

**AN OVERVIEW ON
SAVE THE CHILDREN'S WORK
ON INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN
IN 10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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SUMMARY ON KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was commissioned by Save the Children Finland in November 2012 as part of its Child Rights and Good Governance work funded by the European Commission. The aim of the study is to establish an overview of what kind of work relating to *Investment in Children* Save the Children (SC) Members in nine EU member states and Norway have carried out, and the results so far.

Key findings:

- Investment in Children related issues are increasingly addressed by SC Members in their domestic work. Eight out of 10 have implemented at least some activities in this area. There is real interest on one hand in further developing related advocacy as an integrated element within advocacy on specific child rights issues, on the other hand in implementing specific Investment in Children research and advocacy projects.
- Main focus in the Investment in Children related work has been on government allocation and spending, but also revenue as well as transparency and accountability related issues have been addressed. The close interrelatedness of these three areas is visible in the implemented or planned research, advocacy and civic activities.
- Even though Investment in Children is still a new area of work, SC Members have achieved already many concrete outputs and outcomes, including background studies and analysis, position papers and raising discussions with governments etc. There are positive examples where advocacy has contributed to changes in government policies. Advocacy efforts are often long-term processes where awareness and discussions raised with decision-makers are important steps in achieving positive changes in government policies and practices.
- The principles of *non-discrimination* and *inclusion* are clearly reflected in SC Members' work. *Child and youth participation* is to some extent promoted at the local level. SC Members are widely involved in UNCRC monitoring and alternative reporting, but limited attention has been paid to Investment in Children related issues in this connection.
- There is still some incoherence in the use of terminology, especially child budgeting, budgeting for children and child rights budgeting. All three concepts are used in a mixed way.
- Highly decentralized government structures together with difficulties in accessing budget data, makes it challenging for SC Members to analyse the government investment in children in their countries. There is interest to conduct research and analysis in collaboration with academics.
- In order to strengthen their work in this area, most SC Members need more funding.
- SC Members are interested in sharing information about and discuss results, challenges and lessons learned within Save the Children for joint learning and finding potential synergies.

Recommendations:

- It would be important to look for ways to further strengthen sharing of information, best practices, experiences as well as challenges and thereby joint learning among SC Members within Europe and globally.
- One area of collaboration could be related to research and analysis on government budget allocations and spending within the frameworks of decentralized government structures since there are clear similarities in how the system functions in certain countries.
- It would be important to have shared definitions for key concepts, especially child budgeting, budgeting for children and child rights budgeting. This would support collaboration, joint learning, sharing of experiences and tools development within the international organization.
- Even though the focus and intensity of Investment in Children related work among SC Members will vary, it would be important to reflect government resource allocation issues during UNCRC alternative or complementary reporting processes. To what extent the issue will be included in final reports will depend of the country context.
- SC Members' expertise and ongoing work in other areas such as child protection, rights of the children from vulnerable groups etc. should be seen on one hand as opportunities to integrate

Investment in Children aspects in existing programs and on the other hand as a valuable resource in strengthening *Investment in Children* related expertise on specific issues within the organization at the international level.

- Continued efforts at the European and inter-regional and global level for applying e.g. joint EU funding for this purpose are recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

Save the Children has identified *Investment in Children* as one of the global priority areas to be addressed under the thematic area of Child Rights Governance. In the “*Investment in Children Breakthrough: Concept Note*”¹ the high relevance of analysis and advocacy on Investment in Children in promoting the realization of children's rights is strongly emphasized. It is noted that that one of the single biggest barriers to the realization of child rights is that there is insufficient budget allocated to the sectors that most impact children and a lack of transparency and accountability for the spending that is allocated (p. 4). In order to remove these barriers Save the Children is intensifying its Investment in Children related work with the following global objective: All children, especially the poorest, benefit from greater public investment and better use of society's resources in realizing their rights.

This study was commissioned by Save the Children Finland in November 2012 as part of its Child Rights and Good Governance work funded by the European Commission. The aim of the study is to establish an overview of what kind of work relating to Investment in Children Save the Children Members in EU member states and Norway have carried out, and the results so far. It contributes to the Save the Children global level initiative on Investment in Children under the thematic area of Child Rights and Good Governance. It can be used to provide information and guidance for strengthening of linkages between the international, regional, country and local level advocacy efforts of Save the Children as well as other kind of collaboration in this area of work among the Save the Children Members in Europe.

The study was conducted through structured interviews² with the persons responsible for Investment in Children related work of Save the Children Members in 10 European countries, namely Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden and UK³. Nine of the interviews were conducted as phone interviews and one through e-mail exchange. The aim was to collect information on what kind of Investment in Children related work has already been carried out and what have been the results so far, what have been the main challenges faced and what are the future plans in relation to investment in children as well as what kind of collaboration Save the Children Members in these countries are having or would like to have with other relevant actors in their countries and within Save the Children at the international level.

The report starts by making an overview analysis on common trends, approaches and differences among the Save the Children (SC) Members in the 10 European countries in relation to their Investment in Children related work (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 analyzes the work of the European SC Members within the framework of Investment in Children and especially against the activity categories identified in the Investment in Children Concept Note. Chapter 4 includes brief country specific summaries on the Investment in Children related work by the 10 European Save the Children Members, results achieved so far, main challenges faced, future plans as well as their related collaboration with other actors within and outside Save the Children at the international, European and domestic levels. Chapter 5 includes conclusions and recommendations.

1 "Investment in Children" Breakthrough: Concept Note, Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI), Save the Children

2 Annex I Interview question

3 Annex II: List of interviewees

2. COMMON FEATURES AND DIFFERENCES IN SAVE THE CHILDREN'S INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN RELATED WORK

2.1 Increasing interest in *Investment in Children* related issues

The mapping of the past and ongoing work as well as future plans of the 10 European Save the Children (SC) Members shows that there is an increasing interest in and commitment to the Investment in Children related work even though it is still a relatively new area of work and not yet a priority for many of them.

For most SC Members covered by the study *Investment in Children* is a relatively new area of work and the activities implemented so far have often been small integrated elements within already ongoing research, advocacy and other domestic project work focusing on specific child rights issues. For example SC Denmark has advocated for migrant families access to government unemployment benefits as part of their advocacy in support to children from vulnerable groups. In a similar way SC Norway has advocated for adequate government resources as part of its advocacy on asylum seeking children's rights. The issue of adequate resourcing has also been reflected in SC Spain's advocacy on child-friendly judicial system. SC Netherlands has advocated for increased emphasis on children's rights in the government development policy including increased investment in children in the Overseas Development Aid (ODA).

Three of the interviewed SC Members have already a stronger emphasis on specific Investment in Children issues. SC Romania has done advocacy since 2008 on child allowances as a constitutional right of all children, parental leave arrangements, hidden costs of education as well as government investment in education. SC Italy has started a comprehensive campaign on child poverty with strong focus on government investment in reducing and alleviating child poverty in Italy. SC UK has conducted research on the impact of government investment in the poorest children, promoted child rights budgeting in Wales and is in process of preparing a more comprehensive advocacy project on child rights budgeting. SC Finland is preparing for child budgeting related advocacy at the level of municipalities together with its local associations with emphasis on children's participation.

SC Sweden and SC Germany are not currently implementing or planning any *Investment in Children* related activities or projects. However, this does not reflect lack of interest, but rather lack of financial and human resources. SC Sweden had planned a comprehensive project on child budgeting together with four other European SC Members for which EU funding was applied. However, due to rejection of the proposal, project can't yet be implemented.

While some SC Members including SC Italy, SC UK, SC Romania and SC Finland were already implementing or planning more comprehensive *Investment in Children* related research and advocacy, SC Denmark and SC Norway emphasized that their aim is not to develop so much specific projects on *Investment in Children*, but rather to strengthen the aspect of government resource allocation for child rights implementation as an element in advocacy on some specific issues.

