attended a Media School organized by the Centre were organized into a Youth Club that was named *Children’s Service for Information and Culture – DX*. The purpose was to engage high school children in Belgrade in peer education, newsletters and radio programs targeting children and youth with information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the years the group has carried out various information and advocacy activities about children’s rights in the city of Belgrade and in social media. The DX Group was also involved in the two alternative reporting processes to the UN Committee where the group members have researched children’s perspectives on child rights in Serbia.

Another group that was founded by the Centre is *the Club for Healthy Changes*. It consist of 19 children and young adults with learning disabilities who have grown up moving between institutions, foster care homes and, in case of one of the members, even on the street. The activities of the Club are realized in cooperation with the NGO Centre for Social Preventive Activities (GRiG) that runs the Club on a weekly basis. The Club for Healthy Changes has been involved in capacity building, the development of resource materials and also in the national “child-led” monitoring process.

Capacity Building

In the Child Friendly Justice program mentioned above, capacity building is by UNICEF identified as essential for ensuring that children’s voices are heard and taken into account when determining their best interests within administrative and court proceedings. The cooperation with UNICEF in this area involves training of various professional groups who deal with criminal and civil proceedings, with the judges as central actors for the implementation of a child friendly justice system. During the spring of 2017, Child Rights Centre will assess the quality of the training of judges that is currently performed within the program.

The capacity building of professional groups is a work that is dependent on external funding to be realized, since the Government does not allocate such funds. Since 2015 there is no functional National

Plan of Action for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to CRC, this creates a serious risk for the implementation of children's rights in Serbia, and it will affect the allocations of resources for capacity building of professional groups. Today, training only takes place if funds are raised from external donors. Civil society organizations end up with a great responsibility for the capacity building of professional groups in what it means to respect the child as a rights holder. This is probably a challenge in all the countries in the regional program, not only Serbia.

One example of the lack of long term commitment from the Government is an inter-disciplinary training project carried out by CRC. The purpose was to develop the skills of professional groups on how to recognize signs of abuse and neglect of children with disabilities, and how to talk to children with disabilities. This project was carried out in ten municipalities, involving the members of the Club for Healthy Changes as co-trainers. The project stopped when the external funding came to an end. Another example is a multi-disciplinary training package for municipality level child protection that is available in support of the Child Protection Protocols that are developed within five Ministries (as described above), but that is not implemented due to lack of funds.

Regional Collaboration

Child Rights Centre works at different regional levels. On the European level the Centre has been very active to influence the agenda for Serbia's EU process in order that child rights issues be part of the legal standards requested by EU (for instance the child friendly justice project mentioned above). The Centre is also a member of Eurochild, which is considered to be a useful arena for information sharing and displaying of publications.

On a sub-regional level the Centre shares information and materials within an unofficial network of previous partners from the time SC had programs in Montenegro and Bosnia. With the UNICEF managed juvenile justice program the Centre is part of another network with similar organizations in the former Yugoslavia.

On a sub-sub regional level the Centre collaborates with Save the Children in Kosovo (SCiK) in northern Kosovo, where there is a majority of Serbian communities. The Centre has done a child rights situation analysis with SCiK that produced important information on violence against children and other child protection issues. As a result, a local NGO from Kosovo visited Serbia to learn about the experiences from working with child-led monitoring of the Convention. Child Rights Centre can, in cooperation with SCiK, function as a bridge between Serbian and Kosovan communities in North Kosovo.

2.2 Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), Moldova

Introduction

CRIC started as a group of volunteers disseminating information about the UN Convention on the rights of the child to school children. It registered as an NGO in 1999. In the early days CRIC worked to organize national level events (child forums, youth parliaments) where children could express concerns related to their rights on a national arena. An evaluation of this way of working with children's participation was made in 2004. The evaluation made clear to CRIC that working with national level events was not sustainable and contributed little to transforming society's way of understanding children as full human beings with competences, capacities and rights. Gradually, CRIC moved from working directly with children to transforming the legal framework and systems for implementing children's rights. Today, the work focuses on building capacity of professional groups. CRIC still works directly with children in some contexts, but doing so by simultaneously working to strengthen parents, teachers and other professionals within a functional child protection system. CRIC consists of 8 permanent full time staff, 1 part time staff and around 10 external experts involved as facilitators and consultants on specific events.

Work with legal and policy frameworks

Parallel to working with children on their rights and after registering as an NGO, CRIC soon started to work with advocacy for the legal framework to become rights based. In this process, the network of volunteers from the early days contributed to the establishment of good relations with staff within government institutions. For some years (2012-2015) the Ministry of Education (MoE) was headed by a Minister who realized that the regulations governing the education system needed to change to be in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The door was during this period more or less open to CRIC to contribute to the development of relevant laws and policies. In early 2014 a new Code of Education was introduced strengthening children's rights in the education system. CRIC has influenced the Code with regards to instructions on students' participation on the school board, teachers' use of positive discipline in the class room, and teachers' responsibility to identify, report and monitor cases of violence, abuse and neglect of children. The Code requires the revision or development of around 200 regulations, many of which are drafted by CRIC. This is ongoing work.

Together with the NGO partner National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (NCCAP) CRIC has developed a concept for an intersectoral protection mechanism for identification, monitoring and assistance to children victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking. The organizations spent five years advocating for this with the Ministries of Education, Social Protection, Health and Interior. The mechanism was approved in April 2014 and after that the Ministries started to work on adjusting the mechanism to their internal structures. A common referral form was developed to be used within all four ministerial structures. One staff of CRIC was employed by the MoE to develop its internal mechanism based on a pilot tested by CRIC in two districts. The education sector is the sector most open to training for implementation of the intersectoral mechanism, and this is the sector where the protection mechanism works best.

However, since the last few years Moldova is going through a period of political turbulence. The open-minded Minister of MoE had to step down in 2015 and CRIC's good relationship with the top-level administration came to an end. The current Minister is of the opinion that enough work is done in relation to child rights education and is skeptical to the high level of responsibility that now lies on the

education sector for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect. However, the Code and other relevant policies which are in place provide a framework within which CRIC continues to act. The mid-level management that was involved in the development of the new framework remains more or less the same. Thanks to this, CRIC continues to be consulted. The organization is involved in the formulation of policy matters and communications from the Ministry to regional and district level education authorities, and its' teaching materials are recommended by the National Council for Curriculum.

