

# *Summary of Translating the Right to Non-Discrimination into Reality*



**Save the Children**  
Sweden

Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We influence public opinion and support children at risk,  
in Sweden and in the world.

Our vision is of a world in which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child  
has been translated into practical reality, and all children's rights are fulfilled.

Such a world is one which:

- respects and values each and every child;
- listens to, and is prepared to learn from, children;
- gives every child hope and opportunity.

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# Introduction

Overcoming discrimination has been a core principle of the larger discourse on human rights and has been addressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Other main treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention against Torture and Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities also include non-discrimination as a core principle that address the continuing discrimination that certain groups face in their daily life. Equity and non-discrimination are fundamental principles for respecting, fulfilling and protecting the rights of children and adults. Despite the measures taken at international and national levels to develop and implement policies and legislation, discrimination is widespread and affects children's everyday lives. Discrimination results from the unequal power dynamics and institutional structures in society. Addressing discrimination requires a holistic strategic approach at multiple levels.

Save the Children Sweden's work is founded upon the tenets of the CRC and is implemented by following the principles of child rights programming; this means 'using the principles of child rights to plan, implement and monitor programmes with the overall goal of improving the position of children so that all boys and girls can fully enjoy their rights and can live in societies that acknowledge and respect children's rights.'<sup>1</sup> Promoting, protecting and fulfilling children's right not to be discriminated against is a fundamental aspect of child rights programming and is closely related to the other two core principles of participation and accountability. It is often the lack of participation of rights holders and the lack of accountability of key duty-bearers (such as government officials, family and community members) that perpetuates and reinforces discrimination. Responding to discrimination means addressing children's participation and empowerment as rights holders as well as ensuring accountability of duty bearers. It also means that the root causes of discrimination against children, such as patriarchal structures and unequal power relations, must be addressed head-on. Working from a rights based approach also implies that Save the Children Sweden has to address discrimination within the organisation itself.

Children in virtually all societies have less power than adults because of being children and accordingly are more vulnerable to discrimination. Most girls and boys grow up with the awareness that, as children, their status is inferior to that of adults. Many children face additional forms of discrimination because of their:

- Gender
- Age
- Occupation or their parents occupation
- Religion and language of parents

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<sup>1</sup> *How to apply rights-based approaches to programming, Second Edition; Save the Children 2005*

- Disability or their parent(s) disability
- Health status i.e. HIV/AIDs status of the child or the parents
- Ethnicity and indigenous status
- Refugee or internally displaced status
- Where and how they live (remote area or city slum for example)
- Social class or caste

Poverty and discrimination are closely inter-linked: children can be discriminated against because they are poor and can be poor because they are discriminated against. The two reinforce each other in a vicious cycle. Social exclusion and lack of access to basic services and resources are common effects of discrimination and this can be devastating both for the children concerned and for society in general. It can leave children invisible as social actors, with low confidence and self-esteem. Often children experience multiple discriminations which results in one violation impacting on many others; for example a lack of access to education because of discrimination arising from poverty can impact on their right to health, right to play and right to participation and protection. At its worst, discrimination can lead to child labour and child prostitution and to children leaving the protection of family structures and village. Children who are discriminated against, are severely compromised in their opportunity for self-development.

Save the Children Sweden operates in Sweden and eight regions around the world: Europe, Middle East and North Africa, East and Central Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, South and Central Asia, South East Asia and Pacific and Latin America. During 2008, a mapping of work done on the right to non-discrimination in these regions was undertaken in order to give an overview of how the right to non-discrimination is perceived, promoted and put into practice. It was based on information received from questionnaires sent out to focal persons for the right to non-discrimination in Save the Children Sweden's regional offices and also on questionnaires from country offices in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Twelve of Save the Children Sweden's partner organisations also completed questionnaires and group work with young people was conducted by a partner organisation called Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje (CECODAP) in Venezuela seeking young people's views on discrimination.<sup>2</sup> This core of information was supplemented by reference to key Save the Children Sweden documents as well as a wide range of background materials. There were also follow up emails and a week long e-discussion with prepared questions amongst focal persons for the right to non-discrimination. The following is a summary of the key findings and recommendations of this mapping.