All 10 European Save the Children Members expressed their interest in strengthening their work in Investment in Children in the future. However, for many of them a prerequisite for this was that new funding for this purpose would be received e.g. through SC Members' joint EU funded projects. All SC Members emphasized their interest in further analysis on the government budget allocation and spending on children's rights.

The below table summarizes which Save the Children Members are already working on or preparing for more comprehensive work Investment in Children as well as which Save the Children Members have expressed their interest in expanding their work in this area.

Save the Children Member	Work in the past and currently	Preparing for more comprehensive work	Interested in expanding their work, if funding ensured	Remarks on future interests
SC Denmark	x		x	Some advocacy activities on specific issues. Interested in a wider analysis to support the advocacy on specific issues.
SC Finland	x	x		Some activities on specific issues. Planning for more systematic work on child budgeting especially at the local level.
SC Germany			x	Interested in a wider analysis on government budget allocations and spending if funding received.
SC Italy	x	x		An extensive campaign launched in 2012 with strong elements in investment in children.
SC Netherlands	x			Ongoing advocacy on children's rights in the government ODA.
SC Norway	x		x	Some activities included in advocacy on specific issues. Interested in a wider analysis to support the advocacy on specific issues.
SC Romania	x		x	Several advocacy initiatives and campaigning on Investment in Children. Interested in a wider research on government investment.
SC Spain	x		x	Some activities included in advocacy on specific issues. Interested in a wider analysis to support the advocacy on specific issues.
SC Sweden			x	Interested in and prepared for working on government investment including child budgeting, if funding received.
SC UK	x	x		Research and advocacy towards the Welsh government. Preparing for comprehensive advocacy on government investment in children.
Total	8	3	6	

2.2 Investment in Children and the rights-based approach

The human rights-based approach of Save the Children and especially the principles of *non-discrimination* and *inclusion* are clearly reflected in the current activities and future plans related to Investment in Children of the 10 European SC Members.

The starting point for defining objectives and aims for activities was generally based on children's rights, government's related duties and commitments as well as analysis on current gaps in their realization. Strong emphasis is given to the poorest children and children from the most vulnerable groups such as migrant children, asylum seeking children, children from families affected by unemployment or single-parent families etc. This strong focus on child poverty and non-discrimination and inclusion of vulnerable groups can be seen in the below table.

Save the Children Member	Right-holder focus
SC Denmark	Poorest children including children from migrant families
SC Finland	Poorest children
SC Germany	Poorest children, children from vulnerable groups
SC Italy	Poorest children especially from the most vulnerable groups
SC Netherlands	Children in developing countries
SC Norway	Asylum seeking children, children from vulnerable groups
SC Romania	Poorest children, ensuring rights for all children without conditions
SC Spain	Poorest children, children affected by violence
SC UK	Poorest children

Note: SC Sweden is not currently implementing Investment in Children related activities.

Another child rights principle raised in the interview discussions was the *respect for the views of the child* promoted through child participation. SC UK has already promoted participatory approaches at the local level budgeting in Wales including child participation. SC Finland has also a strong focus on child participation and it is preparing for child budgeting related activities at the local level with emphasis on child participation. However, children and youth are not yet participating in national level advocacy on Investment in Children in any of the countries, and advocacy activities are primarily implemented by Save the Children staff sometimes in collaboration with external experts or other NGOs.

All 10 SC Members had been at least following-up the alternative reporting to the UNCRC Committee and many of them had contributed to alternative or supplementary reports. However, government resource allocation related analysis and recommendations had been included in the alternative reports only in Italy, where SC Italy had coordinated the supplementary reporting process. By some other SC Members it was noted that the length of the alternative reports is limited and therefore not all topics can be addressed.

2.3 Achieved results

Taking into consideration that *Investment in Children* is still a relatively new area of work and is only now being given more emphasis in the SC Members, it is still too early to make a more in-depth analysis on the achieved results. However, it is important to note that there are already many concrete results.

Examples of achieved results:

- SC Denmark advocated successfully the government to remove barriers for immigrant families affected by unemployment to have access to government allowances.
- SC Finland has contributed at the local level on the development of Commune plans for children's and youth well-being.
- SC Italy has produced a dossier for the Let's Remember Children campaign that provides a good analysis on child poverty in Italy and with concrete recommendations for government action it is a useful tool for future advocacy work.

- SC Netherlands has succeeded in advocating for the inclusion of children's rights (as part of the foreign policy) in the party programmes of two Dutch political parties.
- SC Norway succeeded in advocating for amendment in the law so that the child welfare services are currently responsible for under 15 year-old asylum seeking children.
- SC Romania has advocated for child allowance as a right of all children in Romania with positive results.
- SC Spain has successfully advocated for the inclusion of a chapter on resource allocations in the national strategy on children.
- SC UK has successfully advocated the Welsh government to include CRC as part of domestic law. Also a tool kit for participatory budgeting taking into consideration children's rights for local authorities has been developed.

In planning of future work on Investment in Children also the expertise and results achieved e.g. through advocacy in other areas, such as child protection, rights of the children from vulnerable groups, development of child-friendly judicial systems etc. can be seen as opportunities to integrate Investment in Children aspects in successful, ongoing work.

2.4 Challenges faced

There are two main challenges the SC Members are facing when implementing or planning *Investment in Children* related work. Firstly, lack of funding or need for more funding was a main constraint mentioned by most SC Members affecting their capacity to implement more comprehensive projects on Investment in Children. Rejection of a comprehensive multi-country EC proposal submitted by SC Sweden was mentioned as a disappointment by many interviewees. However, it remains unclear to what extent SC Members have carried out other fund-raising for their Investment in Children related work. Another funding related challenge noted by SC Finland was that project-based funding from different sources with different time-frames makes it difficult to make planning in a more holistic manner.

Secondly, SC Members also emphasized that due to decentralization the responsibilities for key issues related to children's rights such as child care, education, health and social protection lie increasingly with regional or local authorities and this makes it very difficult to get information and an overall understanding on government investment in children. Coordinated monitoring or compilation of data within governments is almost non-existing and overall the governments have shown very limited interest in developing such systems.⁴

2.5 Collaboration with other actors at the national and international level

The level of collaboration with other organization and relevant actors on issues on Investment in Children varied among the 10 European SC Members. In many countries SC Members were members in National NGO Groups on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), formed as collaboration fora for CRC monitoring and alternative/complementary reporting. It was also noted that SC Members were collaborating with other organizations on other topics. However, collaboration on specifically *Investment in Children* issues remains limited due to the fact that very few NGOs or other actors active on child rights are working in this area. Seven SC Members were

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For further information see the report Overview On Where And How To Find Information On Government Spending On Child Rights In 10 European Countries, Report Commissioned by Save the Children Finland, Elina Tran-Nguyen, 2013.

in process or interested in strengthening their collaboration with universities and academics on *Investment in Children* related research and analysis. SC UK and SC Italy are already in process of starting collaboration with universities and academics in the area of Investment in Children. SC Finland has already collaboration with universities that can be widened to address also Investment in Children issues. SC Denmark, SC Germany, SC Norway and SC Romania are interested in research type of collaboration with academics in this area.,

All 10 SC Members expressed their interest in participating in the collaboration within Save the Children at the global and European level. They were interested in learning from each other's experiences, sharing of information and tools as well as discussing similar challenges faced in their work. Also synergies from linking advocacy at the international and regional level with advocacy at the national and local levels were mentioned as an added value of collaboration. One issue strongly emphasized by several SC Members was the interest in joint fund-raising for Investment in Children related work e.g. through joint funding EU funding proposals.

