

Food for Thought

**Save the Children's influencing of the
UK Department for International
Development on nutrition – evidence
and lessons**

An independent evaluation



Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's independent children's rights organization. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection and we're determined to change that.

This evaluation was carried out by Steve Tibbett, an independent consultant. Steve is an advocacy, research, policy and campaigning specialist based in London focussed on advising on advocacy strategy, evaluating advocacy and campaigns, and undertaking research and writing in the field of international development. He was Director of Policy and Campaigns for ActionAid, where he oversaw advocacy and research work in the UK on areas including international trade, HIV & Aids, corporate accountability and development assistance. Before that, he was with the campaigning charity War on Want, where he was Director of Campaigns and Policy. During 2004–06 Steve was also a key member of the Make Poverty History Campaign Co-ordination Team and co-chaired its Policy and Lobbying Working Group.

sjtibbett@gmail.com

Published by
Save the Children UK
1 St John's Lane
London EC1M 4AR
UK
+44 (0)20 7012 6400
savethechildren.org.uk

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Executive Summary

Tackling malnutrition is crucially important for achieving development and saving children's lives, and Save the Children and others in the nutrition community identified that the UK Department for International Development (DFID) was falling short. Since 2006, Save the Children's hunger reduction team had objectives around raising the profile and status of nutrition in DFID, and drawing out concrete commitments from them. The influencing effort, which ran from 2006, was highly successful in achieving its objectives, and by 2010 DFID had produced a full-blown nutrition strategy, with an approach closely reflecting that of Save the Children's stance.

Historically, some DFID staff interest on nutrition existed but the organisation was reluctant to formalise a strategic commitment. It was not until a number of factors came together, including Save the Children's influencing activity through policy reports and face-to-face lobbying, the commissioning of an influential think tank – the Institute of Development Studies – to write a report on the lack of nutrition focus in DFID, and the onset of the global food price crisis, that key senior staff in DFID decided to set up a formal task team, which eventually led to the adoption of a full-scale strategy.

While the organisational style and process may evolve in the coming years, DFID is a complex organisation, and lobbying it involves a close understanding of the power structures and particularities of the issue focused upon. DFID staff appreciated the way that Save the Children and their allies promoted nutrition and DFID's emerging approach fitted closely with Save the Children's own position. Save the Children's reports and briefings are heavily referenced in DFID papers as well as the International Development Select Committee inquiry, which also pushed DFID for a stronger focus on nutrition. The Institute of Development Studies' report, commissioned by Save the Children in 2007, was very influential in driving DFID towards change, and picking such complementary advocacy partners is a key learning from this influencing effort.

Although Save the Children had a clear set of messages and objectives in this effort, their overall strategy and tactics were not fully formalised. In this instance the iterative nature of the strategy probably did not present a significant problem, but it represents a risk if repeated in the future. The 'serendipitous' timing of the effort is not easily replicable, but the organisation managed to harness the circumstances and context to maximise chances of a successful outcome.

DFID has shown clear signs in recent months of becoming a global advocate for nutrition. Although it is too early to be sure, the likelihood is that the strategy will remain a priority under the new government, and its maintenance will depend in part on nutrition supporters' ability to ensure delivery. Save the Children should push DFID on measuring the strategy's effectiveness and impact, especially in terms of outcomes.

There are difficulties in measuring specific development outcomes, but in terms of the potential that the effort has unleashed to impact on 12 million children, the cost effectiveness of the effort can be described as extremely high. Compared with other similar influencing efforts, and with the opportunity cost of spending on programmes and projects aimed at malnourished children, for instance, the amount spent (estimated at around £250,000) can be described as a very effective use of time and effort.

I Methodology and objectives

Objectives

The central aim of this study is to understand and analyse the influencing effort that Save the Children's hunger reduction team employed with regard to the UK Department for International Development's (DFID) work on nutrition, providing lessons and insights for Save the Children's future influencing efforts. The core objectives of the study were to assess:

1. *The degree of influence Save the Children has had on DFID between 2006 and 2010 on the re-prioritisation of nutrition (and its multi-sectoral causes/links) and the development of the nutrition strategy. Integral to this analysis is a better understanding of how the different stakeholders and parts of DFID came to a common will and decision to move forward on nutrition.*
2. *What aspects of Save the Children's advocacy were most effective in: a) changing minds directly, and; b) creating the space for views to change in DFID?*
3. *The approximate cost effectiveness of the advocacy – including financial investments by Save the Children (staff time and other resources) set against the anticipated influence of the nutrition strategy affecting a) DFID's £5.5 billion expenditure b) the intention to improve the nutrition of 12 million children over five years, and c) DFID's influence profiling nutrition with other bilateral donors plus the European Commission (EC) and developing country governments.*

An additional and less central objective was also identified: *to suggest benchmarks to help Save the Children monitor the progress of the roll-out of the strategy over the coming five years up until 2015.*

Methodology and approach

The approach used in this study was qualitative, with summative elements that are impact or outcome orientated, along with formative elements for Save the Children to draw on in the future. The methodology concentrated on the difference that the advocacy effort made, the added value of Save the Children in the context of wider advocacy on nutrition, what worked and what didn't work, and attempted to gauge the cost effectiveness of the effort in a broad, qualitative way.

The evidence for the inquiry was gleaned mainly from a set of interviews¹ with key DFID staff, Save the Children staff and ex-staff and staff from other NGOs and think tanks working on nutrition.² This was complemented by scrutiny of relevant documentation provided by Save the Children, and wider intelligence-gathering. This was further augmented by the consultant's own knowledge of influencing DFID and other policy targets.

The qualitative element in this evaluation assumes that interviewees – selected for their intimate or specialised knowledge of the process that is being evaluated – have an understanding of the process and dynamics involved that collectively builds up an insightful picture of what happened, how it happened and why it happened. This methodological approach lends itself well to understanding policy change processes, which are notoriously multifaceted and complex.