Child Rights Monitoring and the National Coalition

CRIC is a member of the board of the Alliance of NGOs and very often initiates and coordinates processes to develop common position papers on different issues. In 2015 CRIC supported the Alliance to develop a child protection policy and trained some members to start developing their own policies. In 2016 the coalition started working on the alternative report for the coming Periodic Report to the CRC Committee. CRIC is one of the leading NGOs in developing this report.

CRIC introduced the rights based approach to be used in the report and presented some tools, of which some but not all were appreciated by other NGOs. However, CRIC thinks that the competitive environment within civil society hampers the development of shared values based on an understanding of the Convention's general principles. For instance, the plan to build capacities of the organizations within the Alliance of NGOs to work with children's participation in the monitoring of children's rights did not materialize as expected during the period. CRIC collaborates with certain like-minded NGOs (including building their capacity on child rights based approaches, child participation, child protection policies) while others are not interested in transforming their work towards a participatory, child rights based approach. These NGOs tend to limit their response to donors' request for children's participation by organizing one-off events and consultations. CRIC is often asked to support them in organizing consultations with children, but only as isolated events. These kinds of requests are in general turned down by CRIC.

The staff of CRIC feels that the Alliance of NGOs currently is not open to develop a common agenda of shared issues. The majority of the NGOs do not want to work together. Instead they work on developing their own areas of expertise aiming at becoming stronger in the competition for donor funds. However, it is a sign of recognition of CRIC that the organization is always referred to when it comes to child participation.

"Child-led" monitoring

When Moldova submitted the second and third periodic report to the CRC Committee in 2008, children's perspectives were presented in a separate alternative report through a consultation process arranged by CRIC. With this first experience a *Working Group on Child Rights Monitoring*, a national group of children, was established by CRIC to follow up on children's rights in Moldova. Between 2008 and 2010 this group met regularly to monitor specific areas of rights, put together in a report on children's rights in Moldova published by CRIC in 2010. An external reviewer suggested to develop a de-centralized model of child led monitoring to allow for children's perspectives to influence local decision making. Thus, a third children's report (2012) was developed based on the work of local children's monitoring groups, with representatives coming together at national level in a *Reflection Group* facilitated by CRIC. An external review of that process indicated that children may be extremely vulnerable in their home environment, if they do not belong to a local group with adult support: having

learnt about their rights at national level, participant would return home to see what problems children in their own community faced, without having anyone to turn to.

CRIC acknowledges that even if local child led monitoring is important in many ways it is also an exercise involving potential risks for children who are involved. Children monitoring their own rights require support from adults, and these adults must understand children's competence but also their vulnerability and need of protection. This is especially so if children are pushed to claim rights by confronting decision makers (including teachers) who have not been sensitized on children's rights and/or feel they lose face through children's action. CRIC tries to handle this by making risk assessments together with teachers in civic education, with the Reflection Group at national level and together with school councils (see below). Children's groups talk about what issues they can discuss freely among themselves and what they can say to authorities.

Strengthen children's participation through existing structures

A model structure has been developed by CRIC for school councils that could form the basis for local child led monitoring. This structure was handed over to MoE, but has during the period 2013-15 not developed as anticipated. There are few school councils at regional and local level that respect the basic requirements for child participation. At the level of school, councils generally deal with extra-curricular activities (sports and culture) and are not involved in any serious decision making. Another project testing whether school administrations could take over the responsibility for school councils as local monitoring groups also failed. Therefore, the plan for the period 2013-15 was to build the capacity of local NGOs to support child led monitoring groups, a plan that could not materialize, as described above.

The area where CRIC systematically has worked with local child led monitoring groups during the period is via the civic education program in school. This is the subject where students learn about children's and human rights. As part of these classes, students are supported to monitor one small aspect of a right, to discuss it with adults in the community, write complaints if relevant and discuss these with authorities. The students learn to develop indicators and tools for monitoring children's rights in their own community. This exercise makes abstract rights real to children. They get in contact with duty bearers and are supported in formulating their concerns and ideas in relation to local problems they identify.

Child-led monitoring also takes place within the National Tournament on Children's Rights which is organized every year by the MoE (based on an initiative by CRIC), which is linked to the child led monitoring groups in civic education classes. The tournament runs throughout the school year and groups of children from schools all over the country participate in the "competition". Thus, monitoring becomes part of the national tournament, and the tournament contributes to the local monitoring of rights.

Capacity Building

CRIC puts most of its time and resources on the implementation of education policies. With the new Code on Education that is quite radical with regards to children's participation and child protection, there is a huge gap between policy and practice. The education sector is also identified as the key sector for CRIC's support in implementing the intersectoral child protection mechanism. With NCCAP CRIC has worked in nine districts to develop a specific training model for the intersectoral mechanism (involving police, health, education and social protection) on child rights and child protection.

CRIC works continuously on child rights training and capacity building of teachers in civic education and school managers to try out training materials and methods that will strengthen a respectful and protective environment in the school and local community. CRIC's strategy is to have a long term presence in districts where training programs on child rights and child protection take place in order to better support teachers in the education system. The organization works with a network of district level coordinators and teacher trainers in testing and developing in-service training programs on child protection and on child rights in civic education.

After the initial training program participants often share that they have got insights at a personal level. However, this is not enough to enable teachers to translate new methods into the teaching situation. Change takes time, which is also confirmed by the experiences made by the members of the Reflection Group, who come from districts where teachers who have been through the initial training quickly return to the authoritarian methods which are routine within the educational system, when back in the class room. Adult attitudes towards children take time to change and short training programs will not make enough difference. Therefore, in two districts CRIC works with the district education authorities to develop a longer term in-service training for teachers in civic education, including materials, techniques and practical support during training of trainer sessions. A challenge for the future is how to make the child rights training integrated into the general curriculum and into the pre-service training of teachers.