3. SAVE THE CHILDREN MEMBERS' WORK WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN IN 10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The "*Investment in Children*" Breakthrough: Concept Note⁵ defines the following three areas for work on *Investment in Children* related work:

- 1) **Revenue analysis and advocacy** aiming at maximizing resources available for investment in children. This would include e.g. activities related to taxation, debt, other main funding sources for the implementation of children's rights including families and private sector.
- 2) **Expenditure/allocation analysis and advocacy** for ensuring equitable and child-friendly allocation and spending . This would include e.g. activities related to tracking and analyzing budget allocations/expenditures in sectors directly related to children's rights and child budgeting.
- 3) **Transparency and accountability** including activities e.g. related to access to budget information, transparency and accountability in the budget process, leakages, wastage and corruption, social accountability and social audit as well as public service monitoring.

When analyzing the past and current *Investment in Children* related activities of the 10 European Save the Children Members as well as their future plans and interests, the priority given to expenditure/allocation analysis and advocacy is visible. The related activities include advocacy for government investment in specific child rights issues, such as benefits for children from vulnerable groups, analysis and advocacy related to the government budget and spending in a specific sector e.g. education and judicial systems or plans to conduct more comprehensive analysis and advocacy on government budget from the perspective of children's rights.

The strong emphasis on analysis and advocacy on government allocation and spending is understandable taking into consideration that *Investment in Children* is a relatively new initiative within Save the Children and in several countries a more systematic plan to address these issues is just being prepared. The analysis on budget allocations and expenditure and thereby understanding the level of government commitment and actual resources provided for the

⁵ "Investment in Children" Breakthrough: Concept Note, Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI), Save the Children

implementation of children's rights can be seen as a basis for the analysis and advocacy in the other areas of Investment in Children work on revenue analysis as well as transparency and accountability can be further developed.

It is necessary to underline the close interrelatedness and parallel nature of these three areas of Investment in Children work. The analysis of government budget allocations and spending often requires addressing transparency issues related to access to budget information. Due to strong decentralization of decision-making and service delivery from the central level to regional and local levels in all 10 countries, access to budget information and especially the flow of funds from the central to local levels is a transparency issue to be addressed especially when making an overall analysis on government allocations and spending at the state or regional levels. Another example on the linkages between the allocation/expenditure related analysis and accountability and transparency and accountability can be taken from child budgeting aiming on one hand at adequate resourcing of implementation of children's rights and on the other hand increasing transparency on how much the government is spending on children's rights as well as through participatory budgeting involving children and youth also strengthen the transparency of government investments.

At the same time, like in the case of Save the Children Italy it has been necessary to link the advocacy for increased allocation and spending on the prevention and eradication of child poverty with analysis and recommendations on revenues to cover the increased costs. Another example of revenue related analysis and advocacy can be found in Romania where Save the Children has analyzed the so called hidden costs of compulsory education showing that parents are paying 1.5 times the amount that the government is investing in their children's education to cover costs related e.g. provision of learning materials and aids, transportation and school repair.

Current emphasis in the *Investment in Children* related work of the 10 European Save the Children Members

Save the Children Member	1) Revenue analysis and advocacy	2) Expenditure/allocation analysis & advocacy	3) Transparency and accountability	Related activities so far and future plans
SC Denmark		x		2): Advocacy on government investment in children from the most vulnerable groups with focus on specific issues such as access to benefits
SC Finland		x	x	2): Advocacy for inclusion of learning material related costs in the government budget for secondary education. 2) & 3): Preparing for child budgeting related advocacy at the local and central level with emphasis on child participation
SC Germany		x		Currently no activities. 2): Depending of availability of funding interested in analysis on government budget allocations and spending on children's rights
SC Italy	x	x		2): Advocacy campaign on government investment in eradicating child poverty. 1): Advocacy on ensuring the required funding for the implementation of campaign recommendations. 2): Addressing government allocation of resources in the alternative reporting to the UNCRC Committee.

Save the Children Member	1) Revenue analysis and advocacy	2) Expenditure/allocation analysis & advocacy	3) Transparency and accountability	Related activities so far and future plans
SC Netherlands		x		2): Advocacy for increased emphasis in the government development aid budget (ODA) on children's rights.
SC Norway		x		2): Advocacy on government investment in specific child rights issues. Interested in conducting a wider analysis on government budget allocation and spending on the implementation of children's right to support advocacy on more specific issues
SC Romania	x	x		1) Analysis and advocacy on families' investment in their children's compulsory education. 2) Advocacy on children's and their families' equal access to government benefits as well as government investment in education. Interested in a more comprehensive analysis in collaboration with academics on government allocation of funds and spending on children's rights.
SC Spain		x	x	2): Advocacy on increased allocation of resources to the judicial system to become more child-friendly. 2): Advocacy for the inclusion of a chapter on resourcing the implementation of the national strategy for children. 2)&3): An advocacy strategy is being prepared on child poverty with focus on children from the most vulnerable groups including analysis on government investment and effects of budget cuts. 2): Strategy for inclusion of a specific strategy on children's rights in the government development policy.
SC Sweden		x		Currently no activities. If funding received interested in: 2) developing child budgeting in Sweden
SC UK		x	x	2): Advocacy in Wales on child budgeting 2): Preparing for a comprehensive project on child rights budgeting in UK. 2&3) Conducted a study on the impact of government investment in the poorest children.

4. COUNTRY SPECIFIC SUMMARIES

This chapter includes country specific summaries on the Investment in Children related work by the 10 European Save the Children Members, results achieved so far, main challenges faced, future plans as well as their related collaboration with other actors within and outside Save the Children at the international, European and domestic levels.

4.1 Save the Children Denmark

1) *Investment in Children related work*

Investment in Children issues have not been in the focus of Save the Children Denmark's advocacy work so far, the focus being mainly on child poverty from the perspective of the most vulnerable groups. However, within this context Save the Children has advocated for improved government financial support to families receiving social support from the Danish state including to some immigrant families. Specific and successful lobbying has been done on removal of barriers faced by immigrant families and other families receiving reduced social benefits.

Save the Children Denmark will continue its advocacy efforts with focus on the poverty of children from the most vulnerable groups. It sees that follow-up is needed since even though new laws have been formulated to improve the government support to poor families, it is not yet possible to measure the actual effects of the new legislation to the lives of children. Another challenge is related to the lack of a defined poverty line in Denmark.

Save the Children Denmark is interested in strengthening its Investment in Children related work. In spring 2013 it is conducting a Child Rights Governance Situational Analysis which will guide the prioritization and planning. It is expected that Investment in children will probably become a focus area for in depth analysis and programming. Depending of the availability of funding Save the Children Denmark would be interested in conducting research on government budget allocation and spending for the implementation of children's rights in collaboration with national economists. The research data and analysis would be used as a source of information and important tool for strengthening advocacy efforts on some more specific issues.

2) *Results from Investment in Children related work*

Save the Children Denmark advocated successfully the government to remove barriers for immigrant families affected by unemployment to have access to government allowances.

3) *Implementation structure*

Within Save the Children Denmark *Investment in Children* as a domestic issue is under the responsibility of the Child Rights and Education Section dealing with Child Rights Governance issues. Domestic Investment in Children related advocacy is also carried out by this section in coordination with the Advocacy Section, while advocacy efforts related to Danish government's foreign policy is under the responsibility of the Advocacy Section.

4) *Main challenges in Investment in Children related work*

As result of decentralization the main government responsibilities for education, health and social protection lie with municipalities and for the health also with regions. The state level budget doesn't include many lines directly relevant to child rights implementation. No coordinated monitoring or compilation of data is taking place that makes it very difficult to get an overall understanding on the government spending on the implementation of human rights.

Save the Children Denmark participated in the EU funding proposal on child budgeting submitted

by Save the Children Sweden. Since the proposal did not receive funding there is currently lack of financial resources for strengthening *Investment in Children* related work.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

The issue of government Investment in Children including allocation and spending for the implementation of child rights has not received much attention within the Danish civil society or the government. Therefore there would be role for Save the Children to play.

Within the international Save the Children organization Save the Children Denmark is active at the European level collaboration. It hopes that at the European level Save the Children members could develop and get funding for joint projects in the future.