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<sup>2</sup> These organisations were: Hiwot (Ethiopia), Sabah Association for Child Care and Development and Sudan National Society for the Deaf (North Sudan) in the East and Central Africa region. Estonian Union for Child Welfare (Estonia) in Europe. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (Uruguay), CECODAP (Venezuela) and Promundo (Brazil) in Latin America. MENA: Kafa and Blue Mission (Lebanon) and Defence for Children International (Palestine) in the Middle East. SCA: Family Welfare Focus (Afghanistan) in South Asia. Centre Djoliba (Mali) in West Africa.

# Key findings and recommendations

## **Defining the right to non-discrimination**

In 2003, Programme Area 4 on the Child's Right to Non-Discrimination based on Gender, Disability, Social and Ethnic background was adopted. This strategy has served as a basis for Save the Children Sweden's work on addressing and combating discrimination, together with the regions own strategies. In this strategy, non-discrimination is defined as 'negative differentiation in treatment of an individual or a group, based on certain grounds such as sex, origin, or opinion, which has the purpose or effect of impairing someone to enjoy her or his rights'. It recognizes that children may have different needs and there might be a need to treat one child differently to another in order to address inequality and to promote equity. Affirmative action or positive discrimination may be required. For example children with a disability might need special equipment or refugee children special education in their mother tongue, in order to enable them to participate in mainstream education alongside other children. Save the Children Sweden views every child from a holistic perspective considering that children may be subject to several forms of discrimination simultaneously. Furthermore, it focuses on preventive measures and strives to tackle the root causes of discrimination.

The PA4 strategy also explains that 'In its work to tackle discrimination, Save the Children Sweden concentrates its efforts on discrimination of children on the grounds of sex, disability, ethnicity, or social background'. There is a general consensus that these grounds are too restrictive and need to be broadened out to encompass all of the myriad ways in which children are discriminated against. Discrimination usually involves those in power treating those who are perceived to be different or relatively less powerful, in an unfavourable manner. Differences, such as gender, ethnicity or disability, are significant because society makes them so. Thus, discrimination is not an inherent consequence of being a member of a group, rather it is the meaning that a society attaches to 'being a woman, or a child, being part of an ethnic group or being disabled, that may lead to discrimination'.<sup>3</sup>

In order to anticipate and counter discrimination, there is a need to be conscious of the ways in which discrimination operates in communities in which Save the Children Sweden works. It is important to understand which groups have power in society; how different ethnic groups are viewed; how women and girls, men and boys are viewed and how this affects their roles and activities in society; and how these dynamics are reflected both in the work place and in programmes. Child rights programming also highlights the importance of considering the 'whole child', rather than any one aspect of a child's situation or identity.<sup>4</sup> Thus, 'tackling discrimination [...] enables us to capture the complexity of identity and to note the intersections between components of identity' in order to find more effective approaches to programming.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p2.

<sup>4</sup> Cave, G & Hyder, T (2004) *Diversity and Children's Rights – the links*. SCUUK internal paper.

<sup>5</sup> Save the Children UK (January 2005) *Diversity/non discrimination primer*. p7.

The information coming from the questionnaires suggests that there is agreement regionally about what discrimination is and what it looks like. However, when devising strategies for ensuring that the right to non-discrimination is fulfilled, it may not be helpful for the regional programmes to focus on already specified grounds since the key to understanding how and why children are discriminated against lies so much in an understanding of power relationships which will vary widely from context to context.

### ***Recommendations***

Instead of specifying grounds for discrimination to be focussed on, Save the Children Sweden needs to develop a framework on the right to non-discrimination with a particular focus on the thematic priority areas; the right to Protection, Education and the Human Rights of the Child.

### ***Effective mainstreaming***

Efforts to mainstream the right to non-discrimination are integral to a rights based approach and this was acknowledged unanimously both within the organisation and amongst the partners who responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaires revealed general agreement over what mainstreaming means in theory. It was described as ‘using a special lens that makes us see “better” and “clearer” at any angle’. A precondition for mainstreaming is that a child rights situation analysis has been done, which detects discriminatory practices and structures. Although it is recognised that non-discrimination is both a mainstream issue and a problem that merits analysis and action in its own right, it seems that mainstreaming as an idea has not yet been sufficiently clearly defined or developed.