A participatory approach

CRIC is respected for its work with children's participation and a few words need to be added on CRIC's participatory approach, which guides its work with children as well as with adults. CRIC has a democratic philosophy and its' approach is participatory in all activities. In training of professional groups, the organization establishes long term relationships of trust in order for participants to become open and honest about their situation. For instance, in dialogue with teachers, training materials are adapted to local needs, teachers' working reality and their relative marginalization in the education system. According to CRIC, adapting the training to teachers (or any other group) requires *being there* in order to understand and build the training around the challenges that participants face. A good and respectful relationship is necessary for people to be open about their situation, their fears and hopes. Trainers must acknowledge that teachers are individuals whose rights in many ways are also not protected in society. A participatory approach in all activities demonstrates respect for the individual which translates into a general human rights based approach – not only rights for children but also for the adults around the child for whom the state must create an enabling environment. When CRIC “walks the talk” and teachers feel that they are listened to, teachers learn that they can also listen to the pupils in the class room and to parents in the community.

Regional Collaboration

CRIC does not work with a regional level perspective in its advocacy and is not member of any regional network, except for SC's regional program.

During the period, CRIC has travelled a few times to Ukraine to support WCU with capacity building on children's participation in educational settings. CRIC is currently involved with UNICEF in a capacity building project in Turkmenistan.

2.3 Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU)

Introduction

WCU registered as a separate entity in 2001. The original network of WCU consisted of social service providers at community level. Slowly it started to talk about women's rights, with a focus on human trafficking and domestic violence. In these challenging situations not only the woman but the whole family is affected. Therefore, it became normal to also think of how children were affected. Since 2002 children's rights have been included in the work of WCU. WCU coordinates two networks, one on women's rights (35 NGOs in 22 regions) and one on children's rights, consisting of 18 NGOs in 7 regions.

WCU consists of 6 full time staff of which two work with the thematic areas child rights governance and child protection. The Board consists of 7 members that supervise the work of WCU.

Work with legal and policy frameworks

Already before working with children's rights WCU had the practice of working with Members of Parliament (MP) to influence the legislative framework with regards to women's rights and gender issues. As it turned out, it was easier to work with MP on children's rights than women's rights, since children do not threaten male MP in their individual work situation. The responsibility for implementing children's rights lies with the Cabinet of Ministers, and MP has the power to request information and reports on the implementation process. Furthermore, Parliamentarian Committees have the authority to introduce recommendations which should be taken into account in plans developed by the Cabinet in their respective areas. Therefore, the advocacy work of WCU is focused towards supporting MP in their requests to the Cabinet, and in amending policies developed by the Cabinet.

A new National Plan of Action for the implementation of children's rights is currently being developed covering the years 2017-2027, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Policy. The process is not well handled and it is difficult to follow what is happening. The work to influence this process seems to follow the same procedure as described above. Not until the Plan reaches the Parliament can WCU start mobilize for advocacy towards MPs. WCU together with the Child Rights Coalition (see below) will then initiate press conferences, arrange round tables involving public agencies and civil society, and suggest amendments to the plan. In October 2016, the Coalition plans to hold meeting and discussions with the Ministry of Social Policy concerning the design of the National Action Plan. In this way they hope to improve the cooperation between the Ministry and civil society in drafting the plan.

The development of the country's Human Rights strategy follows a different process. The Ministry of Justice is in charge of this process, and already from the start the ministry cooperated with a renowned Human Rights organization. Thematic working groups have been organized involving public agencies and NGOs who all have been engaged in developing the vision, the objectives and activities of each thematic field. WCU and the Coalition has been involved in the drafting of the child rights section of the strategy. This process demonstrates a change in the culture of cooperation between the Government, the public sector and civil society, according to WCU.

Child Rights Monitoring and the National Coalition

The Child Rights Coalition started as an informal group that engaged in the process to write the Alternative Report to the Government's Third and Fourth Periodic Report, submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2008. When asking the Government for the Concluding Observations from

the first report to the Committee, these could not be found - this demonstrates the level of interest for children's rights at the time, according to WCU. When the new Concluding Observations arrived in 2011 the Coalition decided to follow up on the recommendations, and decided to formalize the Coalition, albeit not register it as a legal entity.

Every year the Coalition conducts monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A problem is that there are not enough changes on a one year basis to come up with something new when using the same method for data collection every year (questions are distributed to all members and they collect information from their respective areas of expertise). In 2012 the Coalition developed a strategic plan with four priority areas which should be monitored in-depth. This was done with support from SC Sweden. However, only one such specialized report has been published so far, *The Rights of the Child in transit detention centers of Ukraine. Conclusions and Recommendations* (2013). As a result of this report, five out of eight detentions centers have closed and rights based reforms to the placement procedures are developed. The reason for why the plan with priority areas for in-depth studies has not moved on is that it is difficult to find the financial support to carry out the research. Since the Coalition is not registered as an entity it cannot seek funds. Organizations have to apply individually for financial support for the monitoring, which seems to be difficult.

Since 2012 Oksana Moskalenko, the Child Rights Program Coordinator at WCU, is on the Coalition's Coordination Council. Three people from different organizations sit on the council, and work on a voluntary basis for the Coalition. The positions are supposed to rotate on an annual basis, but for the last years they have not, and Oksana is in charge of most of the coordination work. The plan is that the Coalition Council will expand from 3 to 4 people, since more organizations have joined and there is a need to find more efficient ways to coordinate via for instance the website and social media, which need to be updated regularly. Furthermore, principles for membership and procedures for application need to be developed. If registered as an entity, the Coordination Council could organize joint capacity building and project proposal writing.

Today, the Coalition mostly does advocacy and monitoring with limited focus on capacity building. Activities are based on the actions of a smaller number of organizations within the Coalition, with the same people always showing up on a voluntary basis. WCU is influential thanks to the funds it provides and the large amount of work Oksana spends on coordination. She tries to hold back on her views in order not to silence others, but Oksana believes that if the Coalition continues doing only monitoring and advocacy, the current size and format is optimal. If the Coalition is smaller it can do a qualitatively better work in relation to for instance children's participation in monitoring. If the Coalition will grow it needs to be further formalized and registered, in order to get the necessary funding for coordination. Today there are 18 members. Eleven of them are active. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed to be signed by those who want to stay as members of the Coalition.

