

# *Civil Society Strengthening Workshop*

*Stockholm, 29 June – 1 July, 2011*

*Rapporteur: Agneta Gunnarsson*



**Save the Children**  
Sweden

# Contents

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Background and expected outputs.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Day 1: Internal SCS meeting; SCS current status .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Group discussion .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Findings of reviews of SCS partners .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Self-assessment undertaken by SCS focal points.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Assessment of action points from meeting on civil society in 2008.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Group work about SCS's work with civil society.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>Day 2: Exploring a framework for future work with civil society.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>SC members approaches to civil society partners.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>SC Denmark's approach to partnership .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>SC Norway's experiences of working with civil society.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SC US's views on partnerships .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>New challenges – the Paris agenda and new donors .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Presentation of the SCI Theory of change.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Lessons learned from the transition process in the SCA region .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Child rights governance (CRG) global initiative .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Group work.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>Day 3: Way forward.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Summing-up.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Group 1: Presentation of SCS strategy outline.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Group 2: Presentation of SCI framework on work with civil society.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Appendix 1: Participants' list.....</i>	<i>28</i>

## Acronyms

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRG	Child rights governance
CRP	Child rights programming
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
EU	European Union
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
LFA	Logical framework approach
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCD	Organisational capacity development
PME	Planning, monitoring and evaluation
SC	Save the Children
SCA region	South and Central Asia
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
SCI	Save the Children International
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SCS	Save the Children Sweden
SC UK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SC US	Save the Children USA
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund

# *Preface*

A core approach of SCS is to strengthen civil society. This means that we need to understand the nature of civil society and the environment in which civil society organizations work. We also need to know how to assess the strengths and weaknesses of civil society organizations and to be aware of what is the inner life of an organization. We have to know how to measure the impact of our work both in terms of changes within the organization but also with respect to its ability to be a spokesperson for child rights and contribute to long-lasting changes for children.

In the “Civil Society Strengthening Workshop” we touched upon the various levels we have to work at to ensure that we address the above issues and that we take a holistic approach to our work with civil society.

The workshop gathered participants from Save the Children, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and US and provided an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences, lessons learnt and prepare for future cooperation in SCI. We discussed issues related to the implications of the Paris declaration on civil society organizations and how harmonization and alignment of aid have shown that the requirements to access funds in many cases are far beyond what these organizations could match. Another topic, was the emergence of new donors, such as China, India and foundations and how agreements and conditions that we are used to look upon as integral parts of working relations between conventional donors and recipient countries do not exist. We touched upon the importance of understanding the environment in which civil society organizations act. Is it enabling and how are civil society organizations perceived? In some countries there is a growing trend to restrict the space for civil society organizations through legislation and other measures. How do we address these barriers? We exchanged experiences related to organizational capacity development of partner organizations and how we can set benchmarks, measure the impact of our work and nurture a reciprocal relationship with a partner and avoid the traditional donor-recipient scenario.

Within the framework of SCI, we acknowledged that there is a variety of partnerships and that we do not have the same definition and perception of partnerships. We agreed that we have to recognize the complementarity that we could achieve by working together from our respective perspectives.

The workshop concluded in a draft SCI framework on work with civil society that will be an input to the existing SCI group on partnership and the CRG initiative sub-group on civil society.

We thank all the participants for their commitment and valuable inputs which contributed to the workshop being productive, focused and forward-looking.

**Eva Geidenmark**

Director, Section for Thematic Support

International Department

Save the Children Sweden



## *Background and expected outputs*

Save the Children Sweden (SCS) has longstanding experience of supporting civil society, as an end in itself and as a precondition for the successful implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. SCS believes that supporting civil society to promote and monitor children's rights contributes to improvements for children and to building democratic societies where children are empowered. SCS's internal head office and regional working group on civil society for the rights of the child met in 2008 and agreed on a number of action points. The civil society strengthening workshop in 2011 was an opportunity to assess progress and agree on the next steps.

Furthermore, in 2013 all Save the Children organisations' international programmes will be brought together under one programme delivery unit. This means that there is a need for SCS and other SC members to strategically plan on how to advance, coordinate, cooperate and complement each other on strengthening civil society for the promotion and monitoring of children's rights within Save the Children International (SCI). Strengthening SC members' capacity on civil society will also contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Global Initiative on Child Rights Governance, for which one of the key objectives is to increase awareness and capacity among civil society and children to promote children's rights and to hold duty-bearers to account.

Considering this background, the expected outputs of the civil society strengthening workshop were:

- To reach a common understanding within SCS on strengthening and working with civil society and partnerships in the context of SCI; and to provide input to an SCS strategy on civil society and partnerships; and
- An outline for an SCI framework for cooperation and coordination on civil society and partnership and an outline for an SCS strategy on civil society and partnership.