‘It is more difficult to mainstream than having specific programmes on non discrimination.’

Respondent to questionnaire

Many respondents made it clear that in practice, mainstreaming was being done in an ad hoc manner arising as a consequence of programming rather than driving it directly. The danger that was repeatedly highlighted is that if the right to non-discrimination is not prioritised in the sense that it does not have a specific ‘programme’ or budget attached to it then it may become lost or invisible. One respondent explained that ‘It is possible that cross-cutting and mainstreaming ends up not cutting at all, being over-looked and left out.’ This issue was discussed at length during the e-discussion amongst focal points on non-discrimination and the consensus was that a combination of ‘direct work’ on non-discrimination as well as mainstreaming it throughout programmes should be

employed. This means that both Save the Children Sweden employees and partners need to have an in-depth understanding of what the right to non-discrimination implies and that it has multi-dimensional aspects and how programme responses can deliver better results for children. These same people should then be working very closely in the programme areas of Education and Protection to ensure that these principles are maintained and visible in their planning.

There was an overwhelming response from the focal points and partners that they need much more knowledge and capacity to be able to properly integrate the right to non-discrimination within programmes and that this will require resources. Furthermore, there was a suggestion that proper tools were needed to ensure that the right is present in all programming. One respondent explained that: 'Mainstreaming is supposed to be done strategically for it to be effective. This means having a very clear plan for implementing and assessing progress in the integration of the principle. It would also help to develop mechanisms and tools that support this work and to identify people who will be responsible for it. Some regions already have focal people in place and some were appointed to respond to this mapping exercise. On the whole it was felt that they were necessary and can play a vital role in the mainstreaming of non-discrimination (bearing in mind of course the caveat explained by another respondent who said: 'Since there is a focal person for non-discrimination, some staff mistake this to mean that she is the only one who needs to train and carry out all the activities related to fighting discrimination').

### *Recommendations*

Further training and capacity building of employees and partners regarding how to mainstream the right to non-discrimination.

Regional and country situation analyses should integrate the right to non-discrimination with recommendations for programme implementation.

A framework for how to mainstream the right to non-discrimination to be developed to ensure that mainstreaming means the same thing for all and that a common procedure is followed. These guidelines should also be able to be used by partners.

## ***Integrating the right to non-discrimination into planning, monitoring and evaluation***

It is vital to integrate the right to non-discrimination into planning, monitoring and evaluation. This enables learning to take place so that Save the Children Sweden's work on non-discrimination can be assessed and improved. It also



ensures accountability of Save the Children Sweden not only to its donors and members but also to partners, communities and children and it encourages communication. Integrating non-discrimination into planning, monitoring and evaluation ensures that programmes can determine the extent to which projects have effectively reduced discrimination.

There is a general consensus amongst the respondents to the questionnaires that the right to non-discrimination does feature within situational analyses and in the planning of projects with partners. Several respondents cited the 'Child Rights Programming Checklist For Assessing A Project Proposal & Developing A Project' as being extremely useful in ensuring that this happened. These guide questions ensure that marginalised girls and boys are identified within the target group; that an analysis of the root causes of discrimination and marginalisation is made and that the proposed project addresses these concerns.

However, the right to non-discrimination is not always taken into account in the course of monitoring and evaluation (particularly in projects which are not obviously focussed on discrimination). During the e-discussion with focal points, several people acknowledged that there was a lack of indicators which could be used to measure reductions in discrimination and changes in attitude. One respondent made the connection between the lack of a framework for monitoring and evaluating the right to non-discrimination within all programmes and ad hoc mainstreaming: 'it is difficult to develop indicators for this right, hard to assess impact on non-discrimination and a lack of tools for monitoring and evaluation lead to an un-solid mainstreaming of non-discrimination in projects and programmes'.