Due to WCU's strong engagement in the Coalition, there is a risk that the Coalition is perceived to "belong" to WCU. This is a problem when WCU is not on speaking terms with important actors, like for instance UNICEF. Preparatory work on the next Alternative Report will start in 2017. UNICEF will as usual take active part in supporting the alternative report. However, WCU will probably not be suggested by UNICEF to take a leading role since the relations with UNICEF are not the best. There is a risk that the identification of the Coalition with WCU may turn out to disqualify other members of the Coalition from being accepted as leads in the alternative reporting process.

“Child-led” monitoring

Child participation was one of the in-depth monitoring areas that the Coalition decided to engage with in 2012, but that has not yet materialized. Thus, the national monitoring of children’s rights seems so far not to have included children’s own perspectives on the situation in the country.

However, WCU was inspired by the Swedish experience of the Young Voices Survey which was presented in a SCiK-arranged Summer School in Albania 2015. Young Voices is a research model to seek information from children on how they perceive the situation of their daily lives in various fields. WCU piloted a small research where children who had participated in the Summer School disseminated the model questionnaire, with some small amendments suggested by the children, to their class mates. The results were compiled by professionals and discussed with children, who were also involved in developing recommendations based on the findings, and participated in a press conference arranged by WCU.

Next year the research model will be implemented on a national scale. For this purpose, WCU arranged a national summer school in June 2016 with 23 children who hopefully all will be involved in further amending the model questionnaire and disseminate it among their peers in school. The child-led dissemination will be complemented by a dissemination led by university students to guarantee that the data can be statistically secured in terms of size and coverage. The plan is to once again have the children engaged in developing recommendations related to children’s rights based on the analysis of data.

Capacity Building

In 2009 WCU decided together with SC Sweden to engage in the area of bullying, or violence between children in school. A study on how children experience violence in Ukrainian schools was carried out with the consent of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). There are regulations that prohibit VAC in general, but no specific regulations for educational environments. The MoES chose not to participate when the study results were officially presented. Nevertheless, WCU found out that the MoES subsequently had sent out a decree to all schools to “do something” about the situation. However, the decree was not followed by any instructions or resources.

WCU developed a training model to increase teachers’ skills and competence to identify, understand and handle different forms of violence in school. The model has been piloted in four schools during 2013-15. WCU is now in the procedure to have the model qualified by the MoE for use in advanced as well as pre-service training of teachers. A Training of Trainers will soon take place with participation from Coalition members and postgraduate educational facilities in the Kiev region. The plan is to have the trainers identify six trainees among the participants who in their turn will carry out one training each, with the aim to inspire more schools to start working with this model to prevent violence in schools.

As part of the evaluation, a visit was organized to one of the pilot schools, Bila Tserkva. This school was the first in Ukraine to introduce inclusive education in the year 2000. The headmaster emphasizes the complementarities between the “violence project” provided by WCU and the inclusive education philosophy. The project has helped teachers to distinguish violence in its various forms and to understand that addressing violence always has to be a primary issue on the agenda of the school. In a report WCU notes that students are not yet involved in the development of the overall school plans, only in assessing their implementation. This is due to child participation not being included as a

component of the training program, which was considered to be a too radical step by WCU. However, when describing what they have learned from the project during the visit, teachers describe a participatory approach involving the listening to all parties' perspectives in the conflict and the use of this information in the process of resolving the conflict. For an outsider, it is hard to discern what insights have come with the project and what was already there as an overall approach inherent to inclusive education. However, it is clear that the staff of this school have a respectful, participatory and non-judgmental approach in their work with children and their parents.

Regional Collaboration

There is a regional coalition called the Child Pact Coalition of The Black Sea Region. The Child Rights Coalition has applied for membership in this regional coalition, but the application has not been reviewed yet and the process as slowed down lately, perhaps as a consequence of the political instability and tension on the Crimean Peninsula.

During the period, WCU worked together with CRIN and collected information about unaccompanied children from CIS countries for CRIN. WCU also organized a presentation and discussion of CRIN's report (November 2014) with representatives of the embassies of Moldova and Tajikistan. The event was attended by civil society organizations working in Russia and Moldova.

WCU is supported by CRIC with capacity building in the school project.

2.4 About Save the Children's support

The support from SC is highly valued by all three organizations. In unison they express the importance of SC's support when working with sensitive issues like violence against children. SC is always ready to back up with experiences from other parts of the world and, if necessary, by being present at events of crucial importance. SC is appreciated as the international organization most visible in child protection.

The three organizations all have experience from many years of relationships with the SC family. All agree that SC Sweden is different from other donors: "it is not only a donor, it is a partner". While other donors are perceived to impose their areas of interest on the organization requesting specific results in relation to that interest, SC Sweden listens and tries to find ways to support. The interests of SC are shared in dialogue and are adapted to the partner's competence, knowledge and own interests. SC Sweden acts with respect for the perspectives and experiences of the local organization. Practices are not imposed and the organization can adapt material developed by SC to its context.

The partnership with SC Sweden began at different times, but the organizations all have been part of SC Sweden's Europe Regional Program. Before 2012 this program also included SC members and organizations in the Baltic States, Central Europe, and the Balkans, many of whom are no longer eligible for financial support from Sida. With the transition to one international entity in 2012 (Save the Children International) SC's office in Kosovo (SCiK) took over the management of the support to CRC, CRIC and WCU, which today form part of the regional program. SCiK that used to be one in the group of partners in SC Sweden's Regional Program, is now taking on a supervisory role of the other organizations.

SCiK continues the tradition of SC Sweden to arrange regional meetings and workshops, sometimes also inviting other partners to the organizations in the regional program. The regional meetings are much appreciated as providing opportunities to exchange experiences, learn about different tools and learn from each others' practice from using these tools. During the days when the regional program was bigger there was a larger basket of experiences to pick from and in that sense the regional meetings are more limited today, but step by step the organizations are getting used to the new situation. New relationships are developing and the communication is improving.