# **Day 1:           *Internal SCS meeting; SCS current status***

## ***Introduction***

Vibeke Jørgensen welcomed the participants and Eva Geidenmark introduced the workshop: “I would like to highlight that it is a core approach of SCS to strengthen civil society and we will look into what this means during these three days. In order to do this we need to look at different levels where civil society works. At the global level we have the Paris Declaration, which will be followed up in Busan, South Korea, later this year. In the Accra Agenda for Action, the declaration that was adopted after the first follow-up meeting, civil society was recognised. The declaration was considered to contribute to strengthening civil society. But in many countries, small and middle size organisations find it difficult to meet the requirements on financial reporting and results-based management and therefore cannot apply for funding.” Is there an enabling environment in countries for civil society? No, it is rather a trend to limit civil society’s room for maneuver. In some countries legislation imposes restrictions and in others new tax requirements make it difficult for civil society to operate.

We should also consider the relationship between organisations in civil society; is there cooperation or competition? How can we stimulate networking? And how can we assess strengths and weaknesses in organisations? We will establish benchmarking indicators in order to measure results. And how should we look at donor-recipient relationships? In order to deal with all this we need a strategy.

Save the Children International (SCI) maintains a variety of partnerships and not all members use the same definitions. At the regional forum in Singapore for the South and Central Asia region in June 2011, many country offices indicated growing interest, but different approaches and reasons for engaging with civil society. One conclusion from the meeting was that we have to accept these differences and sit down and discuss them. Among members there are different approaches to government accountability, for example concerning health and education. Some SCI members support governments through service delivery (needs-based approach) instead of advocating for them to assume their role as primary duty-bearers, which is a rights-based approach.

Eva informed that an agreement to develop a framework for cooperation within SCI regarding partnership has recently been made. Sweden and Norway have agreed to co-chair the partnership working group. It is important to identify how SCS can complement other members’ approaches.

## ***Group discussion***

*Question: What outcome would you like to see regarding work with civil society, not only in this workshop, but in ten years’ time?*

Among the answers were to be able to measure and document impacts on children's lives of working with civil society, to build a strong civil society, which advocates and works as watchdogs, not only with service delivery, to move away from the donor-recipient relationship and to become better at explaining the added value of civil society.

The participants in the workshop presented themselves (see appendix 1). Vibeke informed that participants from SC Denmark, SC Norway and SC US would arrive the following day. Unfortunately, SC UK and participants from the South East Asia region would not be represented.

## ***Findings of reviews of SCS partners***

Monika Sarajärvi presented two reviews<sup>1</sup>, which have been carried out on request of the SCS Board. Both reviews were carried out by a consultant through review of documents, interviews with head office staff, visits to field offices in some countries and questionnaires to field offices in regions.

The objectives of the review of SCS partners' capacity as advocates for the rights of the child were to find out if the partners have developed their roles as child advocates, if lessons have been learned and which the implications for further support are.

Among the findings regarding institutional and organisational capacity of partners are that they have developed policies and strategic plans and have improved planning and financial reporting. Improved planning in accordance with the logical framework approach (LFA) and improvements regarding advocacy are also reported. Concerning partners' programmes, improvements are noted regarding participation while partners are still struggling with non-discrimination, which is a complex issue.

Regarding work processes guiding document from head office as regards how to develop capacity building plans is lacking and most capacity building is carried out on a needs-based basis. The planning, monitoring and evaluation system (PME) is not fit for organisational capacity development (OCD) processes. There is also a lack of system for documentation of experiences regarding SCS's work with civil society organisations.

"We need to reconsider the selection of partners. Some have been partners for 20 years", it was noted.

Some conclusions from the review are that partners have developed their role as child advocates. Support to OCD is, however, less prioritized than protection, education and other thematic issues and there is a need for coordination at head office level, more cooperation between head office and field offices and practical tools and trainings.

According to the SCS strategic plan for 2009-12 one third of the funding should go to work with civil society. This decision was revised, however, and allocated amounts have decreased. Another problem has been that for long periods there has been nobody responsible for OCD in the head office.

---

<sup>1</sup> Civil Society Partners' Capacity as Advocates for the Rights of the Child, Clarhäll, E., SCS 2011, Civil Society Partners' Contribution to the Implementation and Monitoring of Children's Rights in Society, Clarhäll, E., SCS 2011



The recommendations of the review highlight the need for further discussions and analyses of methodology, development of practical tools, capacity building plans and a strategy and strengthening of PME systems.

Workshop participants pointed out that training on child rights programming has been carried out, for example in Latin America, with very good results. SCS, however, needs to develop methods for measuring impact on children's lives and making the PME system more fit for OCD processes. It is not only a matter of PME, however; both quantitative and qualitative results are needed because only numbers do not do justice to the work. Comprehensive documentation, best practices and long-term follow-up are also needed in order to learn from failure as well as successes.

Most offices move away from focal points and engage more staff, or all staff, in the work with OCD. A risk with this is that responsibility is dispersed and the work does not get done, it was pointed out.