¹ In total there were 18 interviews with 16 informants, including seven DFID staff and ex-staff.

² Where "Save the Children staff" or "DFID staff" are referred to, they may be current or ex-staff members.

2 Background

Brief description of the influencing effort

Since 2006, Save the Children's hunger reduction team had objectives around raising the profile and status of nutrition in the UK Department for International Development's (DFID) aid policies and programme. The objectives centred on drawing out concrete commitments from DFID, alongside similar objectives for the European Commission (EC). In 2008–09 the relevant objectives and outputs were described as follows:

Objective: To secure greater practical commitment from the EC, DFID and national governments in developing countries to tackling chronic malnutrition. Under this objective, we hope to open up the policy space for effective nutrition interventions by raising awareness among donors and national governments of the importance of addressing malnutrition as a major underlying cause of child mortality and as a barrier to human development.

Output 1: The EC and DFID commit to increased monitoring of nutrition impacts of its aid programme and increased nutrition research.

Output 2: Governments in developing countries acknowledge that the priority assigned to nutrition is not commensurate with the scale of the problem.

Output 3: The Child Survival campaign is informed by high-quality policy inputs from the hunger reduction team³.

In the early 2000s Save the Children's hunger reduction team had attempted to influence the World Bank on nutrition. Partly because of a realisation of the scale involved (it was described as “very stressful”) and partly because of perceived opportunities in the UK and EU, the organisation moved from lobbying the Bank to heavy-hitting donors (DFID and the EC) to more effectively change policies in the medium term. DFID was seen as a key donor, both in terms of its own programmes and policies and in terms of its potential to provide a counterweight to the approaches of the USA, Canada and, to some extent, the World Bank, which tend to be based on technical interventions.

Save the Children's basic line of argument was that nutrition is incredibly important for achieving development and saving lives, especially those of children. Malnutrition undermines economic growth and poverty reduction efforts such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet DFID wasn't reporting on nutrition (against the MDG 1 indicator), wasn't prioritising nutrition and wasn't spending enough on it. While they were spending a good deal on indirect investments that might tackle undernutrition, such as social protection, health and agriculture, they weren't able to tell whether these interventions were effective. Therefore DFID should (re)prioritise nutrition, review and evaluate their existing investments to ensure they tackle malnutrition and report on the MDG nutrition indicator that focuses on underweight children.

³ Hunger reduction team, summary workplan, 2008–09, version: 15/5/08

The advocacy approach adopted by Save the Children was described by one involved as “a slow burner”. The work was mainly London-based and there was little discernible rallying and coordination of Save the Children country programmes in support of the influencing effort, which is discussed further below.

The organisation produced a number of publications as part of their attempt to influence DFID of which the key document was probably the 2007 paper commissioned from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) by Save the Children entitled *Greater DFID and EC Leadership on Chronic Malnutrition: Opportunities and constraints* by Andy Sumner, Johanna Lindstrom and Lawrence Haddad, which found that DFID was not leveraging its potential impact given its resources. It had no identifiable nutrition strategy, no internal nutrition champion and did not measure the direct nutritional impact of its work.

Save the Children also produced a number of other briefings and reports including: *Everybody's Business, Nobody's Responsibility: How the UK government and the European Commission are failing to tackle malnutrition*, in 2007; *Running on Empty: Poverty and child malnutrition*, also in 2007; *The Minimum Cost of a Healthy Diet: Findings from piloting a new methodology in four study locations*, first released in 2007, then updated in 2009; *Nutrition Action Plan and Evidence Paper Consultation Submission*, in 2009; and *Child Hunger: How the next UK government must show global leadership*, in 2010.

A loose civil society network formed around nutrition policy and influencing work in the UK, with Save the Children in a de facto leadership position. The other organisations involved in lobbying on nutrition in loose coordination with Save the Children and each other included Concern Worldwide and Action Against Hunger UK.

Alongside the NGO effort on nutrition, the International Development Select Committee (IDC), partly prompted by Save the Children, became increasingly interested in the lack of DFID focus on nutrition. The IDC took evidence from a number of sources including Save the Children and produced a robust report on the World Food Programme (WFP) in July 2008 which was quite critical of DFID's stance on nutrition and supported much of what Save the Children had been saying. DFID then followed up with a customary detailed response in October 2008. During this period a number of other important drivers were working alongside the Save the Children effort. They are discussed below.

In general, and without any notable contradictory standpoints, the influencing effort by Save the Children examined here was seen as high quality, impactful and tactically astute. There were some (mostly minor or emphasis-type) disagreements about what was particularly important, and different emphases were put on various aspects of the effort and the degree of influence exerted by Save the Children vis-à-vis external factors, internal (within DFID and HMG) drivers and other actors, as described and analysed below.

Context

A single NGO campaign or influencing effort, no matter how good, is unlikely to bring about significant change unless there is an environment that allows and assists change. Successful advocacy will maximise opportunities as they come along as well as bringing about opportunities for change. In general, and as with other similar influencing and advocacy streams, the context within which the Save the Children was operating was significant. There were a number of interlocking contextual

features that conspired to make what one interviewee called “serendipity” and another labelled “a perfect storm”.

The period in question had one major contextual factor contained within it. The global food price crisis was without doubt, according to informants, the key stimulus for change in the short to medium term. As global food prices began to rise in 2007-8, reaching a peak in mid-2008, a number of political imperatives became attached to it in the global development community. For the UK Government and DFID this included “doing something about nutrition”.

An additional external factor that was influencing events was the developing agenda of the World Food Programme (WFP) and especially its prominent Executive Director, Josette Sheeran, who was pressuring DFID, among other donors, to respond to the evolving changes in the delivery of food aid and the widening remit of the WFP. There was also a sense in which the nutrition community – traditionally perceived as poor at communicating externally and forming the necessary cross-sectoral alliances to press their case effectively – had started to “get their act together”.