The organizations have developed their internal relationships also outside the meetings and workshops organized by SCiK, and sometimes turn to each other for support. Especially CRIC seems to be appreciated by the others for its competence in working with children's participation. CRC in Serbia and SCiK have worked closely together in the sub-region where CRC has a role in contributing to building bridges between Serbian and Kosovan communities in the northern parts of Kosovo. Children's groups in Serbia and Kosovo have met. SCiK has also organized summer camps three years in a row where children from Kosovo, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine come together to learn and share.

Organizational Capacity Development

In addition to partner meetings and various types of capacity building workshops and trainings, SC Sweden (and Sida) support civil society organizations with Organizational Capacity Development (OCD). The overall objective for OCD is to strengthen civil society in its watch dog function for human rights, give voice and support to marginalized groups and monitor governments. For this purpose, organizations may need to develop their competence and capacity. All three organizations in the regional program comment that very few (if any) donors provide this kind of capacity building and

administrative support. SC is highly appreciated for providing support for the empowerment of the organizations.

In SC Sweden's application to Sida for the period 2013-2015 it is stated that a partner organization of SC Sweden must have, or be willing to develop:

1) Democratic internal structures; 2) Necessary administrative and financial procedures in place for receiving and effectively and correctly report on utilization of funds, if relevant; 3) Institutional transparency; and 4) Fundraising strategies for financial sustainability.

As part of the OCD framework, each organization in the regional program began with a holistic analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. Based on this assessment, each identified their prioritized areas of improvement, and all report successfully implemented activities during the period. For CRC in Serbia this even resulted in a certificate "for the quality management system under the standards SRPS ISO 9001:2008 for the volume of certification Promotion, improvement and protection of child rights", obtained in April 2015. SCiK has monitored the OCD plans with regular visits to Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine.

3. To do the right thing and do it right

This chapter discusses the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the three organizations through an analysis of the characteristics of their work. The regional program as it is administered by SCiK is also commented upon.

3.1 Effectiveness: From policy to practice

It is important for organizations in the civil society to work at all levels in order to contribute to the transformation of society into one that respects the child as a full human being and a rights holder among other rights holders. Work for legal change is important for a sustainable framework but it will not have an impact on change for children if not combined with a capacity building that is relevant to the reality of adults, professional groups and care givers included. Among the organizations in the regional program, CRC focused a lot of its effort on improving the legal and policy framework during 2013-2015. This strategy may have limited effects if the work with policy change is not followed up on. Several of the informants in Serbia believe that the legal framework is sufficiently conducive to children's and adults' human rights by now, and that the main challenge for the future is the implementation of laws and protocols. Some staff and members of the Centre communicate a sense of not doing enough in the practical work to implement and monitor children's rights at local level. The impression is that CRC, when it comes to implementation, mostly relies on its professional network and that capacity building is not one of its core activities. The result is weak links between policy and practice which might reduce the effectiveness of the organization's work.

Having said this, it shall be acknowledged that the Centre has a plan to work in the field of free legal aid to establish a more continuous monitoring of the implementation of children's rights at local level, including capacity building of professionals engaged in free legal aid. This kind of work might in fact end up being more effective in putting pressure on the Government than the national monitoring following the UN system's monitoring process, especially since the Government never addressed any of the comments in the Concluding Observations made on the Periodic Report from 2008.

The relationship between policy and practice is the opposite in Ukraine. Here, neither the Ministry of Education and Science nor regional or local educational authorities are involved in the implementation of the project to stop violence in schools. The legal framework on violence against children is unclear with no specific protocols regulating the educational setting. WCU wants to inspire educational authorities through demonstrating a model that includes capacity building of teachers and individual school plans to prevent and address violence between children in the school. The weak link is that WCU has not developed strategic relationships that can take the model to more schools or move it upstream in the educational system to influence the legal and policy framework. There is only hope that this will happen. The strategy of WCU is to plant seeds in a field that might end up being infertile.

To be successful in creating change for children, you have to work at both national and local level, or work in a tight relationship with other organizations. It has to be a partnership based in a shared sense of ownership of the whole, even if each organization works within its area of expertise. Perhaps the coalitions in Serbia and Ukraine have the potential for developing comprehensive programs for children's rights, building on expertise from local to national level. Both coalitions are currently engaged in discussions on how to strengthen the common work. Alternatively, to improve their effectiveness, CRC and WCU might have to develop more focused strategies with national level advocacy combined with local level monitoring and implementation.

In order to challenge an organization's traditional ways of working, space must be made available for regular reviews of what is done, the outcome so far and an open and critical discussion on whether this is the most effective way to contribute to sustainable improvements for children. Among the organizations in the regional program, CRIC is the one do this by systematically working with learning processes building on reflection and analysis on a regular basis (since many years back), with the result that CRIC's program is the most comprehensive within the area that the organization works, with strong links between policy and practice.

3.2 Efficiency: A democratic approach for a strong civil society

With the support for organizational capacity development, SC Sweden wants to strengthen civil society organizations in their own right. In general, partners tend to prioritize strengthening their financial sustainability and administrative capacity in their OCD plan while improvement of the organization's democratic processes is seldom prioritized. In combination with administrative and financial procedures (which are certainly important for an organization's stability), organizational development is dependent on democratic structures. The point is not to create democratic structures with memberships and branches from local to national level like the traditional civil society organizations in Sweden. Instead, what is important is the *internal democratic process*. A democratic process is at the core of the learning process of an organization, when understood as listening and learning with respect for children's and adults experiences in the work. The development and improvement of an organization's work cannot take place without this kind of open and democratic dialogue, which covers voices from the staff as well as the target groups. Democratic internal structures as an aspect of OCD might need to be better explained in order to be well understood by the partners of SC Sweden.

Taking the democratic process one step further, an organization that has an approach of listening and taking into account different perspectives before moving forward, may also in the longer term contribute to a more democratic society. It might not even be realized among SC staff that with a respectful approach in the relationship between SC and the organizations it supports, you set an example of what it means to work in a democratic tradition. This is explicitly pointed out by Maria Alekseyenko, the chairperson of WCU:

If we have a relation like this with our donor, we can also have this relation with our partners in the Coalition. We never try to pressure others. All organizations can influence the process.