The need to consider the new environment of the SCI – and involve partners in this process – was highlighted. One workshop participant referred to the Keystone Accountability Report. In this report, SC US and SC UK are assessed by partners outlining their strengths and weaknesses.

Concerns were raised as to whether the new internal and external environment means that SCS needs to select big organisations with high capacity and English speaking staff as partners. Participants, however, concluded that small organisations and small amounts of money can change a lot. More money does not necessarily mean better results for children. Therefore, efforts should be made to keep both large and small organisations as partners and to continue building their capacity.

After coffee break the thematic review about civil society partners' contributions to the implementation and monitoring of children's rights in society was presented and discussed. In the review eight areas of the general measures of implementation were investigated. General findings are that local and national contexts differ and influence opportunities to advocate for children's rights, monitoring through legislation is underdeveloped in all countries, civil society and government cooperation is focused on service delivery rather than advocacy and that the general measures of implementation have been used in all countries, but on an ad hoc basis rather than as explicit strategies.

The importance of regional treaties like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, was pointed out by workshop participants. The Africa Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has recommended reporting on the African Charter to focus on issues that are not included in the reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Eva Geidenmark informed that a management response to the reviews has been prepared. It explains which recommendations to take care of, which not and why. Some issues are integrated in the planning instructions already for next year.

### ***Self-assessment undertaken by SCS focal points***

Monica Alcedo and Jerome Conilleau presented an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in working with civil society. The analysis is based on self-

assessments carried out by focal points from the East and Central Africa, West Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, Latin America and Europe regions.

Strengths: Among the identified strengths of partners are credibility with governments and regional bodies, direct contact with children, knowledge and competence about child rights issues, context-specific knowledge, ability to achieve impact, sustainability in holding states accountable and creativity and innovation. Some strengths of SCS are long history in supporting partners, strong linkages with governments, strong collaboration with UNICEF at all levels and, through partners, coverage down to community level. Strengths of SCS and partners are excellent partnership based on a horizontal relationship, trust, transparency and dialogue, good assessment of context and partner capacities, commitment and dedication, flexibility in fund allocation and the combination of the four working methods.

Participants in the workshop added the mutual learning and informal communication between SCS and partners as important strengths.

“But I see a negative shift now”, one of the participants said. “We are moving from being a good partner to a regular donor. Every year we are demanding more and more reports, audits etc. Of course there should be accountability. But when I compare with 5-10 years ago, technical discussions were the most important part, now most of the communication is about accountability. ...but our partners were spoilt before. Therefore, the reaction is stronger than if the demands had, for example, come from DFID.”

Weaknesses, challenges for SCS and partners: Fundraising, communication and documentation, mainstreaming child rights governance (CRG) in the thematic areas, the variety of languages, competition for funding, monitoring and evaluation of OCD and documentation of impacts on children’s lives, limited connection with regional networks, limited involvement of the corporate sector and the Sida requirement to transfer 56 per cent of the funding to partners.

Threats: Weak fundraising and communication skills, funding opportunities on OCD are limited, monitoring and evaluation systems are weak and high staff turnover. Other identified threats are restrictive NGO legislation and strict control of governments, donors increasingly preferring to fund governments instead of civil society organisations, too many demands on reporting from donors and difficulties in finding a balance between partners’ ownership and accountability to donors.

Furthermore, networking versus the individual organisational agenda, unclear roles of networks and difficulties in documenting success of networking and OCD, competition for funds and risks associated with partners becoming gap-fillers were identified as threats. Yet other threats are that partners are overwhelmed by too many donors and projects and lack of instructions on what to do with partners to ensure continuity in the context of SCI.

Successes: New coalitions built and strengthened in all regions and countries, innovate programmes and approaches, increased fundraising, successful advocacy in relation to law reform, policies etc. in several countries, partners and coalitions are better equipped on thematic issues, OCD and CRP and children have greater voice and participation on matters affecting their lives. Other successes are increased knowledge through research and evidence-based advocacy, development of long-term strategies and increased collaboration with other international NGOs, human rights bodies and others.

Learning regarding partnerships: To develop systematic OCD with long-term plans, focus on new partners, build on local capacities, promote mutual learning, see the strengthening of

partners as a long-term strategy, support partners to present joint proposals and establish adequate monitoring and evaluation.

Opportunities: Involve the corporate sector, develop linkages with the EU, increase knowledge about international human rights treaties, existing strong connection with governments and communities, trust and transparency with partners and networks, existing child rights governance programmes, Nordic cooperation and the fact that SC UK and SC US have initiated an SCI working group on partnership.

## ***Assessment of action points from meeting on civil society in 2008***

In December 2008 the SCS focal points for civil society had a working group meeting in the Netherlands. This meeting agreed on a number of action points. Åsa Rapp Baro had followed up on these action points and presented the results.

1. Develop a study on the Paris agenda: This has been done and the report, New Challenges for Civil Society – The impact of the Paris agenda and new emerging donors on child rights civil society, was published in 2010.
2. Develop guidelines for how to work with civil society in emergencies: These guidelines have been developed.
3. Elaborate a guidance document on how to strengthen civil society in fragile states, it was later decided that the issue was not a priority and therefore no guidance document was elaborated.