One set of guidelines which was suggested as being very useful for ensuring that non-discrimination does feature in the monitoring and evaluation of all programmes is the 'International Programme Child Rights Situation Analysis – Guiding questions (2007)'. This has an extensive and comprehensive set of questions relating specifically to the right to non-discrimination in the context of a situation analysis. However, these can be adapted for monitoring and evaluation quite easily. Other indicators that have been used were derived from Inclusive Education and Education for All definition and goals, as well as from Child Friendly Schools/Child Friendly Learning Environment concepts. Several regions referred to the Save the Children UK Dimensions of Change framework.<sup>6</sup> This involves both employees and stakeholders and requires them to monitor and assess programme impact over time. One aspect of the system is that it focuses attention on specific areas of interest to Save the Children Sweden. These areas of focus are called Dimensions of Change. The five common dimensions of change give concrete expression to the Child Rights Programming principles and one of these concerns 'changes in equity and non-discrimination of children and young people' asks the question: In policies, programs, services and communities, are the most marginalized children targeted and reached? This framework has been adapted to fit various contexts and has been used by partner organisations to assess whether or not its strategies contributed to the reduction and/or the

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<sup>6</sup> [http://seap.savethechildren.se/upload/scs/SEAP/publication/publication%20pdf/child%20rights%20programming/SEAP\\_Report\\_MeasuringImpactEffectiveness2005.pdf](http://seap.savethechildren.se/upload/scs/SEAP/publication/publication%20pdf/child%20rights%20programming/SEAP_Report_MeasuringImpactEffectiveness2005.pdf)

elimination of discrimination or helped to promote the inclusion of marginalised children in their respective communities.

### ***Recommendations***

**Clear and simple guidelines for monitoring and evaluating programmes in relation to the right to non-discrimination should be drafted.**

## ***Planning and prioritising without data***

The collection of accurate and disaggregated data is fundamental for understanding the intensity and complexity of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups of children and for taking appropriate measures to combat it within the family, community and society as a whole. It is a challenge for all of the respondents that there is a significant lack of disaggregated data concerning the situation of children available and that it is especially difficult to access for marginal groups such as the very young, rural children or children with disabilities. One respondent makes the point that ‘all countries collect data using different methods making it impossible to compare the situation in different states, there are also disparities in collecting data within different authorities at national level’. In other regions internal conflicts have severely hampered the capacity for data collection.

Often the data is either not there (and this is particularly the case for hard to reach children) or it has been inconsistently collected rendering it difficult to use. Furthermore, the very fact of collecting data can generate expectations hard to fulfil: ‘The greatest challenge has been in the collection of data and information on children with disabilities. Every time we go within the community to collect such data, the community expectations are raised in terms of the direct support for those children and this in the end hampers continuation of this data collection.’ Relying on data collected by other organisations is of course one solution but this can become difficult if you do not have much confidence in their reliability.

The implications of a lack of data are immense and impact not just on strategic planning for Save the Children Sweden in terms of the right to non-discrimination in its programmes but also more broadly in terms of being able to measure whether a government is fulfilling its obligations to children’s right so that it can be held account. One response to a lack of data is of course to support partners to advocate with states to gather disaggregated data. Another approach might be to explore the feasibility of developing child rights-based indicators for non-discrimination which can be used to assess whether a government is fulfilling its obligations as a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### *Recommendations*

Save the Children Sweden should build the capacity of its partners to lobby and advocate with the state to ensure that relevant data relating to children's rights is being gathered.

Save the Children Sweden could explore the feasibility of establishing an indicator set for non-discrimination (and perhaps all four of the guiding principles) to assess whether a government is fulfilling its obligations as a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Such an indicator set might include examining budgets, institution establishment, implementation of legislation, adequacy of data collection etc.

### **Working with Partners**

The range of experience and understanding amongst Save the Children Sweden's very many different partners is enormous. Nonetheless, respondents raised various challenges when working with partners on the right to non-discrimination: absolute clarity is required when establishing expectations regarding the extent to which this principle should be reflected within partners' activities; often the small size of partners makes it difficult to push them to deal with complexity and the range of discrimination issues facing children in a region; and, the practical application of non-discrimination by partners can be limited. It was emphasised during the focal points e-discussion that Save the Children Sweden gains much knowledge from partners but in some cases capacity building is required to ensure that non-discrimination aspects are included in applications by partners for funding and in their reporting, as well as including this in the follow-up of their programmes.