4.2 Save the Children Finland

1) Investment in Children related work

Investment in Children has not yet been a focus area in Save the Children Finland's domestic work at the national and local levels. Some small-scale activities have taken place, such as support to the provision of learning materials for secondary school students from poor families and advocacy related to free secondary education.

Children's participation is strongly emphasized in Save the Children Finland domestic work on child poverty and child protection. Save the Children local associations play a key role in promoting children's participation at the local level in practice and it is being discussed how they could promote commune level child budgeting in the future. In 2013 the local associations will receive training on how to promote child-centeredness in commune level decision making with strong emphasis on children's right to be heard on decision-making concerning their lives. Tools have been developed for this purpose and collaboration with media is being initiated.

Save the Children Finland gives strong emphasis to child protection related advocacy in its domestic work where direct service delivery and advocacy are closely interlinked and supporting each other. At the national level Save the Children has produced various position papers, commented new law initiatives and raised child protection issues in the human rights monitoring processes including UPR. At the commune level capacity development is provided for guardians with emphasis on children's right to be heard. In this work *Investment in Children* issues have not yet been addressed so much, but SC Finland sees its child protection related expertise as a strength that can be used also in the Investment in Children related work.

In 2012 Save the Children received EU budget support for Child Rights Governance Initiative including this study on Investment in Children.

Save the Children Finland is currently undergoing a strategy planning process, where the focus and a more holistic strategy for advocacy work will be defined for the coming years. It is expected that citizenship including child and youth participation as well as child budgeting will be among the thematic focus areas both at the local and national level. Linking direct local level civic activities and advocacy efforts at different levels continues being an important strategy in Save the Children Finland's domestic work .

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Finland has advocated for child rights in various processes with many positive results. It has e.g. contributed to advocacy efforts on the legislative changes at the European level, it has influenced government funding decisions, it has been active in the advocacy against racism at the level of Council of Europe. At the local level it has promoted the commune plans for the wellbeing of children and youth that have become a channel for intersectoral collaboration in great majority of Finnish communes. In Joensuu city Save the Children has promoted the establishment

of a Family House for preventive child protection work. All these activities and their results have also aspects related to Investment in Children.

3) Implementation structure

The Civic Activities team of Save the Children Finland is responsible for *Investment in Children* related civic activities and advocacy in Finland. The wide network of local associations plays a key role in advocacy at the local level. Child and youth participation is increasingly emphasized and new channels and mechanisms for its strengthening are being discussed. So far children's participation has happened under some specific projects.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

One challenge affecting the collaboration within the Finnish civil society in this area is related to certain level of competition. Save the Children Finland has strong expertise on child protection that could also increasingly be linked to *Investment in Children* related work, but it still has a relatively low profile in advocacy at the national level.

The domestic work has been to some extent fragmented due to project-based funding. However, the new strategy is expected to support reaching a more holistic approach.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

Save the Children Finland has a wide network for collaboration within the Finnish civil society that could be used as a channel also for the *Investment in Children* related advocacy in the future. It is member in the UNCRC working group involving child-centered organizations and other relevant actors. It also collaborates closely with Central Union for Child Welfare and promotes Children's Parliament activities with Finnish Parents' League and the Ombudsman for Children in Finland. In addition collaboration with universities and other learning institutions have been initiated. Save the Children Finland maintains also good dialogue with Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY)⁶, different ministries, other NGOs, authorities and professionals at the national and international level and especially at the European level. The local level networks of Save the Children local associations are an important and widespread channel for commune level advocacy.

Save the Children Finland participates in *Investment in Children* related collaboration within Save the Children at the European level and it is a member of the child poverty thematic working group. Sharing of information and joint learning among Save the Children Members, joint efforts for getting funding as well as joint advocacy are considered important.

4.3 Save the Children Germany

1) Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Germany is a relatively new organization established in 2004 and operational since 2006. The Programme Department responsible for both international and domestic programmes was established in the end of 2007. Due to limited human and financial resources it has not yet worked on Investment in Children related issues in Germany, the focus being on fund-raising for and management of development cooperation programmes and humanitarian aid.

The main domestic advocacy and project activities implemented by Save the Children Germany so far have been as follows:

⁶ Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) raises funds through gaming operations to promote Finnish health and welfare. It provides funding to Finnish health and social welfare organisations as well as for the benefit of the country's war veterans.

- i. In 2007 Save the Children collaborated with the German Federal Government on children's and national NGO participation in the World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children. In 2008-2009 it advocated the government to strengthen its support to children who have experienced violence and sexual exploitation.
- ii. Some small-scale domestic projects on children's participation in decision-making in primary schools have been implemented. In the near future a corporate funded two-year project on strengthening the interaction and collaboration between schools and families with involvement of migrant NGOs. This project includes a specific component on child participation.
- iii. Save the Children followed the previous UNCRC reporting process with focus on refugees, but it did not contribute actively to the alternative report.

Save the Children Germany is in principle interested in Investment in Children and child budgeting related work in Germany. However, due to lack of human and financial resources it is not yet able to start this kind of activities.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

As noted above Save the Children Germany has not worked specifically on Investment in Children so far. One of its main advocacy achievements has been the establishment of a new formally independent institution that has linkages to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, to address i.e. the issue sexual exploitation of children.

3) Implementation structure

The domestic and international programmes of Save the Children Germany are managed by the Programme Department with five staff.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

For Save the Children the main obstacle for doing *Investment in Children* related work is lack of financial and human resources. The main emphasis is currently on the management of international programmes and related fund-raising.

With regard to government investment related analysis and advocacy in Germany, the administrative structure makes the overall analysis extremely difficult. The responsibility on significant services and actions related to children's lies with the fairly autonomous Federal States and municipalities, and the Central Government plays a minor role. In addition to these structural challenges the government budget information is not openly available. In order to have an in-depth analysis it would be necessary to have a comprehensive research project with duration of 1-2 years in collaboration with academics.

There is some level of reluctance in Germany against creation of formal structures and mechanisms for UNCRC implementation, such as the Ombudsman for Children.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

Since Save the Children Germany has not worked on *Investment in Children* it has not been involved in related networking or collaboration with other organizations or actors in this field.

Save the Children Germany has recently decided to join the Europe Group of Save the Children that it finds a relevant forum for advocacy taking into consideration that European decision making is increasingly done at the European level. If there are possibilities to get joint EU funding for Save the Children Members for Investment in Children related work, Save the Children Germany is very interested in participating.

4.4 Save the Children Italy

1) *Investment in Children related work*

Save the Children Italy is doing advocacy on government investment in children's rights with specific focus on child poverty. In its domestic work Save the Children Italy links the advocacy efforts at different levels with the experience from concrete projects at the local level. Since 2011 Save the Children Italy has implemented concrete local level projects in disadvantaged areas of ten cities all around Italy on health education, nutrition education and sports in partnership with two national sports associations. These projects promote good nutritional and exercise habits among children from the disadvantaged groups thereby addressing the issue of increasing poor nutrition and sedentary life-styles. In 2011 Save the Children Italy established the network "Crescere al Sud" (Grown Up in the South of Italy) to gather best practices and to advocate for structural changes with a specific focus on child poverty.

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In May 2012 Save the Children Italy started an advocacy campaign 'Let's Remember the Children' towards the political decision-makers at the national level, targeting especially the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Social Welfare concrete recommendations on the required increase in the investment in children as well as how this investment could be funded. A comprehensive campaign document analyzing child poverty in Italy with emphasis on children from the vulnerable groups (single parent families, young parents, large families, parents with low level of education, families affected by unemployment etc.) and making recommendations for structural improvements has been prepared.⁸ The campaign also draws the attention of decision-makers to remarkable differences in the level of child poverty between the Northern and Southern parts of Italy as well as between migrant children and children with an Italian origin. Moreover from 2010 Save the Children Italy realized a publication named "*L'Atlante dell'Infanzia a risk*" (*Atlas of children at risk*) to collect and highlight different data on childhood, that include also information about social investment on children.