One participant commented that it would be interesting now to bring together staff working in fragile and politically challenging states and discuss ideas about how to approach the issue. Consequently, it was decided - action point - that **the CRG initiative will look into the issue and decide whether to pursue it.**

4. Develop a guidance document on “How SCS should relate to civil society and other actors”: This document has been finalised.
5. Develop a study on the social, economic and political environment for civil society organisations in Southern Africa and capitalize on the information collected for a global seminar: The study was completed, but now needs to be updated and probably complemented. No seminar was organised. As an action point it was decided that **the regions will share information on this topic with each other.**
6. Check the possibilities to have the document “A common understanding on relations to civil society and the state” endorsed by more European organisations: This was checked but never followed up. Action point: to **look into the issue again.**
7. Three action points which were all about organisational capacity development of partner organisations and development of different guidance documents: These documents have been developed and sent out. Despite this, several of the participants in the workshop were unaware of their existence or had not read all of them. As an action point it was decided to **send out the documents again and review them.** Comments about their usefulness, possible amendments and other changes should be sent to the head office no later than 15<sup>th</sup> of

September. Furthermore, it was suggested that the documents will be introduced to the new civil society task group, headed by Susanne Kirk Christensen from SC Denmark, under the Child Rights Governance initiative.

8. Monitoring and evaluation of organisational capacity development, development of indicators and so on: Some concrete measures were taken but the issue was never finalised. As no standardized monitoring and evaluation exists this will be **something for head office (Monika Sarajärvi) to take on.**

The setting up of a learning group on civil society was discussed. Due to staff turnover at the head office it was decided to continue the discussion at a later stage.

### ***Group work about SCS's work with civil society***

Vibeke Jörgensen introduced the group work and the participants were divided into two groups and given the following questions:

#### *Questions Group 1:*

- 1) *Which are SCS' strengths and weaknesses in work with Civil Society?*
- 2) *Which are your five solid recommendations, regarding strengths and weaknesses?*
- 3) *What could SCS bring into SCI?*

#### *Questions Group 2:*

- 1) *Which are SCS' opportunities and threats in work with civil society?*
- 2) *Five recommendations regarding threats and opportunities.*
- 3) *What could SCS bring to SCI?*

#### Presentation, group 1:

##### 1 a) SCS strengths:

- Strong knowledge and long term experience in working with child rights.
- Knowledge of the context, close relation with stakeholders from national to grassroots level.

- Outreach to marginalised groups in remote areas and vulnerable groups (non-discrimination).
- Capability to build alliances and networks, from local to global level.
- Flexibility in the way we work with capacity building.

1 b) Weaknesses:

- Documentation and knowledge management.
- Monitoring of OCD and evaluation of impact on children's lives.
- Decreasing real partnership values, for example less time to listen to partners.

2) Recommendations:

- Reassess whether partners are still valid to contribute to our objectives.
- Show how OCD contributes to improving children's lives.
- Develop package where demands on partners are explained in a simple way.
- Emphasize outreach to the most marginalised groups.
- Emphasize child rights, particularly through the general measures of implementation.

3) What to bring to SCI?: Working methods (child participation, networking etc.), CRP; competent human resources and expertise in the work with CRG and OCD.

Presentation, group 2:

1 a) SCS opportunities:

- Strong partnerships in all countries and regions.
- Increasing number of donors are more and more interested in human rights, democracy etc.
- Civil society in the Middle East region plays an important role to promote democracy.
- Regional platforms and conventions offer opportunities to advance children's rights.
- Increased awareness about human and children's rights.

1 b) SCS threats:

- Limited funding.
- Competition among partners.
- Donor requirements - and donors rather support governments.
- Shrinking space, restrictive legislation etc.
- Weak organisational capacity and dependence.

## 2) Recommendations:

- Emphasize strengthening of civil society as a core value of SCS.
- Investigate how different approaches among civil society can complement each other.
- Develop a paper on how work with civil society contributes to the theory of change.
- Address restricted external environment of civil society (for example NGO legislation and registration requirements) and develop a conceptual framework on how to work with civil society and child rights in this environment based on practical examples and good practices.
- Develop an effective fundraising strategy including building capacities on fundraising.

## 3) Due to time constraints the group did not consider what SCS can bring to SCI.

## *Day 2: Exploring a framework for future work with civil society*

Participants from SC Denmark, SC Norway and SC US were welcomed (see appendix 1) and Ruth Koshal and Jerome Conilleau briefly presented the recommendations from the group work of day 1.

### ***SC members approaches to civil society partners***

#### *SC Denmark's approach to partnership*

SCD's definition of partnership is: A long-term commitment between two or more like-minded organisations that share visions and complement each other in the work towards the common goal of achieving all rights for all children.