This comment on how WCU acts more democratically in relation to members of the Coalition thanks to a democratic relationship with SC, demonstrates that the organizations in the regional program may all make a difference by the way they *do and live* democracy in their daily work.

From this perspective, it is unfortunate that CRIC seems to have "given up" on some of the members of the Alliance of NGOs in Moldova (while still having a good working relationship with others). CRIC's approach to the stakeholders in its program is to meet them where they are. Would it be possible to have the same approach with members of the Alliance and try to meet them where they are in their attitudes and constraints in action? One of the staff said that when the next Alternative Report to the UN Committee is due, they will make a new effort to make the members of the Alliance understand CRIC's participatory approach. Maybe this needs to be foregone by a self-critical analysis of what CRIC itself can do differently to reach out to the members of the Alliance.

Strengthen Coalitions

What is the responsibility of CRC, CRIC and WCU to strengthen national coalitions for a stronger civil society voice for children's rights? In Serbia and Ukraine the collaboration with other NGOs is focused on advocacy for legal and policy change. In Serbia the collaboration focuses on the periodic reporting to the UN Committee while in Ukraine the Coalition works continuously with advocacy efforts towards the Parliament. In Moldova the Alliance is more divided and does not always speak with one voice.

Is there reason to question what expectations can be placed on SC's partners when it comes to strengthening other NGOs within civil society? For instance, how much time and energy must CRIC spend on organizations that are not interested in a participatory approach? WCU experiences a different kind of challenge as it has taken on a heavy burden to coordinate the work of the Coalition in Ukraine. Individual members of the Coalition monitors the Parliament based on their specific interests, but all advocacy work towards the Parliament is carried out in the name of the Coalition and is coordinated by WCU. For WCU, this creates an ad hoc character of advocacy that holds back WCU's own strategic advocacy work. Lastly, is it realistic to think that coalitions will be able to develop comprehensive programs covering policy as well as practice instead of competing for donor money?

3.3 Sustainability: anchorage in the general principles

Strong links between policy and practice will not change much if practice is not grounded in the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The general principles must permeate any process as well as result that aims at strengthening children's rights. In the reporting formats that have been shared as background material to this evaluation, SC asks for information regarding non-discrimination, and children's participation is one of the fundamental goals of SC Sweden's work. Information on how partners handle the principle of the best interests of the child and the right to life, survival and development is not explicitly asked for.

Yet, a holistic management of the four principles seems to be in place in at least some of the organizations' achievements. The research of CRC in Serbia seems to be well grounded in all principles. In developing the Model Protocol on child protection in recreation and sports, CRC demonstrates the importance of listening to those whose lives are affected by the protocol: in the process of assessing what children's best interests could be in the context of preventing and addressing violence in recreational and sports activities, children's experiences and ideas are heard and taken into consideration. Another example is the development of the booklet *'Nobody is allowed to harm you'*. A book for children and young people to help them understand what abuse and neglect means (2015). The booklet is developed together with the Club for Healthy Changes. This group of children and young adults with learning disabilities has probably all experience from the many examples of harm the booklet covers: from corporal punishment and sexual abuse to emotional harm, humiliation, peer isolation and physical and emotional neglect. But the booklet is not about children with disabilities. It turns to every child with great empathy for how it feels to be subject to any of the forms of harm presented in the text. What makes this booklet so important is that it is written based on the accounts of a marginalized group of children, without further stigmatizing this group by pointing them out in the text.

CRIC's approach in addressing discriminatory attitudes is to work with creating a "positive identity" aiming at positive attitudes towards children and between children (this is done within civic education). Even when aiming at the inclusion of specific groups (like children with disabilities or children of Roma

origin) the approach communicated in the training of teachers is to work with all children to increase the appreciation of diversity and increase the understanding that a child's personal conditions affect him/her in various ways within the education system. This approach is also taken by the teachers in Bila Tserkva, one of the pilot schools of WCU (the school that also works with inclusive education). A teacher explains that the weekly morning meeting in primary school always includes "the child of the week". The class talks about that child's strengths and the child presents something s/he likes and is good at, and the parents are invited to share nice stories about the child. This way, every child learns to see all children in the class in a positive light, regardless of abilities.

In child-led local monitoring the challenge is to make sure that the monitoring group includes girls and boys whose perspectives are rarely taken into consideration and who are often discriminated. CRIC supports a selection process where questions like "Who are usually excluded? What can be done to support their participation?" are asked to ensure that there is a balance of experience in the group. In this process children may suggest situations that are not necessarily in the minds of adults, like children with parents abroad, with alcoholic parents, single parents, or children with low marks.

In this context the DX Group in Serbia stands out as a less inspiring example. Since its start in 2002, the group gradually renews as its members turn 18. However, members are self-selected and only come from central Belgrade schools, from an urban middle class that is relatively privileged. Furthermore, the messages of the DX Group seem not to have been followed up on or become integrated into the Centre's work. The impression is that this is a project to educate children rather than to empower them, a conventional adult approach to children's participation. The Centre should, with its level of professionalism, have left this kind of approach behind.

In whose interest do children participate?

International research that has looked into different kinds of "child participation projects" from all over the world concludes that children's messages tend to emanate from the political agenda of the NGO behind the participation project¹. These kinds of projects could also be called demonstration projects. Demonstration projects tend to be related to the marketing of an NGO towards donors, which over the years have become very keen on children's participation as a component of projects they support. CRIC describes this situation in Moldova, where child participation projects create frustration and obstruct CRIC's relationship with other NGOs in the country.

A demonstration project might empower children on a personal level and may be useful with adults who don't see children's needs, but it does little to change power relations and the respect for children as full human beings. In fact, the research model *Young Voices*, developed by SC Sweden, may belong to this approach, depending on how it is handled. SC in Kosovo and WCU in Ukraine are piloting the model, with the aim to know on a national scale what children in the country think about different issues. The questionnaire was originally developed in a participatory way in Sweden, and probably resulted in an empowered group of children back there. However, when the model is replicated in other countries it loses one important aspect of the process. Giving children the chance to discuss and comment on the model questionnaire is not the same as being involved in developing it. Therefore, the focus end up being more on the result than on the process. Thus, when carrying out this research project, the organizations in Kosovo and Ukraine have to strike a balance between working with

¹ Thomas, Nigel (2007) Towards a Theory of Children's Participation. In *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 15:199-218.

children as objects of information and children as subjects with knowledge, in order to create synergies that may lead to the empowerment of children as active participants in society.