Save the Children Italy is starting collaboration with an Italian research institute to conduct research on the welfare system with specific focus on children that is expected to be published during the latter half of 2013.

The campaign will be relaunched in 2013, and it will probably include also a focus on regional level.

Save the Children Italy also coordinates the Italian NGO group for CRC and has led the development of an alternative report to the UNCRC Committee. In this connection also the government allocation of resources for the implementation of children's rights was analyzed and commented. The economic crisis and government budget cuts affecting children continue being a big concern for child-centered organizations in Italy.

2) *Results from Investment in Children related work*

At the level of outputs various activities involving children and families from the disadvantaged groups at the local level have been implemented as part of the domestic project work.

The dossier of Let's Remember Children campaign provides a good analysis on child poverty in Italy and with concrete recommendations for government action it is a useful tool for future

⁷ Further information on the supplementary report can be found in the report *Overview on Where and How to Find Information on Government Spending on Child Rights in 10 European Countries*, Elina Tran-Nguyen, January 2013

⁸ The Land of Hop o' My Thumb, Ricordiamoci dell'infanzia: the Dossier (Let's Remember the Children)

advocacy work.

3) Implementation structure

The Advocacy Department is responsible for implementing the Investment in Children related work within Save the Children Italy. Some external experts are involved when necessary.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

The main challenge in analyzing government investment in children in Italy is related to difficulties in finding relevant budget information from different ministries in order to form an overall understanding on the situation at the national level. Another remarkable challenge is related to the decentralization from the central level to the regional level regarding the welfare system. There are remarkable differences between the regions and also within regions among municipalities that have the primary responsibility for child care and pre-school education. Within the Atlas there are maps that underline these differences.

There are no systems for coordinated monitoring of budget allocation or spending neither at the national or at the regional or local levels.

There is a strong need for advocacy taking into consideration the radical government budget cuts affecting children.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

As noted above Save the Children Italy is coordinating the NGO group for CRC in Italy and Crescere al Sud. It collaborates with other NGOs and associations in the implementation of local level projects.

Save the Children Italy has been involved in the Investment in Children related discussions at the European and international level collaboration within Save the Children and is interested in participating in possible joint projects and related fund-raising in the future.

4.5 Save the Children Netherlands

1) Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Netherlands' Investment in Children related work has focused on advocacy for integration of and increased allocation of funds for children's rights in the Dutch government's development policy and ODA budget. Using the Save the Children Investment in Children report⁹ Save the Children Netherlands has lobbied towards Dutch political parties and the Dutch government to integrate children's rights back into their party programmes and the coalition agreement in their foreign policy.

In collaboration with UNICEF Save the Children Netherlands started a children's rights lobby towards the main Dutch political parties in May 2012 when the government fell. All parties were contacted through a letter explaining the necessity to integrate children's rights into their party programme. Few were contacted in conversations, namely the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and Labour Party (PvdA). Within one and a half week Save the Children and UNICEF organised 23 other organisations to support this lobby-effort with positive results.

In August 2012, towards the elections, a new letter was sent to the political parties with a suggestion on a paragraph in the coalition agreement. This letter was supported by a petition

⁹ Investment in Children, Report commissioned by Save the Children, Child Rights Governance Initiative, Paola Pereznioto, Anamaria Golemac Powell and Merima Avdagic, November 2011

driven by Save the Children, UNICEF, Warchild and Terre des Hommes and supported by the other organisations that had joined the advocacy campaign earlier. The petition received over 10.000 votes and in the parliament it was received by four political parties. Despite these efforts children's rights were not included in the coalition agreement formed by People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and PvdA. However, it should be noted that human rights are again included in the current coalition agreement.

Save the Children Netherlands continues collaborating with UNICEF, Warchild and Terre des Hommes on joint advocacy on investment in children in the government development policy and ODA. A joint advocacy plan is being prepared for promoting the inclusion of children in the development policy and possibly raising some more specific topics. For example Save the Children Netherlands launched with UNICEF on the 10th of December 2012 the Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) initiated by Save the Children Sweden.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

As result of the joint advocacy the campaign message "children's rights are an integral part of our human rights and foreign policy as our investments are therefore more just, sustainable and efficient" was included in the party programme of PvdA. Another political party (Partij voor de Dieren) included the word 'children's rights' in their programme for the first time.

3) Implementation structure

The Policy and Lobby Department is responsible for the Investment in Children related Advocacy within Save the Children Netherlands.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

It's difficult to differentiate from the Dutch coalition agreement how much they will invest in children in their international cooperation. The education related ODA budget is heavily deteriorating, education not being any longer a priority for the Dutch government. Basic services are not part of the investment and in the health sector the focus is on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

Save the Children Netherlands has done joint advocacy on children's rights in the Dutch development policy and funding in close collaboration with UNICEF as well as Warchild and Terre des Hommes. A plan for a new phase of joint advocacy is being prepared with these organizations.

Save the Children Netherlands is interested in increasingly collaborating with other Save the Children Members within Europe and learning from their work, especially from Save the Children Sweden and Norway about their work on children's rights and child protection.

4.6 Save the Children Norway

1) Investment in Children related work

In the domestic rights-based advocacy work of Save the Children Norway *Investment in Children* related issues are raised and addressed as one element when promoting children's rights on specific issues. So far the advocacy work has focused on child protection including protection and promotion of the rights of asylum seeking children. Save the Children has for example advocated for asylum seeking children to be under the responsibility of child welfare services and not immigration authorities. Within this context also the financial resourcing of required services has been followed up and discussed with the government on a regular basis.

Save the Children has also raised in its dialogue with the government that funds channeled from the state level to municipalities should be earmarked for children. At the moment funds from the central level budget are channeled to municipality level for child welfare services, but there is no guarantee how the funds are used in the end, the autonomy of municipalities being very strong in Norway. Save the Children has emphasized and advocated for mechanisms to ensure same standards for the whole country.

In their work to strengthen the protection of children against violence and abuse advocacy for adequate resourcing has been an element in the efforts to promote the establishment of Children's Houses. The model of Children's Houses providing all services in one place for children who have experienced violence and abuse was brought to Norway through strong advocacy work by Save the Children. The model was adapted from Iceland. From the establishment of the first Children's House in 2008 until today where there are 8 houses, an important advocacy objective for Save the Children has been to promote adequate resourcing of the houses and the establishment of a Children's house in each region of the country.

Save the Children Norway will continue its rights-based advocacy where analysis on and advocacy for adequate resourcing will be one element. A new strategy is being developed for the period of 2014 – 2017 where Child Rights Governance will be one of the main focus areas.

Save the Children Norway would be interesting in studying more in detail government budget allocation and spending for children. This study would be used as background resource and support in advocacy on some more specific issues. In Norway where economic situation is very good and the availability of resources is not always the main challenge it will be useful to have a broader perspective. Save the children emphasizes that availability of funds is not the only issue to be raised because the realization of child rights in the Norwegian context depends very much on how effectively and efficiently the funds are spent, coordination between different services and knowledge about child rights among professionals.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

Save the Children succeeded in its advocacy for the rights of asylum seeking children. The legislation has been amended so that the child welfare services are currently responsible for under 15 year-old asylum seeking children. This was a result of continued discussions with the government, hearings and production of position papers. Advocacy efforts for inclusion of 15-18 year-old asylum seeking children under the responsibility of child welfare services are continued.

As result of Save the Children's advocacy efforts there are currently eight Children's Houses in Norway and the aim is to have full coverage for the whole country.

3) Implementation structure

Within Save the Children Norway the Domestic Programme Section is responsible for advocacy work both at the national and local level. The Section has advisors for specific topics who work either as a team or alone on specific issues.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

In relation to Investment in Children the real challenge in Norway is to follow the flow of funds from the state level to local level. There is no information about any child budgeting or cost-tracking initiatives so far. There are neither any studies comparing political commitments for the children's rights with actual municipality budgets. It is important to note that there may be big differences among the municipalities. The CRC Committee has also pointed out challenges related to budget tracking in their concluding observations to Norway in January 2010.