The form of support and assistance this might take depends of course on the type of partnership and level of engagement being offered. It can be done in a variety of ways – partner meetings, one to one discussions and by training. Child Rights Programming workshops were felt to be particularly useful for participants to reflect upon the right to non-discrimination within their work. One respondent argued that is most important for partners that they have 'an understanding of Child Rights and what it means to work towards child rights programming and that they themselves are developing their own working definitions [of non-discrimination] [...] that Save the Children Sweden might learn from.' They also emphasised that capacity building of partners is 'a thin line to walk – we don't want to impose – rather to have our partners themselves "wanting" more knowledge'. It was clear when undertaking this mapping that many exemplary programmes which incorporated important elements in combating discrimination had not been documented fully. This need for documentation is echoed by several partners who completed questionnaires and who are hungry for

information: 'Information on best practices are lacking – insufficient share of experience at local, national and regional level'. It would be a useful way of enhancing global learning of partners to conduct documentation of programmes looking specifically at discrimination issues.

### ***Recommendations***

Work with partners on the right to non-discrimination should be firmly located in the context of a child right situation analysis as a baseline so that change as a result of programmes can be demonstrated.

Save the Children Sweden should aim to document more cases studies and experiences in addressing discrimination within programmes to develop guidelines and share best practices.

Save the Children Sweden should network with like-minded organisations, including other human rights organisations on mainstreaming the right to non-discrimination.

Save the Children Sweden should build partner capacity by providing training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Child Rights Programming.

Save the Children Sweden should involve its partners more in global and regional meetings so that they can meet and learn from each other. Save the Children Sweden should guide and support partners in identifying elements of non-discrimination in their existing programmes and support them in highlighting successes.

## ***Children's right to participate***

It is essential to give children a voice and to listen to their direct experiences of discrimination in order to develop effective strategies. Unless adults support children to participate and have a say in matters concerning them, adult society will continue to be unaware of the extent and nature of any discrimination children suffer and without that knowledge they will be unable to develop holistic approaches. Too often adults wrongly assume that they understand children's lives. As one respondent pointed out: 'Neglecting to ask the opinion of children in matters that concern them is a way of discriminating against them – this happens almost as a rule'.

It is important to recognise the extent to which children can be enlisted as advocates on their own behalf. Children can provide solutions ranging from peer counselling to tackling issues of bullying in schools. They can represent each other in challenging school practices which discriminate against certain groups. They can campaign for governments to change unfair laws, provide more

resources for disadvantaged groups and promote greater justice for children. There are many, many examples of children building self-esteem and capacity through participation in Save the Children Sweden supported programmes and this is a considerable strength for the organisation.

However, it should be recognised that at times it is very difficult to involve the most marginalised children in programmes since they might be invisible or they do not have the freedom to be involved. Furthermore, there is a tendency for adults to promote the participation of children who are more vocal, expressive and who can write. This may mean that children who are younger, quieter and less expressive are given fewer opportunities to express their views. Adults also need to be careful not to overburden the children. Very often children have been consulted for various UN processes, but there have not always been deliberate efforts to include girls and boys from all backgrounds and to use methods to make everybody speak out. (For example using sign language for deaf children, having separate groups of girls and boys as times).

‘When you work with children and young people on a day to day basis,  
you have to be on your toes mentally and creative  
or you will lose them.’

Partner respondent to questionnaire

The projects that Save the Children Sweden supports should challenge power relations rather than perpetuating discrimination against the hardest to reach children. One of the biggest challenges which Save the Children Sweden faces in relation to implementing the right to non-discrimination within its programmes is in accessing invisible and hard to reach groups of marginalised children. Clearly this is closely linked with the question of lack of data and links in with the importance of having quality indicators for measuring government accountability to its most discriminated against children. During the e-discussion amongst the focal points, it was clear that the Child Rights Programming approach should be strengthened amongst partners as it is a framework which ensures that the most marginalised children are taken into account. One respondent emphasised that ‘we need to ensure that the view of children based on the CRC echoes way beyond our own programming and own organisation. Hopefully other actors and individuals can complement the work we do and together we can reach more children’.