Also playing out in the external environment was the fact the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were passing through their mid-term in 2007–08. Target 1c, which aimed to “reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”, and which had indicators on the prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age and the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption, was off-track. This, combined with the above events, ratcheted up the political significance of nutrition.

3 Decision making in DFID⁴

Towards a nutrition strategy for DFID

Nutrition had been an issue on the periphery of DFID thinking for some time. There was a loose grouping of about ten individuals in DFID who lobbied internally for the UK to do more on nutrition, and have a clear strategy on nutrition. These staff members were not necessarily located in the right places within DFID to effect fundamental change. The group met virtually and infrequently, and discussed what comparative advantage DFID might bring to the nutrition table. One said that this work in effect “softened them [DFID] up”.

There was no concrete and organised blockage to nutrition work internally in DFID. The lack of progress in the past was perhaps best described as arising from “a lack of knowledge” about nutrition, what another described as “quite a reluctance” to go into a new area, when DFID “believed in a division of labour” among donors. Although many were sympathetic to doing more on nutrition, the international nutrition community (in particular the UN infrastructure) was, in the words of one outspoken interviewee, a “complete shambles,” and looked at the time like an area that would best be avoided.

The DFID reaction to the Save the Children–IDS report and briefing in 2007 was twofold. As explained above, the report highlighted a difficult area for DFID, leading some to describe it in terms similar to “a minor embarrassment”. Another, referring to a senior colleague’s reaction, said: “It got up his nose.” In general, however, it was treated seriously and is retrospectively considered a very significant moment (which is discussed further below). Nevertheless, although it clearly leveraged support internally and externally, it was not generally seen as sufficient pressure for movement in and of itself.

Action on nutrition in DFID was more assured once the food price crisis hit in 2007, and it was then that an influential DFID Minister (Baroness Vadera) went on an official visit to India where she was said to be “shocked” by the malnutrition she saw despite the rapid economic growth, and became concerned that DFID was not doing enough to tackle it. The DFID India country office was becoming a powerful advocate for nutrition and had started to think about what steps to take in order to refocus its own efforts. It was also around this time that DFID and other government staff started to reprioritise the MDGs – in the context of their half-way point – and how the first goal was off track.

In 2007 DFID commissioned a junior member of staff to undertake an internal review on nutrition, and, although the outcome was not considered particularly useful, it was the start of the formalised process that led, in the end, to the nutrition strategy. However, it wasn’t until the food price crisis became a political issue in 2008 that change seemed “inevitable”. Initial lobbying and the publication of reports by Save the Children, IDS and others had initially “annoyed” some at DFID, but changes in the external context, staff and available evidence had conspired to allow the lobby to make headway. One said: “It was clear that the global nutrition architecture was bust” and it needed fixing.

⁴ It is worth mentioning that the evidence collected here stems mainly from DFID staff and so the findings will obviously reflect their point of view, although it is supplemented by wider intelligence and the consultant’s knowledge.

The 2008 IDC report entitled *The World Food Programme and Global Food Security* reinforced the case for change: “We are shocked that DFID lacks both a specific nutrition policy and measurable targets for assessing progress in reducing malnutrition. This must change.”

This chain of events led to the issue being adopted by senior management in DFID, including the Director of Policy. A new Head of Profession for Health had joined DFID in Palace Street, London and, coming from the DFID India office, was convinced of the need for more action on nutrition. A DFID Task Team on Nutrition was set up in June 2008 by the acting head of the Policy and Research Division. By 2009 there was a “groundswell of support” within DFID. “We sent a questionnaire to every country office and virtually every one of them agreed [with a greater DFID focus on nutrition]. There was a big appetite.” Analysis by DFID, supported by evidence from the Lancet series, Unicef, Save the Children and others fed into the Task Group’s production of an ‘evidence paper’ in October 2009 and then a full nutrition strategy launched in March 2010.

Most seemed to agree that, as an issue, nutrition – in the words of one interviewee – “rises above politics” and represents “compelling value”. The strategy is now being rolled out in six priority countries and most interviewees felt that, while it may not become the *cause célèbre* of the new ministerial team, it is likely to be supported in a reasonably robust way.

How decision making happens in DFID: some thoughts

DFID is a complex, multi-faceted and “non-monolithic” organisation. As an organisation, but mainly in reference to headquarters in Palace Street, it has been described variously by informants as “dominated by economists”; “quite an intellectual place”; and “more like an NGO or a think tank than other government departments”. In staff terms there is a strong ‘revolving door’ between DFID and other donors, NGOs, think tanks and academia. In this regard it is best to think of the department as ‘semi-detached’ from day-to-day government, with a strong slant towards evidence from the field and intellectual rigour, and a variegated relationship with civil society, both in the UK and in the South. For instance, some staff may have sympathy with NGOs while others might feel more sceptical about lobbying by NGOs. This implies a sophisticated and nuanced approach to influencing may work best, and that understanding the specific part of DFID that you are targeting is probably more relevant than a one-size-fits-all approach.

DFID also has a certain place within the development and aid architecture. It is seen as a leader in many sub-sectors and is known as a more ‘progressive’ donor, with close links to some other northern European donors. It is also one of the largest bilateral donors, and is influential with the World Bank (it is the largest donor to the World Bank’s International Development Association) and with some of the development-oriented UN agencies such as UNICEF, where it is also a key funder. Although some of the specifics of this positioning may change in the coming months and years, influence on DFID is likely to be maximised if these structural constraints and eco-systemic considerations are heeded and harnessed.