Norway is well known for its strong commitment to children's rights and to some extent there exists an attitude within the government that the structure in place is sufficient to guarantee the implementation of children's rights. However Save the children continues to uncover the gaps and

and finds it highly important to continue raising awareness on children's rights and the main challenges, including lack of resources.

5) *Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level*

Save the Children Norway has collaborated closely with other NGOs in its work on asylum seeking children. It also participates actively in the NGO network called the Norwegian Forum for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular in the reporting to the CRC Committee and the follow up of the Concluding Observations.

Save the Children Norway has participated actively in the discussions on Child Rights Governance Initiative within the international organization of Save the Children. It is also a member of the Europe group and finds it important to find good ways to collaborate with Save the Children Members within and outside Europe when matching objectives are identified.

4.7 Save the Children Romania

1) *Investment in Children related work*

Save the Children Romania has conducted Investment in Children related monitoring and advocacy in Romania on a continuous basis since 2008 on the following topics:

- Child allowance: The government took an initiative in 2008 to make the child allowance accessible only for children who attend public school, with the idea of creating an incentive for increased school attendance. Save the Children advocated strongly through position papers targeting political decision-makers and press releases against discriminatory conditionalization of child allowance that is a right of all children. The government initiative was rejected since child allowance is defined as a right for all children in Romanian Constitution. Later on Save the Children continued its advocacy for an equal child allowance for all children when the government took a new initiative in 2010 to redefine the level of allowances based on the family income. Also this initiative was rejected as discriminatory based on the Constitution.
- Maternity leave payment: in 2010 Save the Children advocated against a government initiative to reduce the length of parental leaves and the level of leave payments, one of the key arguments being the weak availability of child care services (2.5 % nationwide). This time the advocacy was not successful, and the government has continued making changes to the parental leave arrangements that has made the system very unpredictable for parents to plan their future.
- Costs of free education: Save the Children Romania has conducted research in 2010 on the costs of free education. Even though the compulsory education should be free for all children according to the law, it was found out that parents pay approximately 1,5 times the amount the government is paying (excepting the salaries of the school staff) for their children's education (learning materials and aids, transportation, school repair etc.). These so called hidden costs known by everybody cause drop-out and absenteeism. Even though the new education law (from 2011) mentions that education should receive 6% of the GDP, the Government decided to postpone until 2014 the application of this particular provision and to allocate a much lower percent.
- Intersectoral coordination for child rights: Save the Children Romania has piloted child rights coordination group at the county level involving county level government officials from different sectors and social workers from the local level. At the central level it advocated against the closure of the *National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights* that took place in 2010. However, this advocacy has not been successful so far since no government coordination structure has been reopened or created.

- **Budget transparency:** Save the Children Romania has been advocating for a better transparency and clarity to the way the policy documents are being reflected during the processes of drafting, debating, adopting and spending the public budgets at all levels; increasing the visibility of the strategic documents and ensuring a proper assessment of their impact. This issue was enclosed in Save the Children Romania's latest submission to the Universal Periodic Review (2012) and also in Children's Manifesto - a document, signed by the main political parties (on 20th of November 2012), detailing the most urgent 10 points that need to be transformed into policies and legislation during 2013-2020.

Save the Children Romania will continue to advocate for the 6 % of GDP for education sector budget and spending as well as elimination of hidden costs. It would find very useful to conduct a wider analysis on government investment in children in Romania with support of an external expert and study further the child budget concept in the Romanian context. However, for the time being this has not been possible due to lack of funding.

Save the Children Romania wants to continue its work on government investment in children and related advocacy.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Romania succeeded in its advocacy campaign to raise discussion on the child allowance as a right of all children in Romania with positive results. It has also succeeded in raising awareness on the hidden costs of compulsory education as well as the need to achieve the government target of 6 % of GDP to be invested in education sector. Within the Governance fit for Children project, Save the Children Romania raised awareness on the "child budget" concept. The pilot on child rights coordination group at the county level has received positive feedback from the participants.

3) Implementation structure

Save the Children Romania doesn't have a team/department responsible only for advocacy; instead, this activity is mainstreamed across all projects (thus, the project coordinator has also the role to identify the issues that need to advocate for and to build the argumentation). Nevertheless, the Centre for Information, Documentation and Research (which has 3 staff members: 1 legal specialists, 1 sociologist and 1 social worker) supports all other project coordinators in their advocacy work, through carrying out research, providing statistics/documentation and suggestions for the argumentation. Several advocacy and awareness raising activities are carried out by the Centre, independently from the other projects.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

Due to the decentralized administrative structure the budgeting and spending of funds for the implementation of children's rights takes place at three levels: national, county and local levels with strong emphasis on the local level in municipalities, cities and communes. This makes it very difficult to get an overall understanding on the budget allocations and actual spending for children's rights in different sectors. Consolidated budgets covering the different levels and reflecting the flow of funds from the central level to regional and local level can be requested from the Ministry of Public Finance. However, there are doubts about the reliability of the data. It is difficult to have direct access to budgets. There are also remarkable differences between the budget allocations and the actual spending. No coordinated monitoring of the government investment in children is in place. In addition due to the economic crisis the government is under pressure to further cut its investment in children.

If more funding was available Save the Children Romania would be interested in increasing and widening its work on Investment in Children.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

The research on hidden costs of education was conducted with the support of several partner NGOs (who supported the application of the questionnaires to parents and teachers). The Children's Manifesto was developed together with UNICEF Romania and benefits from the support of 35 other national coalitions and organizations.

Save the Children Romania is interested in collaborating on Investment in Children related issues within Save the Children at the European and international level. It would be very interested in participating in joint funding projects for getting funding for its work in this area.

4.8 Save the Children Spain

1) Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Spain has not yet implemented any specific projects or advocacy activities on Investment in Children so far. For this kind of a more specific work on budgeting for children it had applied funding from EU as part of the funding proposal submitted by Save the Children Sweden, but the project could not be started because funding was not received.

Allocation of government resources for the implementation of child rights has however been included as an element in other advocacy activities as part of a holistic approach:

- A report is being prepared on child-friendly judicial system and one of the recommendations is to increase resources of judicial system to become more child-friendly.
- Save the Children has given inputs to the development of the government three-year national strategy for children. It managed to advocate that a chapter on resourcing and especially funding of the implementation of the strategy was included in the document.
- Child poverty in Spain is one of the thematic areas for advocacy. Studies conducted by UNICEF including statistical analysis on various economic indicators shows that the child poverty is increasing in the country. Save the Children is in process of preparing an advocacy strategy and plan for the coming years on child poverty. It will focus on children from the most vulnerable groups. In the related analysis the relation between poverty and the government budget cuts due to the economic crisis are an issue to be analyzed and raised for discussion.
- Save the Children Spain has done lobbying on the development of a national strategy for the elimination of violence against children. This kind of strategy would also have resource implications.
- Save the Children has been involved in the alternative reporting to the UNCRC Committee. However the resource allocation or other investment in children related issues have not been discussed so much in this connection so far.
- Some advocacy had been conducted together with other child-centred development organizations in Spain to include a specific strategy on children in the government Development Aid Policy document.

Allocation and spending of financial resources for the implementation of children's rights in Spain will be reflected in Save the Children's advocacy work in the future. In the current context of economic crisis in Spain it doesn't make sense to advocate for more money for the budget, but the analysis on funding and how it is spent is of central importance when advocating for realization of children's rights. Without adequate resourcing political promises have no effect.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

Many of the Investment in Children related activities are still ongoing or in a planning phase. However, some concrete results have been achieved so far:

- As result of Save the Children's advocacy the national strategy on children includes a chapter on resource allocations for its implementation.
- As result of the conducted advocacy it is expected that the parliament of Spain is going to establish a commission on violence against children. Even though this is not yet confirmed, it can be seen as a first step towards the development of a national strategy for the elimination of violence against children that would also include a resourcing aspect.