Save the Children Sweden supports an organisation in Venezuela called Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje (CECODAP) who have implemented a project to inform, sensitise and encourage public opinion to think about the way in which discrimination affects children and adolescents. This is run by groups of children and they too wrestle in their own work with reaching children who are extremely marginalised: ‘...if these are children with disabilities, facilitators must be expert in developing actions according to each kind of disability. They must also be convinced about inclusion. All the same, they must take into consideration that the materials should be designed according to the specific needs of children to facilitate their participation in the programme or project. For example, in Braille, if they are blind. Or maybe include the use of sign language for all adolescent training. With those children who are discriminated because of their poverty, we should try to go further on, to go to the communities they live in, to look for a place close to their houses and try to get a

greater participation on their part. All the same, to design materials that can be understood in a simple language, with attractive colours and shapes. We should use games, dynamics and plenty of love and fun to work with them'. Another issue raised by many of the partners and also by the children and young people from CECODAP was the lack of child friendly materials in local languages available for them to use to promote the right to non-discrimination.

### ***Recommendations***

To access invisible and hard to reach groups will require partnership with organisations that specialise in such fields as well as advocacy with governments to ensure that policies and programmes clearly define the needs and realities of children from many different backgrounds and geographical regions.

There is a real need for child friendly materials related to the right to non-discrimination to be made accessible.

## ***Ensuring accountability of duty bearers***

The lack of accountability of key duty-bearers (such as government officials and family and community members) can perpetuate and reinforce discrimination. Responding to discrimination means supporting children as rights holders as well as ensuring the accountability of duty bearers. Many different approaches are taken by Save the Children Sweden to ensure the accountability of duty bearers for their obligation to protect, promote and fulfil children's rights to non-discrimination. Nonetheless, responding to impunity is one area which could be explored in more depth. This would involve considering the development of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that cases of discrimination get reported, and that laws are properly enforced. Children's rights are often perceived as 'soft' and uncontroversial and it may be that this has contributed to a lack of willingness to engage in a direct challenge to governments to ensure that children have an effective means of redress when they are discriminated against. However, a crucial aspect of tackling impunity is that discrimination must be monitored and reported on. An effective monitoring system is required that records the incidence and nature of discrimination and allows for informed and strategic responses to it.

Save the Children Sweden programmes do support legal aid organisations and partners who address individual cases especially in South Africa where one of the partners is doing a great deal of work around the right to non-discrimination in the context of education. They express reservations at the success of this as a strategy: 'Litigation as a non-discrimination strategy has proved time consuming and expensive with limited output, for example legal cases take five or six years to reach a conclusion. In addition, government frequently lack resources to implement recommendations resulting in the little accountability for realising of

rulings'. There is scope to look further into supporting mechanisms which can receive individual complaints such as Ombudspersons, Children's Commissioners or within school structures. These mechanisms can play a vital role in ensuring accountability in terms of promoting the rights of children as a group and as individual children.

### ***Recommendations***

There is scope for Save the Children Sweden to support its partners in working with monitoring mechanisms such as ombudspersons and national human rights commissions to ensure that cases of discrimination are being reported.

There is also scope, where possible, to support partners in undertaking strategic litigation of cases concerning the right to non-discrimination. Work with partners could be more focussed on key messages urging governments to take up the issue of the right to non-discrimination more responsibly (for example, by supporting budget analyses aimed at ensuring that government is more accountable in allocating resources for children who are invisible in the budget).

Save the Children Sweden could explore the feasibility of establishing an indicator set for non-discrimination (and perhaps all four of the guiding principles) to assess whether a government is fulfilling its obligations as a State Party to the CRC. Such an indicator set might include examining budgets, institution establishment, implementation of legislation, adequacy of data collection etc.