It is important to note that change can come about in DFID in a number of ways: from the ‘top’ down, via ministers; from ‘outside’ influencing from NGOs, academia and think tanks; and from the ‘bottom’ up, through staff initiatives, evidence and internal caucusing. In this sense, it is, again, less like other government departments, less hierarchical and more independent of everyday politics. However, it was pointed out in gathering evidence for this study that in order get strategic change in policy and practice of the magnitude this study is analysing, DFID’s senior management within DFID

need to be convinced (not necessarily through direct lobbying) of the case for change. This could include “drip feeding” elements of strategic influencing, alongside the more ‘big picture’ or ‘set piece’ moments.

It is self-evident, but important to note, that different Ministers and Secretaries of State will react differently to NGO pressure. Some may react better to outsider pressure, direct approaches, or political persuasion, while others may prefer to take soundings from staff and experts. For example, in the past some Secretaries of State have been far more sensitive to criticism than others, resulting in a sometimes rocky relationship at the political level with NGOs.

The type and style of influencing is also considered important. One respondent said it was always better to “go with the grain” with your advocacy strategy and that “you should always back up what you say with evidence”, which although, again, is self-evident and well documented in advocacy good practice, is not something that NGOs always do. One aspect of influencing that DFID clearly dislikes is advocacy that includes a financial ask for support for the organisation doing the lobbying, which was described by one respondent as “irritating”.

The IDC is also a key influencer of DFID policy and practice. While this can change over time, according to who is the chair and according to the type and scope of inquiry the Committee is conducting – as well as the nature of their recommendations – it is clear that the relationship is an important part of the scrutiny of government by the legislature. The relationship was described by one interviewee as one of “constructive engagement”, and the current (and pre-election) chair of the IDC was described by one DFID source as “very influential”. In addition other parliamentary mechanisms of accountability – adjournment debates, parliamentary questions, and so on – continue to be given high status within the department.

Some DFID interviewees were keen to make the point that NGOs should contact DFID staff first when they are planning a piece of advocacy. NGOs that go straight to ministers (the ‘top down’ route described above) rather than starting with, or at least liaising with, staff (who will, in the end, have to enact changes and deal with the practical consequences of any changes agreed or directed by ministers), are seen as “annoying” and are likely to get short shrift from staff and may make slower progress.

There was a fairly broad recognition among interviewees that engaging in ‘non-traditional’ alliances and linking up with experts is worthwhile when trying to have an effect on DFID policy teams. One noted that “there is tendency [amongst NGOs] to make alliances with other NGOs – one of the strengths is to have non-traditional alliances – people respect different people – research centres are important – they multiply the agency’s clout and give more credibility.”

One staff member also made the point that DFID prefers dealing with coalitions that are unified in their messaging and strategic in their interventions. Grow Up Free from Poverty and the Hunger Alliance were mentioned.

DFID under a new government

Looking forward, most interviewees were reluctant to speculate how lobbying and influencing DFID might need to change under the coalition government and with the new Conservative ministers, with

many expressing the view that it is “too early to tell” what the new situation will mean for NGOs.⁵ However, some thought that the new Secretary of State clearly sees NGOs as “very important players” and has expressed as much both publically and privately, while some others felt that the new ministers would be less inclined to view NGOs as a legitimate influence on policy and perhaps more appropriately involved in delivering services to poor communities in the South. In a recent speech Andrew Mitchell, new International Development Secretary, was keen to mention “brilliant” NGOs and, although he didn’t encourage lobbying of DFID per se, he did talk about “a central role for a vibrant, strong Department for International Development, agitating, campaigning and helping to deliver progressive change for communities worldwide.”⁶ One informant characterised the likely scenario as follows: “They will listen more to the private sector, about the same to think tanks and, in the round, probably a bit less to NGOs”.

New ministers have already indicated that “cost effectiveness”, “value for money”, “a focus on results” and “outcomes rather than inputs” will be the key maxims in the next period. In this regard it may also be important to think about using the new independent evaluation mechanism or ‘aid watchdog’ that the new government has proposed, which may prove to be another key influencing route.

⁵ This review straddled the general election period and the formation of a new government.

⁶ Secretary of State for International Development speech to Oxfam and Policy Exchange at the Royal Society in London, 3 June 2010

4 Assessing Save the Children's influence

Degree of influence

Problems of attribution and contribution

As with all policy-advocacy and campaigning evaluations, there are problems with measuring both the contribution of a particular effort or organisation to outcomes such as policy change, and also whether particular changes can be attributed to a particular organisation, individual or effort. In this case, and in most similar influencing efforts, it is perhaps better to confine thinking about Save the Children's *contribution* to a wider effort, which included a number of other actors, both within DFID and more widely within civil society, the media and in academia. It is also credible of course to look at the contribution of idiosyncratic external factors.

Evidence of Save the Children's influence

Overwhelmingly, respondents picked Save the Children out as the single key civil society actor driving change on nutrition. One DFID staff member said: "I have hailed this as one of the most successful lobbying operations that I have come across, although to some extent they were pushing at a half-open door."

Save the Children's reports and research had a bearing on the key documents produced during this period. For example, Save the Children was quoted and referenced six times in the DFID report, *The Neglected Crisis of Undernutrition: Evidence for action* published in 2009, and referred to 15 times in the International Development Select Committee report. While no Save the Children reports were directly quoted and referenced in the nutrition strategy itself, the secondment of a Save the Children staff member to the drafting team and the role that Anna Taylor played first in commenting on drafts, and later as a DFID staff member, were instrumental in shaping the strategy and ensuring Save the Children's messages were heavily embedded in the document.