SCD works with 55 local NGO partners in 70 projects financed through Danida. Work with another 25 NGO partners is financed through other sources. Danida, Sida and EU require implementation in partnership with local NGOs.

According to SCD the roles of civil society are support to the development of a democratic civil society, advocacy and awareness-raising for children's rights and citizenship, support to a child rights-based civic community (children's groups, parents, caregivers, teachers, traditional leaders etc.) and support and test of new and innovative ideas.

"Civil society is not per definition 'good'. It also includes anti-democratic organisations and produces ideas and movements which destroy democratic structures", Susanne Kirk Christensen pointed out.

Based on this understanding, SCD works to strengthen communities and their capacity to hold duty-bearers to account, increase legitimacy, improve sustainability through developing local structures, increase the scale and scope of the work, encourage mutual learning and promote participatory approaches and good governance. Guiding principles of the partnerships are: A shared vision and commitment to children's rights, common values, openness and trust, impartiality, mutuality in learning and long term commitment to foster participatory and democratic structures.

Key elements in partnerships are: Focus on the relationship and clarity on the purpose, focus on the psychological contracting process and the formal agreement, feed-back mechanisms and availability of tools and methods to support the above.

The partnership work can be illustrated by the model for organisational development with three circles: to do (protection, education etc.), to be (management, leadership, strategies and staff) and to relate (relations with key stakeholders and SCD, children, global networks etc.).

Susanne explained that there are differences between partners. Some organisations have been partners for 20 years and *are* partners in the true sense of the word. Others see SCD as donors and do everything they are asked to do.

“Partners depend on us”, she continued. “If we build capacity why should we phase out the partner we have invested in? Money still talks in partnerships. It is a challenge to come to a stage where only partnership matters.”

### *SC Norway’s experiences of working with civil society*

Ann Margaret Stewart Pedersen presented the Norwegian approach. SCN has approximately 400-500 partners. This is a very high number, but among them are many indirect partnerships, members of networks etc. SCN has a broad definition of partnership; the majority of the partners are from civil society, but the work also includes partnerships with governments and the private sector. Partnerships have always been a core element of SCN’s work and in the end of the 1990s the last self-implementation was phased out.

Presently, an evaluation of the partnerships and how they are perceived by SCN’s partners, with case studies in several countries, is being made. INTRAC carries out the evaluation.

Building the capacity of civil society is sometimes an end in itself, sometimes a means:

“We do both, we cannot deny that. When we build knowledge to implement child rights programmes, we are a donor.”

As Sweden, Denmark and Norway have a similar approach to partnerships, the three organisations share a concern regarding how to develop an understanding for this approach in SCI.

### *SC US’s views on partnerships*

“In our work partnership is a core element”, Muluemebet Chekol Hunegnaw explained. “We have different kinds of partners; also governments and local governments are our partners.”

“The most common is that we use partners to implement our programmes, but we also identify local organisations, which have innovative solutions, for example regarding informal education and develop relationships with them, with the aim of making them independent.”

A weakness is that we have not documented what we are doing, Muluemebet remarked. And we have no articulated partner strategy, only bits and pieces.

The Keystone Accountability Report, which is about how partners perceive donor NGOs, showed that SC US is good at building capacity on health and some other thematic issues, quite good in communication and support to financial management. On monitoring and evaluation SC US is not so strong, though:

“And on the key issue, institutional strengthening, we were weak, Muluemebet said.

“Therefore, we were inspired to initiate the SCI working group on partnership.”

The purposes of the working group are:

- To establish a common understanding of the diversity and depth of SC’s approach(es) to partnership at the country level, and



- To develop or leverage the tools and resources across the membership to strengthen SC's vision, principles and approach to partnership.

### ***New challenges – the Paris agenda and new donors***

Eva Geidenmark presented the study about the Paris agenda and emerging donors.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the study was to increase the understanding of SCS on how to better support and strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in a changing development aid environment. The following mayor players of interest to SCS were identified: Traditional Western donors, multilateral donors, traditional non OECD donors, emerging donors, with focus on China and India, and non-state emerging donors.

Some findings of the study were that the Paris Agenda might:

- Compromise the space open to civil society and aid becomes the preserve of bilateral donors and governments.
- Make the rights of the child a low priority in the rush for donor harmonization.
- Lead to government dispersing funds to service delivery rather than to strengthen to watchdog function of civil society organisations.
- Lead to reduced funding for small civil society organisations as donors will channel funds through large INGOs, urban-based NGOs or UNICEF.

On the positive side is that the Paris Agenda might:

- Create opportunities for civil society to influence the aid effectiveness agenda.
- Open up for monitoring the results of development aid.
- Increase the opportunity for civil society to hold governments accountable.

However, civil society has not seized the opportunities due to: lack of willingness on the part of governments to encourage civil society participation, lack of knowledge and understanding of the Paris agenda and insufficient technical and institutional support.