### ***Addressing root causes***

Working from a Child Rights Programming perspective implies addressing both the immediate and root causes of discrimination. A central part of any programme planning is therefore to acquire as much information as possible about perceptions, values, attitudes and behaviour and how these values are transformed into structures and mechanisms for the perpetuation of inequalities. It also requires information on changes that are taking place in society – why have changes taken place, how have they taken place, who wanted change and who were the opponents to change, etc. Power structures have to be addressed both from a community based approach as well as from a top down approach (legislation and its implementation, customary laws, etc.)

Breaking the cycle of discrimination is a huge, long term challenge and Save the Children Sweden needs to apply multi-pronged approaches to break the vicious cycles of oppression and exclusion. Achieving a balance between addressing immediate and root causes is difficult as they are so closely intertwined. However, it seems overall that there is an emphasis upon addressing

immediate causes in Save the Children Sweden programmes and that more exploration of strategies to address the root causes of discrimination should be undertaken, for example addressing the link between discrimination against girls and masculinities, socialisation and power dynamics within society and addressing the links between discrimination on economic grounds and poverty.

### ***Recommendations***

**Build programme development on situation analyses which focus on the causes of violations of the right to non-discrimination and the capacity of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations to children who are being discriminated against.**

**Address gaps in data and policy with stakeholders.**

**Support advocacy work of partners to address the root causes of discriminatory practices.**

## ***The right to non-discrimination within the organisation***

Adopting a child rights programming approach means that while addressing non-discrimination in programmes it is also essential to address it within Save the Children Sweden. One section of the questionnaire sent out to the regional and national offices covered the following questions: how diverse is the workforce; how many men and women from various backgrounds do you have at different levels? What are the attitudes towards gender and diversity among employees? How do employees relate with each other? Is the office accessible for adults and children with disabilities? Children's participation is also closely related to participation within organisations: for example, how participatory are decision-making mechanisms? How are men and women from various backgrounds empowered to speak up during meetings? Are there informal decision-making mechanisms in place? If yes, who benefits from these mechanisms?

The main area of contention which emerged from the questionnaires was the relative treatment (particularly in terms of salary) between expatriate and national employees. It was felt that whereas the pay and benefits do not have to be equal, there should be equality in the treatment of local employees and expatriate employees. Another area of concern was the lack of reporting mechanisms for discriminatory behaviour and in this regard it would be helpful to look at the experience from a partner who responded to the questionnaire: 'All discriminatory acts are reported for immediate correction; as we may all have discriminatory attitudes whether consciously or not.' Finally, an issue was raised regarding how to ensure an ethical and non-discriminatory relationship with partners is maintained.



### *Recommendations*

Create a working environment that promotes diversity and aims to eradicate inequality and prejudice;

Build employee teams reflecting the diversity of the different contexts in which Save the Children Sweden operates;

Promote a working environment where each person is respected, enjoys dignity at work and is protected from harassment;

Provide guidance and opportunities for dialogue to enable employees and partners to be clear about what is expected, supported by up to date policies, practices and procedures;

Develop a regional non-discrimination organisational policy guideline that clarifies the complaints procedure within the organisation's hierarchy.

*Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We deliver immediate and lasting  
improvements to children's lives worldwide.*

## ***What is Translating the Right to Non-discrimination about?***

This publication is a summary of a report which maps the work done on the right to non-discrimination by Save the Children Sweden between 2002 and 2007 around the world. It is based on information received from Save the Children Sweden's regional and national offices, from partner organisations and from children and young people. It gives an overview of the kind of programming done from which to draw conclusions for improving implementation. For the long version, please visit our website [bookshop.rb.se](http://bookshop.rb.se).

## ***Is this publication for me?***

This publication will be of interest to all practitioners of children's rights who are interested in knowing more about the right to non-discrimination and how it is implemented by Save the Children Sweden following the principles of child rights programming.

## ***What can I learn from this publication?***

This publication seeks to draw out the key implementing strategies used by Save the Children Sweden and its partners to translate the rhetoric of the right to non-discrimination into meaningful interventions which can improve children's lives in a sustainable and long-term manner.



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