What is argued here is not that information about children's situation based on their own account is not important. What is argued is that this is not an activity for creating change in terms of children's participation. Even if it is relevant to demonstrate that children have important things to say, in order for national level participation to be sustainable in respecting children as rights holders and full members of society, children's participation must be anchored at local level.

3.4 Save the Children in Kosovo and the Regional Program

In the new SC International organization, SCiK took over the donor slash partner position of SC Sweden and became the manager of SC Sweden's regional program. The transition period lasted for one year and included technical support of various sorts from SC Sweden. This was not an easy task for SCiK. The situation not only demanded from SCiK to adjust to and monitor the implementation of new administrative routines that came with the new international entity, but also to start walking in the shoes of a highly appreciated donor slash partner. Furthermore, the regional program now had diminished and did no longer offer the broad spectrum of experiences as did the old SC Sweden Europe Regional Program. The discussions with CRC, CRIC and WCU indicate that during the period 2013-2015 the regional program has been owned by SC, but not by the organizations in the program. This had implications for what could come out of SCiK's ambitions with the regional program.

It is hard to take over someone else's coat. To work with regional programs is a concept that is more or less unique to SC Sweden within the SC family. SCiK had to begin recutting the coat to make it fit with its own idea of what is a regional program, a tailoring that is still ongoing. SCiK is very ambitious in its efforts to give the organizations in the program what they need in order to develop and become stronger in their respective national contexts, and SC Sweden is backing up with technical support. The impression is that SCiK might even work a little bit too hard, which may result in overlooking the importance of listening to what the organizations' needs are.

In general, the regional meetings and workshops are perceived to be useful and inspiring. But while several persons comment that the sharing of experiences is interesting, others mention that little substance comes out of this kind of activity. The many opportunities for capacity building are appreciated, while sometimes perceived as too much of a good thing. How to absorb everything? What to pick from the "smorgasbord"? A question that comes to mind is what the strategy is behind offering all these opportunities for capacity building.

Sharing of experiences is often perceived to be a way forward to inspire learning and replication of good practice among organizations. However, the three organizations in the regional program are quite different in what they do and how they go about it. The more advanced organization has less to learn, while the less advanced organization always is the learner. In such a situation sharing of experiences might work less well, if not properly guided. The situation may reinforce power imbalances in the group and hamper the development of new knowledge.

For SCiK the regional program is perceived to be an opportunity to advance children's rights in the region and strengthen the civil society in each country. During the period, SCiK wanted to "find joint advocacy messages to bring forward on a European level" with the organizations in the regional program. This objective has not been realized. CRC, CRIC and WCU don't see the usefulness of common

regional advocacy. None of the three organizations talk of themselves as actors in developing a regional program. Only CRC talks about regional relations and advocacy work, but this is in a context of influencing Serbia's application for EU membership. A question related to regional advocacy is who would be the target for regional advocacy messages? What room for manoeuvre does SCiK as a country office have for advocacy in Europe? The transition to SC International created turbulence during the period and made it hard for SCiK to act. It is clear that the continuous support from SC Sweden is paramount for SCiK to reach out to other actors in the European region, and to absorb other experiences in the sensitive and provocative areas in which SCiK and the partners in the regional program work.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations are kept on a regional programmatic level and do not go into organizational detail, with respect for the many dimensions of work of each organization that this evaluation could not cover within the time frame. Based on what the analysis has given in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, recommendations are therefore mainly directed to SCiK and SC Sweden. The question in focus is key considerations to take into account in the next phase of the regional program. How can SC best support and strengthen the organizations as partners in a regional program, in order that synergies are created and new knowledge is developed?

1. Success stories: Replication of processes - not of results

Success stories are tempting to replicate. However, if the focus of replication is on the results of a successful story without a full comprehension of the process that made it possible, the replication will not be fruitful. What needs to be replicated is the process, including the approach in the process, rather than the result. Successful processes for children's rights are anchored in the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is important because only then will they have an impact on the understanding of children as rights holders and towards making society respect children as full human beings. Therefore, it might be useful for the organizations to together explore the implications of the general principles in their work in order to become more explicit on how these principles as a whole (and not as four separate rights) inform what they do, and how the principles can guide learning processes.

2. How to create new knowledge for all in regional meetings

When levels of experience and ways of working are diverse, sharing of experiences may not be fruitful for the development of the kind of knowledge that each of the organization in the regional program can integrate into their work, regardless of level of competence and capacity. A suggestion is to initiate thematic inquiry based dialogues (Why? What? When?) in order to support the development of new knowledge. Inquiry based dialogues may for instance result in the development of a more strategic plan for capacity building of the organizations in the regional program.

3. Challenges relating to national coalitions are complex and rarely have easy answers. A recommendation is to put them on the table for critical discussions.

What role can be expected of the partners in strengthening national coalitions? Is there reason to question what expectations can be placed on SC's partners when it comes to strengthening other NGOs within civil society, especially when there is less interest in working with a rights based approach? Is it possible to develop joint strategies among coalition members for stronger links between policy and practice, national and local monitoring, and to ensure that legal and policy change make a difference in children's daily lives? Is it realistic to think that coalitions are able to develop comprehensive programs covering policy as well as practice, setting aside the competition for donor money?

4. The assessment and improvement of organizational democratic structures and processes

Democratic internal structures are an important aspect of OCD that needs to be further explored. A democratic process is at the core of the learning process of an organization, when understood as listening and learning with respect for the experiences staff as well as target groups. Staff of SC and partner organizations *do and live* democracy when acting with respect for the knowledge and experience of others (including children and care givers), when listening and developing activities together. SC Sweden should spend more energy on raising awareness of what a democratic structure might lead to and why it is important for the development of the organization.