Save the Children staff themselves were clearly influential. While it is not always helpful to personalise contribution to an advocacy or influencing effort, Anna Taylor was picked out by a number of interviewees as being particularly helpful within DFID to the process of moving forward on nutrition. One said "we were quite like-minded and had a constructive dialogue"; another said "we were on the same wavelength". Several made the point that Save the Children ex-staff were well-placed in a number of external agencies including in DFID itself during the latter part of the influencing period. One said that, by having well-placed former staff, "I have seen things that we managed to get through in five minutes that we had spent years advocating for."⁷

Many respondents said that it was in part the *modus operandi* of Save the Children that was particularly helpful internally in DFID: "They didn't knock (our proposals) down but they still applied external pressure: that helped me do my job," said one. Furthermore, although Save the Children had talked about lack of funding for nutrition, getting more money wasn't a major focus: "Save the Children were calling for a multi-sectoral approach – not asked to put a massive amount of money on the table – which is the right approach – calling for much more money might have put [DFID] off."

⁷ Several also made the point that this state of affairs is probably not replicable: "We realise it is a luxury." It is also not necessarily desirable to repeatedly lose (often high-quality) staff to government departments.

Save the Children's policy position on nutrition was also seen as helpful within DFID, which was perhaps instinctively uncomfortable with what has been described as more 'US-style' direct interventions on nutrition. "Our position was not about direct interventions but a multisectoral approach. They (Save the Children) were strongly aligned with the multisectoral approach," said one DFID staff member. The focus on solutions that Save the Children helped provide was also highlighted as key to progress.

During the DFID evidence-gathering process Save the Children had a seminar that was found to be helpful by some DFID staff in "getting senior (DFID) management on board" and bedding down the process of work on nutrition. The delay of around six months between the publication of the DFID evidence paper and of the strategy could have been subject to criticism, but DFID staff appreciated that Save the Children took a pragmatic view on this, which helped allow the final "outcome to be much stronger than it otherwise would have been".

The role of the Institute of Development Studies and Lawrence Haddad

Save the Children's deliberate choice of hiring the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) to craft a paper on DFID nutrition work was widely seen as a smart one. Perhaps more importantly, directly involving Lawrence Haddad, Director of the IDS, was in many ways "a masterstroke". Professor Haddad was described as "very influential" and came to IDS from the *International Food Policy Research Institute* (IFPRI), the prominent and respected research body, close to the World Bank. Perhaps more importantly, Professor Haddad is a well-known nutrition, food and hunger specialist and had a deep knowledge and body of work on nutrition.

The Save the Children-commissioned report that IDS published was considered influential in and of itself. The central tack taken in the report of 'auditing' DFID ministerial speeches and looking for evidence of a commitment to nutrition was mentioned by a surprisingly large number of DFID and non-DFID respondents as valuable and influential. The idea was to highlight the weaknesses but "not to humiliate them", according to one informant. One interviewee pointed out that the criticisms were "quite brave" bearing in mind that DFID is one of the main funders of IDS.

It is also possible to argue – from the evidence available – that it was Lawrence Haddad himself who was more influential than IDS institutionally, although both clearly were and are respected within DFID on this and other issues. One interviewee commented frankly, "Lawrence probably has a lot more gravitas than a policy team at Save the Children." There was a good deal of strategic and tactical communication between key DFID staff and Professor Haddad (and between Professor Haddad and key Save the Children staff) during this period and he was considered helpful in many ways, including by "making himself available at short notice and for small things like figures."

Coalition/network work

In general, and based on evidence from other studies undertaken on influencing government, working in coalition is clearly often the best influencing option for NGOs. MPs, ministers and civil servants all say that they prefer to deal with a coalition or well-organised network, as it usually provides clearer policy positions, a single point of contact, and is less time-consuming. Civil Society groupings themselves report more success in groups than alone and can increase their voice through pooling resources and voice, effecting greater change.⁸

⁸ See for instance, Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, 1998, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.

It is not at all clear that the loose alliances that Save the Children convened – or were part of – contributed a great deal to the overall changes made in DFID. Although DFID was clearly well aware of a loose alliance between NGOs, it was not a situation where the work in alliance is perceived to have made a big impact. One DFID staff member informant described the networks working on nutrition and related matters as “splintered”, with the other organisations having their own “special interests”.

In general, NGO partners were happy to work in alliance with Save the Children, who was described by one as “easy to work with”. Another described the person involved as “useful and constructive” but said there was “limited agreement on policy detail”.

Who/what else was influential?

Internally in DFID there was no discernible active opposition to an increasing focus on nutrition, which was helpful. DFID had some internal champions, as described above, but they were “hidden away” to some extent and were “not strategically located”, within the organisation. By 2007 DFID wanted to appear more flexible and “fleet of foot” in terms of responding to crises, shocks and changing circumstances.

In terms of country offices, India was a key driver of the debate on nutrition and DFID India played a key role within DFID on nutrition. India had for some time experienced large-scale economic growth without commensurate drops in malnutrition that some might expect to see. In this regard, India was a good example of how some (especially economists) in the growth-fixated development community failed to recognise that growth was not adequately affecting key MDG areas such as hunger and nutrition. Indian civil society had rallied around a prominent national *Right to Food Campaign*, which had translated into limited political action but, importantly, also had a knock-on impact on donors.

The food price crisis, which erupted in 2007 but reached a peak in 2008, undoubtedly had a big influence on thinking within DFID and on other donors and developing country governments. The crisis elevated nutrition-related issues to the political arena and pressure for action from politicians was palpable during this period. The “political embarrassment” of the MDG 1c being off track and, as far as DFID was concerned, not reported on was also in play.

Another set of work that was clearly influential in terms of both content and timing was the Lancet series on nutrition, which proposed a clearer set of solutions and helped to clarify costs. Additionally, quantitative and qualitative work done by UNICEF (and to some extent the World Bank) on better identifying and understanding the problem of malnutrition was mentioned.

Internationally, another additional key influential actor cited by informants was David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Food Security and Nutrition. IFPRI was also mentioned as an important player, as was Steve Wiggins.⁹ The US government’s recent nutrition focus, as well as the work of the World Bank and changes in its attentions, were seen as qualitatively different approaches but also politically significant drivers in development thinking and practice.