Concerning emerging donors, China and India have signed the Paris Declaration as recipient countries, not as donors. Both countries receive aid, but are also donors. China's main focus is Africa, India supports neighbouring countries, but very little information is available about India as a donor.

---

<sup>2</sup> New Challenges for Civil Society – The Impact of the Paris Agenda and new Eerging Donors on Child Rights Civil Society, SCS 2010

Important non state emerging donors are private foundations. Sometimes they, for example the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provide more funds than some donor countries. Concerning impact there is a difference between old and new foundations; from support to watchdog functions of NGOs to service delivery NGOs. The non state emerging donors also have goals that do not correspond to civil society objectives. For example they aim at obtaining quick results, not at building partnerships.

It was noted that the Paris Agenda has not been on the agenda of the SCI global advocacy group.

## ***Presentation of the SCI Theory of change***

Eva Geidenmark presented the Theory of change:



“But SCS has said that we do not want to be the voice, we want to give voice to children”, it was pointed out from the audience.

“Where is the leadership of governments? Now they are mentioned as a partner, on the same level as civil society. Where is government accountability?” another participant asked.

Maybe we need to reformulate a few things, for example concerning work with governments, one participant suggested. Others, however, pointed out that as the Theory of change has been adopted by the SCI Board it will be difficult to get acceptance for rephrasing it.

### **SCI vision, mission and values**

The new SCI vision is: “A world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation”.

The mission is “To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives”.

## ***Lessons learned from the transition process in the SCA region***

Turid Heiberg provided some impressions from the transition in the SCA (South and Central Asia) region:

The transition is very top heavy. Decisions are taken at meetings where you represent everybody. Usually it is the Regional Directors or Regional Coordinators who are part of decision making. It also happens very fast.

You have to understand who you are; SC US is the financially strongest member and therefore they risk more. However, the smaller members' interests and investment is also crucial for a strong SCI.

There are new people to relate to, such as the change managers from the Boston Consulting Group. Also in other senses the context may be confusing, but this is expected to be easier for the regions that will go through the transition in the future.

During the transition there were lots of rumours: Where will this office be placed in the new organisation? Will there be room for me? All this is a source of frustration.

The regional directors of the two first regions have been appointed and soon the Regional Directors for the next regions will be appointed. It is important to identify and support key staff to play a vital role in the new SCI and in general the staff needs to be well informed. The ongoing work during the transition and the future prospects needs to be felt as meaningful. And you have to believe that things will work although a much larger organisation will work in a slightly different way from what we are used to. There will also be more opportunities as staff now will be supported by many more members.

You need to always be alert, in relation to new developments, research etc. We need to be in the change mood all the time.

"It is a hurricane!" Turid summarized.

Partners need to be informed and trained. We have to see which partners can take issues forward. A question that remains unanswered is what will happen with work that benefits the children who are hardest to reach. This work is normally not done by big partners.

"And if we should only look for partners who can deliver at scale, what about children's organisations, was a question from the audience."

Concerning the small partners some workshop participants suggested that SCS should argue for marking room for them in the new organisation. Others opted for other solutions, such as to provide the partners with fundraising strategies so that they can find new funding or set up structures that make it possible for big partners to transfer funds to the small ones.

Turid finally remarked: "There are many things with the new, emerging SCI that are a result of compromise or the result of larger interests. Personally, I have decided to check the results after five years and believe that SC will become the leading child rights organisation in achievements and size. Let's see..."

## ***Child rights governance (CRG) global initiative***

Ulrika Sonesson, Jumanah Zabaneh and Lene Andersen presented the CRG initiative:

Global initiatives are there to support agreed priorities. They are not implementing; members implement the global strategy. The CRG initiative assists in coordinating, strengthening and innovating.

The GRG initiative has three sub-themes: child rights monitoring, strengthening of national systems and building awareness and capacity.

There are three global outcome indicators:

- % of countries in which child-informed supplementary reports are being prepared by partners and children's networks supported by or partnering with Save the Children.
- Number of policy or legislative changes to institutionalize children's rights with the support of Save the Children.
- Number of countries where coalitions for children's rights supported by Save the Children and partners have demonstrated impact or influence.

A discussion followed about the importance of not only assessing partners, but also considering how to support them: We need to foster networking between organisations, training on budget analysis, advocacy for law reform and so on. Also we should support children's own organisations and develop good practices on how children can engage in local governance, were some of the suggestions.

Regional consultations in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America are opportunities to exchange information on CRG. The consultations have recommended the sharing of programmes and lessons learned, building a network of CRG persons, capacity-building on budget influencing, involvement of children in local governance, technical assistance to develop long term CRG strategies etc.

## **Group work**

The workshop participants split into two groups with the following questions to discuss.

### **Group work questions**

- The purpose of working with and strengthening civil society?
- Differences between SCI members regarding work with civil society; and
- How to ensure an inclusive approach so that all SCI members feel comfortable?