3) Implementation structure

The advocacy activities of Save the Children Spain are implemented by an advocacy team consisting of five staff members. The work is based on an advocacy plan and the concluding observations of the UNCRC Committee are used as a basis on formulation of advocacy messages and recommendations. Children's participation in national level advocacy efforts is still limited.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

One common challenge in the Investment in Children related work is that it is very difficult to get clarity and an overall picture on the actual budget allocations and spending on children's rights in Spain due to the very decentralized administrative structure. In Spain the 17 regional governments are responsible for most children's rights issues, but some responsibilities still lie with the central government and also the municipalities have a strong role in the service delivery for children. Even though the budgets are accessible, it is very difficult to understand and interpret them as well as to get an overview of the actual situation.

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

Cooperation and networking specifically on Investment in Children related issues have been limited. In the advocacy related to government development aid policy Save the Children collaborated with UNICEF, Plan and some other child-centred development organizations. Save the Children is also an active member of the national platform for children (Plataforma de Infancia).

Save the Children Spain finds the international collaboration on Investment in Children within Save the Children important. Many of the challenges faced in Spain are similar to the challenges in other countries and therefore sharing of research and experiences is useful.

4.9 Save the Children Sweden

1) Investment in Children related work

Save the Children Sweden is not implementing any activities related to Investment in Children at the moment. The previous activities in this area were implemented over ten years ago. However, Save the Children Sweden is actively involved in the UNCRC Alternative Reporting process and will submit its own Alternative Report to the CRC Committee. In the Alternative Report the issue of resource allocations for the implementation of child rights may be less emphasized since the government of Sweden has made remarkable progress in providing detailed spending related information in its fifth periodic report compared to the previous periodic reports.

Save the Children Sweden prepared recently an EU funding proposal for an extensive programme on Child Budgeting in collaboration with four other European Save the Children Members. The aim was to develop and promote Child Budgeting approaches and processes. Unfortunately the proposal did not receive funding and for this reason Save the Children Sweden is not able to start any activities on child budgeting or more widely on *Investment in Children* for the time being. The reasons for the rejection of the funding proposal are being analysed, the main reasons being

possibly the big volume of the programme and gaps related to child participation.

Save the Children Sweden sees the issue of budgeting for children as an important topic to be promoted e.g. for the reason that governments normally show very little interest in developing tools and processes for budgeting for children. Therefore submission of a new EU funding proposal in 2013 will be considered.

2) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

The main challenge hindering the start of *Investment in Children* related work is related to lack of financial resources.

3) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

Save the Children Sweden has participated in the NGO network on Children's Rights consisting of 40 Swedish organizations working on children's issues and with children. However, with regard to UNCRC alternative reporting Save the Children Sweden has found this network too heterogeneous for the development of a child rights based report and therefore it has decided to produce its own report separately.

Save the Children Sweden participates in the Save the Children collaboration at the international and European levels. It is interested in learning from the child budgeting related experiences of and tools developed by other Save the Children Members. It is also interested in collaborating with other Save the Children Members on joint fund-raising for Child Budgeting programmes also in the future.

4.10 Save the Children UK¹⁰

1) Investment in Children related work

Investment in Children is still a fairly new area of work for Save the Children UK, though it has carried out some research studies in this area and undertaken more significant advocacy work in Wales. In 2003 the Welsh program commissioned a study on public spending on the poorest children in Wales and this was followed up by further studies and briefings across the UK in 2006 and 2009.¹¹ The reports showed how difficult it is to find out whether government funds were actually making a difference in children's lives and recommended that expenditure on children needs to be collected; published and analyzed with a view to ensuring that investment in children is visible, accountable and transparent and that it is possible to determine the exact extent to which spending is targeted and benefiting children in poverty. Whilst most of the advocacy at Save the Children UK will continue focusing on government investment in the poorest children it also plans to develop further policy and advocacy work on child rights budgeting more broadly. In Wales, following 'A Child's Portion' Save the Children UK has undertaken lobbying of the Welsh Government on child rights budgeting and produced a toolkit in 2009 on children rights budgeting at local government level. It was also actively engaged in an inquiry into children's budgeting carried out by the National Assembly for Wales Children and Young People's Committee. In response to Save the Children's work, the Welsh government can be seen as a positive example of a government taking steps to produce children's budgets including a commitment to improve the transparency of budgeting for children and young people. The Welsh Government has also

¹⁰ Save the Children's advocacy programme's geographic focus is on England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

¹¹ Sefton Tom (2006) Public Spending on Children and Sefton, Tom (2009) 'A Child's Portion, An analysis of public expenditure on children in the UK', a report commissioned by Save the Children UK

recently passed a children's rights law¹², which also offers an opportunity to improve on how children's rights are taken in to account in budgetary decision making.

Following its study Governance fit for Children in 2011, looking at the implementation of the CRC General Measures of Implementation across the UK, Save the Children UK is now focusing on several specific areas, including investment in children. An internal scoping document is being developed to define what child rights budgeting means, why it should occur, what have been the best practices so far, where child rights budgeting is already being implemented as well as what is the learning within a UK context. Save the Children UK plans to start a dialogue also with academic researchers to learn lessons and identify best practice examples e.g. from gender budgeting experts. Based on this mapping and analysis a child rights budgeting project plan will be prepared and resourcing discussed.

2) Results from Investment in Children related work

Research conducted on government investment in the poorest children in UK provides information and analysis for advocacy work.

As result of Save the Children UK's advocacy efforts in Wales the Welsh Government has taken positive steps forward in producing a children's budget and the CRC is now part of domestic law in Wales, meaning that any decision made by the Welsh government has to show how it affects children's rights. Also a tool kit for participatory budgeting taking into consideration children's rights for local authorities has been developed by Save the Children.

3) Implementation structure

The *Investment in Children* related work of Save the Children UK is planned and implemented by the policy and advocacy team. This work is led by the UK Child Rights advisor, supported by an Education and Child Rights Policy Officer and a child rights policy officer lead in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

4) Main challenges in Investment in Children related work

The complicated and nonuniform administrative structure in UK makes the overall analysis on budget allocations and spending for the implementation of child rights challenging. The UK Government and the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as local governments all make spending decisions that impact on the realisation of children's rights. In each part of the UK the devolution process has been carried out differently so that the share of responsibilities between the devolved administrations varies. Therefore getting an overall understanding on the budget allocations and spending for children's rights would require a comprehensive analysis at the UK Government level, devolved level as well as level of state, nations as well as local authorities including an analysis on the flow of funds from the state level to the devolved

Save the Children UK emphasizes the importance of combining critical advocacy messages with positive messages in order to create a constructive atmosphere for the dialogue with decision makers on this issue

5) Networking with other organizations / actors and future collaboration within Save the Children at the international level

There has been very limited work on child rights budgeting by other organizations in UK so far (with the exception of the Wales UNCRC monitoring Group). Save the Children UK has done the preparatory work described above so far internally, but dialogue and information sharing will be done in the future with UNICEF UK and other child-centered organizations as well as with academics. Also the office of the Commissioner for Children of England is interested in having

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dialogue with Save the Children and others on this matter and is having a roundtable on this issue in December 2012.

Save the Children UK is interested in exchange of information and expertise, sharing of tools as well as learning from other Save the Children offices working on *Investment in Children and child rights budgeting*.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Investment in Children related issues are addressed at least to some extent in the domestic work of Save the Children (SC) Members in eight out of 10 European countries covered by this study. The two SC Members who have not yet worked in this area are interested if adequate resourcing of this work could be ensured. Among the SC Members there is real interest in further developing *Investment in Children* related advocacy on one hand as an integrated element within rights-based advocacy on more specific child rights issues such as promotion of the rights of children from specific vulnerable groups e.g. asylum seeking children or children from migrant families. At the same time there is increasing interest in implementing specific *Investment in Children* research and advocacy projects.