Some were keen to note that nutrition specialists in the development sphere tend to lack communications and networking skills. One said, “They are happy with talking about coverage,

⁹ Food and agriculture specialist and research fellow at the Overseas Development Institute.

interventions and technical stuff, but they don't like to talk about policy." This meant that while the nutrition community was in a strong position to influence, during the 2008 crisis for instance, it took those NGOs who were better at communicating to coordinate a stronger response.

A critical discussion of Save the Children's strategic influence¹⁰

The hunger reduction team at Save the Children was keen to raise the profile of nutrition and had thought carefully, partly based on their experience with the World Bank influencing effort, about who to target. They were clear from the start about their strategic objectives on nutrition and their targets. The messages that they wanted to present to DFID were also clear. The team had a highly knowledgeable leader who was a powerful and well connected advocate for nutrition, and the team had worked out its solutions in advance. All of this is consistent with what is considered best practice in advocacy.

The team did not, however, have a full-blown strategy for the work. In this instance, it was probably not a necessary document, as the key team members knew what they wanted to do and, broadly, had a sense of how to do it. Moreover, the iterative nature of the strategy they actually deployed may well have helped them to achieve more rapid progress than might have been the case if they had a grander plan and implemented it more ruthlessly. There was also, as far as it is possible to tell, limited use of power analysis and other advocacy tools, which may have helped establish a critical path for the work more quickly, although more formal processes may not have expedited the actual outcome. In addition, interviews have revealed that a fair amount of informal power analysis was going on, including in conversation with DFID insiders and other interested organisations and individuals. Although these gaps probably did not hold things up, they are identifiable risks to flag up for future efforts.

Perhaps far more important than formal 'strategisation', was the way in which the team and its close allies were skilfully able to harness the contextual and political advantages that presented themselves. One comment possibly best sums up Save the Children's influence over events: "We were a catalyst for the change." The organisation made the most of the opportunity presented by the food price crisis and managed to get key messages out during that time about nutrition.

There was much in what DFID officials said that points to Save the Children being perceived as a helpful organisation with a broadly cordial tone of voice towards DFID, including several comments to the effect that they were not the "types" to go to the media. At one point in the process, as Save the Children was about to launch its major report, Save the Children staff had been booked to make various media appearances, but the story was superseded by another more pressing news item and most of the bookings were cancelled. Some speculated that this sequence of events might have been fortunate timing for Save the Children's agenda as it meant no major bad publicity for DFID and allowed relations to stay fairly cordial between the two parties. However, as this was still in the more critical phase of the campaign, had it gone ahead, it could arguably have hastened rather than hindered the final outcome.¹¹

¹⁰ It is perhaps important for NGOs not to 'over claim' their role in policy change, which usually happens in a dynamic context, with multiple actors affecting change. This can annoy other actors as well as staff within the target institution.

¹¹ It is also worth noting that by being 'realistic' and measured with its advocacy agenda, or as one person put it "going with the grain", Save the Children may find it difficult to propose a more ambitious, transformational or long-term agenda.

There were, however, some varied views amongst interviewees about the degree to which Save the Children had a strong and strategic overview, not only of what it wanted to achieve but also how it was going to achieve it. “I don’t think we directed events,” said one informant, while another said that the lack of a strong financial ask – which was perceived as helpful to the chain of events – was “not a conscious decision”. Another noted, “We never had an advocacy strategy ... sometimes I think we were more reactive than proactive.”

In common with advocacy teams in most large NGOs, the policy teams in Save the Children are not able to make full strategic use of or deploy the wider Save the Children family, including country programmes, in favour of particular advocacy objectives. One interviewee said the work “didn’t link up well with Save the Children India,” while another said that a greater focus on harnessing country programmes may have made better headway.

The key added value of the intervention was, according to one informant, twofold. First, Save the Children had set the agenda, and second, by positioning itself as a leading voice, staying engaged and through the embedding of ex-staff in DFID, Save the Children was able to ensure that the strategy adopted closely reflected its own key messages and approach. Overall, Save the Children had clear objectives, was focused and measured in its approach and, crucially, stayed engaged to ensure that a successful outcome was achieved, albeit with some notable informality.

Wider lessons

It seems that overall the coalition work was not perceived as that important, at least internally in DFID. However, the key alliance that Save the Children was part of was with IDS, described by one as “very powerful”. Another pointed to the complementary nature of this type of alliance: “I think [Save the Children] should always go with an independent piece of research, especially when there is a knowledge gap ... When it aligns it is very powerful. Save the Children’s own research is less impactful. They should keep commissioning things from independent sources.”

One interviewee was keen to make the point that some of Save the Children’s fundraising materials (as well as those of other prominent organisations) were sending out mixed messages to the public on nutrition, in terms of the long-term versus short-term approach and of the images of starvation that were used.

5 Impact, cost effectiveness and sustainability

The effect of changes made

This study is not equipped to review the overall impact of the nutrition strategy and it is, of course, far too early to tell whether there is real change in the overall numbers of children and adults affected by DFID's new nutrition strategy. It is clear, however, that the overall challenge of influencing DFID strategy and ensuring DFID has a nutrition focus, and that it analyses and reports on nutrition interventions, has been achieved. There is now an ongoing interest and expectation amongst those in the international development community that DFID will deliver. DFID itself has said it expects to "improve the nutrition of at least 12 million children over the next five years, which amounts to 10% of all undernourished children in the world."¹²

Furthermore, according to most informants, DFID is now seen as – if not a nutrition champion – a donor playing its full part in nutrition-related development debates, discussions and initiatives. For example, Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of WFP, wrote recently to congratulate DFID at a senior level on the nutrition strategy.¹³ One informant said that the "nutrition strategy has been so well received it would be difficult to pick apart."