Concerning the rationale for working with civil society a number of issues were highlighted:

- To enable civil society to monitor children's rights.
- To enable civil society to hold the government to account (watchdog function).
- Support civil society to report on violations.
- Promote sustainability of our work for children.
- Position ourselves to ensure outreach to children and communities.
- Ensure more effective and efficient emergency preparedness and response.
- Support and empower civil society towards more democratic societies.
- Strengthen civil society as advocates for children's rights.
- Deal with cultural sensitivity.
- Learn in order to improve ourselves.
- Save money (at least in the long term).
- Comply with donor requirements.
- Attract talented people.

Some possible differences between SCI members that were highlighted:

- Conceptualization of civil society as a means for enhancing democracy;
- Strengthening of civil society as a means towards achieving our objectives or as an end;
- Understanding for the financial and human investments needed to work with civil society;
- Accountability requirements from back donors (better to implement than to take the risk that partners mess things up);
- Different ideologies concerning the importance of a strong civil society, national members etc;

- Flexibility with core funding or more controlling attitude.

Regarding how to ensure an inclusive approach, one group provided the following recommendations:

1. Partnership assessments should be revisited and there should be different types of assessments for different purposes and different kinds of organisations.
2. Coordination is crucial; countries have to agree on common strategies and share information. It would be useful to have some kind of mechanism for coordination. With time fundraising for country and regional level interventions should be carried out jointly.
3. A set of guidelines and tools on what is an inclusive approach should be developed. Costs of working with civil society versus self-implementation should be explored, good practices as well as failures need to be documented and existing guidelines should be revisited.

The recommendations from the other group were:

1. Develop a model and an approach on work with civil society, keeping in mind donor's requirements.
2. Develop a conceptual framework for working with civil society that is context-specific and based on good practices and examples.
3. Develop a communication paper explaining how working with civil society contributes to the Theory of change.
4. Develop a measure of success from working with civil society to ensure that child rights are achieved.

## *Day 3: Way forward*

Vibeke Jørgensen introduced the last day of the workshop, intended to focus on developing an outline SCS strategy and a SCI framework for cooperation and coordination on civil society and partnership. Ruth Koshal was going to chair the SCS strategy group and Susanne Kirk Christensen was responsible for the group working with the SCI framework. Suggested templates for the structure of the documents were handed out.

### ***Summing-up day 2***

Åsa Rapp Baro presented a brief summing up of the previous days:  
In its work with civil society SC Sweden should:

- reassess how partners contribute to established objectives by the end of 2012;
- demonstrate how OCD contributes to improving children's lives.
- address restricted external environments and develop a conceptual framework on how to work with civil society and child rights based on practical examples and good practices
- develop an effective fundraising strategy.

SCS needs to:

- continue to emphasise partners work to reach the most marginalised groups (non-discrimination);
- ensure understanding of child rights, particularly through the general measures of implementation;

In relation to Save the Children International Save the Children Sweden should:

- Understand, complement and cooperate with SC members on working with civil society and other partnerships in order to achieve the Theory of change
- Develop a communication paper to explain how working with civil society contributes to the Theory of change.

### ***Group 1: Presentation of SCS strategy outline***

Elijah Adera presented the outline:

Vision, mission, SCS values and SCS's position on civil society strengthening, based on the Compass, should initiate the strategy.

As strategic goals (to be achieved in 2015) the group proposed:

- SCS needs to complement and cooperate with SC members on working with civil society in order to fulfill, promote and respect child rights.
- SCS needs to continue its approach of empowering civil society in an innovative and creative manner.

Outcomes/objectives:

- Child rights civil society active as watchdog in a larger human rights/democracy and governance context, holding state to account and empowering children to claim their rights.
- Real partnerships apply based on mutual child rights interest, acting in cooperation with shared goals.
- Increased, measured and documented impact on children's lives of strengthening civil society.
- SCI is a child rights based organisation, inspiring and cooperating with civil society in improving the situation for children.

#### External context:

Need for strengthening existing and new coalitions in regions and countries.

Follow up on the Paris Agenda and incorporate relevant recommendations.

Development of a concept framework on how to work with civil society on child rights issues based on practical examples and good practices in order to address restricted external environments.

Need for highlighting the importance and enhancing the understanding of different donors supporting and strengthening civil society.

#### Internal context:

Strengths: Knowledge and long term experience in working on child rights issues, child participation, knowledge of context and close relationship with civil society at all levels from national to grassroots level, outreach to marginalised groups, networking at different levels and flexibility in funding.

Weaknesses: Documentation and knowledge management need improvements, need for monitoring OCD and documenting results in relation to children's rights, need to keep the



true partnership values when the donor requirements are becoming more stringent and SCS head office should strengthen coordination internally(fundraising, communication, thematic support etc.)

Programme focus: approaches:

- SCS should stress the need to support small, medium size and big partners and also differentiate the kind of support and relationship needed for the three categories.
- SCS should emphasise to reach out to the most marginalised children as there is a risk for these to be left out within the new structure and working methods of SCI.
- SCS should emphasise the unwritten psychological contract (partnership, dialogue, building relationships etc.)
- SCS should put more emphasis on child-led organisations.
- SCS should emphasise networking among partners and influencing other organisations to become advocates for children's rights.