Main focus in the *Investment in Children* related work is currently on advocacy on government allocation and spending, but also revenue as well as transparency and accountability related issues have been addressed by SC Members in their domestic work. Overall, the close interrelatedness of these three areas of *Investment in Children* work is visible in the research, advocacy and civic activities implemented or planned by SC Members in these 10 countries.

Taking into consideration that *Investment in Children* is still a relatively new area of work and is only now being given more emphasis by the SC Members, it is still too early to make a more in-depth analysis on the achieved results. However, the 10 SC Members have achieved through their advocacy already many concrete outputs and outcomes, including background studies and analysis, position papers, child budgeting tools as well as raising discussion with governments on specific *Investment in Children* issues. These can be seen as important steps in the process of strengthening the *Investment in Children* related work. There are several positive examples where Save the Children Members' advocacy had contributed directly to actual changes in government policies, such as ensuring government benefits for migrant families affected by unemployment in Denmark or adoption of child budgeting in Wales. At the same time achieving positive changes in government policies is increasingly difficult in most countries covered by this study taking into consideration the challenging economic environment where the governments are under pressure of cutting budgets. From this perspective the SC Members' advocacy on *Investment in Children* need to be seen as long-term processes where the awareness raised and discussions raised with decision-makers are important steps in achieving actual positive changes in government policies and practices.

The principles of non-discrimination and inclusion of the human rights based approach are clearly reflected in the focus of Save the Children Members' *Investment in Children* work with strong emphasis being given to the poorest children and children from the most vulnerable groups. In addition child and youth participation is to some extent promoted at the local level especially as part of child budgeting processes. However, at the national level advocacy child participation remains weak that can be explained with the strong emphasis on technical expert inputs. SC Members have been widely involved in UNCRC monitoring and alternative reporting to the UNCRC

Committee, but the issue of Investment in Children has been raised only by one SC Member in this connection.

Based on the interviews it seems that there is still some incoherence in the use of the terminology especially in relation to child budgeting, budgeting for children and child rights budgeting. All three concepts are used in a mixed way. This use of different concepts may reflect differences in approaches related to whether a participatory process with children is aimed at, whether the idea is to develop the capacity of and tools for the government to integrate children's rights in its budgeting or whether the idea is to develop systems for Save the Children to monitor government investment in children. At the same time it is important to note that all these are important aspects of *Investment in Children* related work.

All SC Members implementing, planning or interested in implementing domestic *Investment in Children* related work emphasized challenges related to the complexity of government multi-level structures and complex processes. All 10 countries have strongly decentralized government structures where allocations and spending for the implementation of children's rights are made at various levels and increasingly at the local level of communes, cities and municipalities. There is very little information about functioning coordinated government monitoring or cost tracking systems. The highly decentralized government structures together with difficulties in accessing budget data, makes it challenging for Save the Children Members to get an overall understanding on the government investment in children in their countries. For this reason seven SC Members expressed their interest in conducting more in-depth research and analysis in collaboration with academics if funding was available.

Another challenge noted by interviewees in relation to strengthening Investment in Children related work is lack of funding or need for increased funding. However, besides the comprehensive EC proposal on Investment in Children submitted by SC Sweden that was rejected, it remains unclear to what extent SC Members have made fund-raising efforts for increased resourcing of Investment in Children related work.

Taking into consideration the similarities e.g. in the government structures as well as opportunities and challenges in advocating for increased government Investment in Children the SC Members in these 10 European countries are interested in increasingly sharing information about and discuss the results achieved, challenges faced and lessons learned with other SC Members with the aim of joint learning and finding synergies.

Recommendations:

- It would be important to look for ways to further strengthen sharing of information, best practices, experiences as well as challenges and thereby joint learning among Save the Children Members within Europe and globally.
- One area of collaboration could be related to research and analysis on the government budget allocations and spending within the frameworks of decentralized government structures taking into consideration that there are clear similarities in how the system functions in certain countries.
- It would be important to develop a shared understanding on the key concepts Save the Children is using in the area of *Investment in Children*, especially child budgeting, budgeting for children and child rights budgeting. Depending on the local context there will certainly be different approaches within Save the Children in different countries, but clarity on concepts would support joint learning, sharing of experiences and tools development within the international organization.
- Even though the focus and intensity of *Investment in Children* related work will vary among the European countries, it would be good that government resource allocation issues are

reflected during the UNCRC alternative or complementary reporting processes. To what extent the issue will be included in final reports will depend of the country context.

- In planning of future work on *Investment in Children* SC Members' expertise and results achieved e.g. through advocacy in other areas, such as child protection, rights of the children from vulnerable groups, development of child-friendly judicial systems etc. should be seen on one hand as opportunities to integrate Investment in Children aspects in successful, ongoing work and on the other hand as a resource in strengthening Save the Children's *Investment in Children* related expertise on specific issues at the international level.
- In order to strengthen the *Investment in Children* related work in most of the SC Members covered by the study, increased funding is necessary. In addition to domestic level fund-raising, continued efforts at the European and inter-regional and global level for applying e.g. joint EU funding for this purpose is recommended.

Annex I: Interview questions

1. Please describe what kind of work related to Investment in Children your national organization has done so far: objectives, activities, the content focus as well as time-frame.
2. Who have been responsible for the implementation and who have been involved? Have children participated in the activities?
3. What have been the results achieved so far?
4. What have been the main challenges related to your work on Investment in Children and what are your main strategies to overcome them?
5. What kind of networking have you done with other organizations / actors in this area in your country or at the international level?
6. What are your future plans regarding the work on Investment in Children?
7. Do you have any expectations related to possible future collaboration within the International organization of Save the Children or among Save the Children members within Europe in the area of Investing in Children? Please describe.

Note: Originally also the following question was included in the list of questions, but it was removed since it was found confusing by some interviewees and this kind of categorisation could be done based on the information gathered with the other questions.

Has SC xx done *Investment in Children* related work so far in the following three areas defined in the “Investment in Children” Breakthrough Concept Note?

- a) **Revenue analysis and advocacy** (including activities related to taxation, debt, other main sources of funding children’s rights including families and private sector)
- b) **Expenditure/allocation analysis and advocacy** (including activities related to Child budget, tracking budget allocations/expenditures in sectors directly related to children's rights)
- c) **Transparency and accountability** (including activities related to access to budget information, transparency and accountability in the budget process, leakages, wastage and corruption, social accountability and social audit, public service monitoring)
- d) **Other**

Annex II: Persons interviewed

Save the Children Member	Person interviewed	Date
Save the Children Denmark	Inger Neufeld, Child Rights Consultant	21 Nov 2012
Save the Children Finland	Riitta Kauppinen, Chief of Civic Activities	30 Nov 2012
Save the Children Germany	Christa Dammermann, Programme Manager	3 Dec 2012
Save the Children Italy	Arianna Saulini, Italy-EU Advocacy Deputy Head of Department	29 Nov 2012
Save the Children Netherlands	Kim Hartog, Policy, Lobby and Advocacy Officer	E-mail correspondence 20 – 22 Nov 2012
Save the Children Norway	Marianne Hagen, Head of the Domestic Program Section	28 Nov 2012
Save the Children Romania	Mihaela Manole - project coordinator Roxana Paraschiv - project coordinator Centre for Information, Documentation and Research on Child's Rights of Save the Children Romania	27 Nov 2012
Save the Children Spain	Ms. Virginia Rodríguez Bartolomé, Officer of the Advocacy and Campaigns	4 Dec 2012
Save the Children Sweden	Karin Fyrk, Programme Manager	3 Dec 2012
Save the Children UK	Louise King, Child Rights Advisor Hollie Warren, Education and Child rights policy officer	28 Nov 2012