There was some concern that DFID could row back from these commitments, though these comments were a minority voice. One said, "It's a great paper but there is still very little money for nutrition." There is also concern that the cross-sectoral and technical nature of nutrition leaves it vulnerable: "We were always trailing the food security people – always a step behind – the SCN (United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition) is always a step behind – it's too delivery focused; the debate is still too technical. Nutrition affects everything but it is nowhere – people are still a bit ambivalent about making it central. You have to have much more capacity to be everywhere you need to be". The lack of civil society activity on nutrition was described by another internal to DFID as a "weak bit in our armour". Another summed the changes up by saying, "We have come a long way but we have a lot further to go."

The ability and willingness of DFID to influence others

It was generally felt, albeit among a somewhat narrow group of respondents, that DFID has now become – or at least is becoming – a vocal advocate for nutrition. One claimed that, "DFID is very influential within the nutrition communities now, it is a valued player. [At a recent donor meeting] DFID was automatically asked "to play a leading role in the work around nutrition. However, the same respondent also pointed out that the UK was not very "joined up" in the way it approaches the European Commission on aid.

DFID has also recently called for a clear nutrition communication from the European Union through leading grouping of like-minded states during the May 2010 Council meeting. And DFID has been working with David Nabarro, UN Special Representative on Food Security and Nutrition. They have reportedly been "quite challenging" towards the SCN. "We have raised our game, which gives us credibility", said one DFID staff member.

¹² DFID, 2010, *The Neglected Crisis of Undernutrition: DFID's strategy*

¹³ According to one informant

Another made the point that DFID was not just an advocate for nutrition but also a supporter of a certain strand of nutrition work – multi-sectoral and arguably more sophisticated than more simple and direct interventions – closely matching the main objectives and approach of Save the Children. In this sense DFID is seen as an important counterweight to the direct intervention strand of nutritionists.

Cost effectiveness

Overall it is apparent that, although it is difficult at this early stage to measure specific outcomes such as lives saved or development paths altered, in terms of the potential that the effort has unleashed, the cost effectiveness of the effort can be described as extremely high. Comparable with similar influencing efforts, and spending on programmes and projects aimed at malnourished children, for instance, the amount spent can be described as a very effective use of time and effort.

There are no hard and fast figures on Save the Children's influencing of DFID on nutrition, and what resources were used largely consisted of staff time. Estimates of staff time used in the effort ranged from 15-40% for three or four key staff, less for others in the team. Staff time also varied over time in the four main years in question, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. In addition to staff time there were a number of other costs: mainly research studies - the two key papers that had significant costs were the IDS paper and the Cost of Healthy Diet paper - occasional briefing papers, and the high-level seminar in 2009. All in all the estimated cost over the period is in the region of £250,000.

Cost effectiveness is a notoriously difficult element of advocacy to try to evaluate. There is little literature on the subject available to draw on and even less in term of methodological models.¹⁴ It is perhaps not helpful to try quantifying the cost effectiveness of a piece of advocacy. Without broadly comparable studies undertaken over time, the cost effectiveness of this work has no comparison criteria with which to assess it. It is therefore necessary to take a broad view but also a long view about the effects that a piece of advocacy or policy influencing has over a specific target (in keeping with the qualitative nature of this study).

In this case the types of changes that were achieved at the policy level are quite large-scale ones, covering strategic interventions and potentially harnessing large part of DFID's substantial resources. However, while DFID has changed its strategy, its policy, and its position, it has not radically altered its resource allocation. Nutrition-related outcomes in terms of reduced stunting, for example, would need to be measured at some point in the future, and tools for measuring this would need to be designed. Therefore, it is clearly too early to measure these types of effects. At any rate (although DFID is reportedly thinking "a lot" about this) linkages between a multi-sectoral-type approach to nutrition and its effects on nutritional levels and health outcomes will be quite hard to measure, although that does not mean that they will not be significant. The overall effects on economic growth, social structures, households and development in general is undoubtedly even more difficult to measure, although again the effects may well be great. The effects on other donors, the development architecture and the debate may be easier to see evidence of, although the outcomes in development terms may be doubly difficult to calibrate.

¹⁴ One model that might be useful to look at for Save the Children as background is the New Economics Foundation's *Social Return on Investment* model which aims to measure the 'social value' created in comparison with the amount of money spent on creating it. The model is a good attempt to measure the value created but may not be relevant for complex processes such as policy influencing.

Most interviewees were adamant that this was an extremely good use of resources. One respondent said: “We are talking about a condition that is responsible for a third of all child deaths. What better outcome could there have been?” One interviewee made the point that the alternative might have been to plough some money into a project but that this would be a far less effective use of money in terms of the long-term benefits, structural changes and influence on other donors and the development discourse. Another said: “It [the influencing effort] is without doubt good value for money, when you look at the potential to help 12 million children in six countries ... but I do wonder whether it is replicable”. One person made the point that the effort “could have been accelerated by getting more country offices on board” and that “five years is quite a long time to take”. Another, commenting on the 12 million figure, said, “The 12 million figure is a bit ambitious but it is better that they are ambitious than not.”

One Save the Children staff member said that the resources deployed were appropriately allocated: “It was certainly a very good use of my time, it achieved a lot. You couldn’t have imagined a better use of the time.” Another staff member was keen to look at the broader picture and the wider impacts of the change in DFID’s focus: “I think we have played a key role helping to create a ‘ripple’ or domino effect – with DFID helping to move the agenda ever outwards on nutrition with EC, World Bank, other donors and institutions they fund – that is the real impact at scale.”

The relative value of advocacy, influencing, lobbying and campaigning is evidenced by the large and growing pool of practitioners and converts to this approach – from civil society organisations to government and quangos to private businesses – and from the growing professionalised advocacy consultancies, PR firms and lobbying companies that offer advocacy services to a diverse range of clients.