5. The continuous support from SC Sweden

SC Sweden plays an important role to support the organizations in their work in the sensitive area of abuse, neglect and violence against children. As has been argued in this text, the participatory approach of SC Sweden in its relationship with partners demonstrates a democratic working method, a method that might gain from becoming even more explicit.

1. Introduction

In January 2013 Save the Children International (SCiK) office in Kosovo took over the management of the three projects implemented in Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. Current year is a bridge year and Partners' work is aimed at focusing on consolidating the strategic outcomes in Child Protection and Child Rights Governance.

The program has in general contributed towards an increase of partners' capacities to influence governments in fulfilling the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and to ensure that children are active participants in monitoring the implementation of the CRC.

SCS is aware of the potential of partners and makes the investments necessary to enable partners to act in their own right. SCS believes in joint programme cycle ownership, with clearly elaborated roles and responsibilities. SCS strives at bringing the global human rights architecture and all its mechanisms to a local level, where the effects that a rights-based approach can have on children becomes most evident and put into practice. Also in this respect the actual strengthening of local capacity and the rights approach are closely intertwined and mutually re-enforcing.

The main outcomes of the logframe as per which the partners worked were: More Children actively participate in the monitoring of the Child Rights Convention; More Civil Society Organizations have the capacity to independently influence Governments to fulfil with the CRC and Schools and Education Departments are better equipped to respond to cases of violence between children

Partners engaged in the Regional Program are: Child Rights Centre (CRC), Belgrade; Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), Moldova; Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU)

2. Background Information

The program is aimed at addressing the weaknesses and gaps in policies, laws, and in governmental systems and structures for the implementation of children's rights broadly. SCS sees its civil society partners as key actors for change and therefore this programme includes a comprehensive investment in their capacity. The programmes continue to be implemented through SC's country offices—and always together with local civil society organisations, including child-led organisations.

Strategic priorities during this period were:

- Continued development and dissemination of child led monitoring of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child in South East Europe and Universal Periodic Reporting monitoring process and follow up on concluding observations
- Joint advocacy based on data collection through Child Right Situation Analysis and assessment of General Measures of Implementation in countries in South East Europe.
- Organizational Capacity Development of partner organizations to facilitate their capacity as strong Child Rights organization and resources in national and regional coalitions and networks.

Objectives of the Consultancy:

- The primary objective of the service is to evaluate to which stage have partner objectives been achieved and how they have been achieved.
- To evaluate the importance of the undertaken actions in comparison and taking into consideration the circumstances of and in each country
 - Determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, with major difficulties, challenges faced and how it was addressed.
 - Development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability
- To evaluate the growth /strengthening of organization's capacities from the initial stages to now with partner organizations feedback and participation at this evaluation (partner assessments, audit recommendations and feedback from other stakeholders)
- Identify success stories and mechanisms (factors) that enabled the sustainability of such actions in order for the replication of the same models elsewhere
- Identify the synergies built through 3 year partnership with SCI and regional and local partners

Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Questions

The main evaluation criteria is *Impact*. That is, the positive and negative changes produced by the program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as the political development on regional and country levels. A secondary evaluation criteria is sustainability. That is, to what extent the results achieved through the program are likely to remain long-term if donor-funding were to be withdrawn.

The following questions shall be addressed in the evaluation:

- What are the main successes and achievements of the advocacy work of the program at Regional and level? What is the impact of the regional programme on the conditions of children in the Region, and the sustainability of achievements?
- Has the program contributed to strengthen civil society voice on child rights at regional level?
- What are the main achievements of the regional project in terms of organizational development and consolidation? What is the level of involvement and influence of national and regional coalitions (directly or indirectly partnering with the regional program) and children in national policies and strategies for children in countries of interventions?
- To what extent has the regional program contributed to strengthen contacts, coordination and collaboration between national coalitions?
- What are the main successes and achievements of the CRG/Child rights work of the national child rights coalitions in their countries?
- How sustainable are achieved program results/outcomes? What lessons have emerged?
- Are the benefits and challenges with the current program approach, including its focus on supporting coalitions and activities at both country and regional levels? What are the key

obstacles and constraints that national and regional coalitions faced and are facing to achieve their mission?

- What are the key considerations to take into account in the planning of the next phase of the program?

Expected results:

- A written report containing the above objectives elaborated
 - A clear methodology to be presented specifically on how consultation with partners will be conducted.
 - Data from the research to be shared with SCiK
 - Data analysis and comparisons to use validated statistical means
 - The overall report to provide clear and practical recommendations

1. Duties and responsibilities of the consultant:

Under the guidance of CRG Department - SCiK Consultant_must present:

- ***The proposed methodology***
- ***The timeline of proposed activities***
- **Duration of the service: May- September 2016**

Timeframe:

Tasks	Days
Desktop research/ Skype calls with SCI , SC Sweden , local partners	4
Field work (on site visits)	12 days (4 in each country)
Data analysis	4
Writing of report	5
Total	25 days

Save the Children Child Safeguarding Policy:

As a condition of entering into a consultancy agreement the consultant must sign Save the Children International Child Safeguarding Policy and abide by the terms and conditions thereof.

Contacts:

Contact:	Role:
Linda Hoxha MEAL Officer linda.hoxha@savethechildren.org	Ensures and provides information for work, dates and correspondence.
Rebeka Qena Thematic Manager in CRG rebeka.qena@savethechildren.org	Ensures and provides information for work, dates and correspondence.
Rudina Ademi Shala Rudina.ademishala@savethechildren.org	Ensure the quality and assurance of the Evaluation

2. Required qualifications for the Consultant:

- Proven experiences in designing and conducting researches and producing quality program analysis
- Proven knowledge of Child Rights, Program cycles and program evaluation
- Ability to deliver a high quality product in a timely manner
- Excellent command of English (written/spoken)
- Ability to produce well-written reports, in a plain and approachable text, demonstrating excellent analytical and communication skills
- Ability to travel to Ukraine, Moldova and Serbia

Interested applicants should submit the following documents at linda.hoxha@savethechildren.org or rebeka.qena@savethechildren.org

- ***Curriculum Vitae***
- ***A proposed methodology and timeline of action***
- ***Price for the services***
- ***1 Reference Letter***

Deadline: 23.05.2016