Programme focus: consolidate

- We need to show the link between OCD, the outcome of the work of the partner organisations and the impact of that work on children.

Programme focus: strengthen

- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation processes in all efforts to strengthen civil society.
- Improve the documentation process, as a means to bring out the lessons learnt.
- Empower and encourage other organisations and actors to include children.
- Strengthen CRP training and planning in our work and that of our partners.

Programme focus: innovate

Be creative about including components of strengthening civil society in funding applications. Focus on innovative pilot projects for stakeholders to be able to duplicate.

Communication/documentation: consolidate

Ensure that good practices, lessons learned and case studies are documented, and disseminated.

Consolidate communication among SC members, global initiatives etc. on civil society strengthening.

Ensure that children's and civil society's voices are heard.

#### Communication/documentation: strengthen

Make sure that there is clarity in terminology.

Strengthen partners in communication.

Translate relevant documents into national languages.

#### Communication/documentation: Innovate

Develop a paper to explain how working with civil society contributes to the Theory of change.

Use create and new methods of communication, for example DVDs, Facebook and Twitter.

Vibeke explained that the SCS strategy will mainly be for internal use, in order to identify weaknesses and how to improve SCS's work with partners – taking into account the context of SCI and opportunities for influencing SCI. Another target group will be donors; as of yet SCS has not been very clear on its partnership approach to them.

Susanne informed that SCD is developing strategies at country level on partnership and capacity development but is not planning anything similar to the SCS strategy at head office level. SCN intends to develop more tools for how to strengthen civil society. SC US will review its work on partnerships; local capacity building is a focus area and probably some small document for internal use and communication to donors will be elaborated, Muluemebet said.

## ***Group 2: Presentation of SCI framework on work with civil society***

Susanne Kirk Christensen presented the results of the group's deliberations and noted that a division of responsibilities between the SCI group on partnership and the CRG initiative sub-group on civil society would be needed. The group's thoughts should be seen as an input to both groups, however.

The group had chosen the SCS definition of civil society: Citizens who act collectively and voluntarily in an organised way in order to express or promote a common interest or opinion.

The goal of the framework should be:

- To create a strong children's movement together with children.

Regarding how the Theory of change applies to work with civil society, the group had the following suggestions:

In relation to voice, partnerships should provide collective voice, enhance credibility, increase legitimacy and enable children's voices to be heard. Regarding innovation, working with children can lead to innovative ideas. Civil society also brings knowledge and understanding

that we might not have otherwise. As regards bringing interventions to scale, civil society organisations should primarily take issues further to governments. Another option could be that civil society disseminates new ideas and approaches through their networks and bring to scale through duplication. Advocacy with governments to take on successful approaches could be carried out by civil society.

Concerning democracy, partners' values will depend, the group remarked. Sometimes they are not democratic and do not live up to the standards we would like to see, but they might for example be very good at distributing food in emergencies. Other partners might have strong values and democratic structures. The choice of partners will depend on the situation and the context, the group concluded. It is not possible to say what is better; it depends on what you want to achieve. The group, however, suggested a categorization of partners in order to be able to make deliberate choices.

## ***Appendix 1: Participants' list***

### ***Save the Children Sweden, Regions***

**Ulrica Soneson Cilliers**, Africa Coordinator, Child Rights Governance Global Initiative

**Ibrahim Faltas**, Regional Civil Society Program Advisor, Middle East and Eastern Europe

**Åsa Rapp Baro**, Regional Advisor Child Rights Governance West Africa

**Ruth Koshal**, Regional Child Rights Governance Manager East and Central Africa

**Monica Alcedo**, Programme Coordinator, Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office

**Jerome Conilleau**, Regional Thematic Advisor on Child Protection

**Turid Heiberg**, Regional Director, Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia

**Jumanah Zabaneh**, Regional Representative, Child Protection and Child Rights and Governance Initiatives in Middle East and Eastern Europe

**Elijah Adera**, Regional Programme Manager, Southern Africa

### ***Save the Children International***

**Muluemebet Chekol Hunegnaw**, Senior Director, Monitoring & Evaluation, Save the Children US

**Susanne Kirk Christensen**, CRG Programme Coordinator, Save the Children Denmark

**Ann Margaret Stewart Pedersen**, Senior Advisor Policy, Planning and Reporting, Save the Children Norway/Redd Barna

**Lene Andersen**, Child Rights Governance regional Manager ( ASIA) Save the Children

### ***Save the Children Sweden HO***

**Vibeke Jørgensen**, Senior Advisor Rights of the Child and Civil Society, Thematic Support

**Eva Geidenmark**, Director Thematic Support

**Monica Sarajärvi**, From August 2011 Advisor on Civil Society, Thematic Support

**Agneta Gunnarsson**, Rapporteur