Another way of looking at cost effectiveness is to look at it from the opportunity cost angle. In this sense the cost of the intervention could have been used to perhaps treat 1,500 children for acute malnutrition if it had been sent to a country office.¹⁵ This could be contrasted with DFID’s potential to reach its target of 12 million malnourished children. Additionally, as nutrition is arguably a very cost effective development intervention – saving lives and allowing people to fulfil their potential – the cost of the original investment looks very good value indeed.

Suggested benchmarks for monitoring the roll out of DFID’s strategy

The following proposals are based on interviewees’ suggestions for how to benchmark against the delivery of the nutrition strategy. Perhaps the most interesting is the suggestion to push DFID on measuring the strategy’s effectiveness and impact, especially in terms of outcomes.

Ensuring ongoing political support

- ‘Temperature checks’ with the new ministerial team should happen “pretty soon” and on a regular/ongoing basis.
- Future speeches should be scoured for evidence of nutrition commitments and action. (The ongoing monitoring of DFID on nutrition is described as very important for those within DFID who are championing nutrition or who supported its prioritisation in the past.)
- Save the Children should lobby the IDC to have another look at nutrition in some future inquiry by pressing for this at an appropriate juncture.

¹⁵ According to Save the Children informants

- Other parliamentary tools such as parliamentary questions and Early Day Motions were also mentioned, although their use should be set against a risk assessment of how they might be received and the ability get information directly from DFID staff.¹⁶
- Return to the original Institute of Development Studies report recommendations and flesh these out with more concrete targets.
- Engage further with Save the Children country offices to ensure demand is galvanised at the country level.

Measuring inputs and outcomes

- How will DFID measure the outcomes from the strategy? One interviewee pointed out that it was very difficult to measure outcomes from nutrition interventions in a multi-sectoral context, but suggested that the Code on Nutrition and Health of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee could be broadened and used as a measure.
- What outcomes are there in terms of numbers lifted out of malnutrition?
- Engage further with Save the Children country offices to ensure delivery is happening on the ground.
- Ensure DFID shows demonstrable support to in-country nutrition platforms.
- How much is DFID spending on nutrition in terms of hard cash and percentages?
- MDG indicators could be further broken down by Save the Children to enhance further scrutiny. On the research side, Save the Children should look at what is actually being funded and try to monitor this.

Infrastructure and architecture

- How many countries is the nutrition focus being applied to and what will the in-country infrastructure look like? What country-level expertise on nutrition does it and will it have? (Some also made the point that the monitoring approach should be on a country-by-country basis and within this that Save the Children could try to use its own structures to monitor how DFID is doing on nutrition.)
- DFID should be more accountable about the institutional set up on nutrition ("needs more clarity about the decision-making and to keep an institutional record").
- How will the strategy dovetail with the Gender Action Plan?
- What is DFID's 'vision' for nutrition and has Save the Children got a clear vision itself?

¹⁶ One DFID staff member said that, "Save the Children should perhaps leave us alone for a year or so – not totally – we should be in contact – but the commitment is there – I can't see it going away. It could be more of a 'grown-up' partnership".

6 Conclusions, lessons and recommendations

Conclusions, risks and lessons

Overall this piece of influencing was highly successful in terms of outcomes. Save the Children has achieved its central objectives of securing greater practical commitment from DFID to tackling undernutrition.

The role that Save the Children has played in securing this has undoubtedly been a central one. The way the team conducted the effort, ensuring at first that the issue climbed up DFID's internal agenda, maximised – as far as it is possible to tell – the chances of a successful outcome.

The efforts were endowed with some fortunate timing and contextual factors. In this sense, Save the Children definitely harnessed the circumstances to produce the outcome it wanted, and ensured that the specific messages that it wanted to see were integral to the final nutrition strategy. The placement of key Save the Children staff in prominent positions in DFID has undoubtedly been valuable in ensuring ongoing synergies between Save the Children's objectives and DFID's policies. It is worth pointing out that the key question, set against a very successful outcome for this piece of work, is whether, ultimately, the effort is replicable in other similar future influencing efforts.

DFID has a clear and probably fairly sustainable commitment to nutrition in the medium to long term. It is exercising its own influence in favour of multi-sectoral approaches to nutrition amongst the wider development community.

The efforts were certainly worthwhile, and while cost effectiveness of advocacy is difficult to accurately calibrate, the effort has made a large impact on both the UK and international nutrition architecture. The future potential in terms of development outcomes is substantial. The key benchmarks to adopt to ensure continued success with the strategy should include a substantial effort to ensure that DFID is able to measure its own success and ensure ongoing political support for nutrition.

However, there are a number of risks, ambiguities and hazards that present themselves with regard to DFID's future nutrition work. First, there is an ambiguity around the current government's commitment to the strategy, although the risk here could be described as quite small. Second, there is the risk that the lack of civil society scrutiny of nutrition in general and the somewhat insufficient communication and political skills of the wider nutrition community leave the nutrition commitments and staff in DFID relatively isolated and unsupported. Third, there is a possibility that the strategic commitment to nutrition does not translate into realisable gains in terms of lives affected, although this is partly contingent upon the first two risks. Fourth, and connected with the last risk, is that DFID will not be able to adequately measure its own strategic impact. Finally, it is also possible that DFID will be unable to adequately ensure its relevant country offices roll out the strategy in a meaningful way.

In terms of lessons from this experience, perhaps four elements can be concluded:

- The key alliance with IDS was instrumental in enhancing Save the Children's credibility and put the organisation on a different footing from most NGOs with a particular advocacy objective. Alliances of this kind should therefore be sought in future similar advocacy efforts.
- Staying engaged with the strategy at the latter stages of the activity helped to ensure that the particular messages that the organisation was keen to promote were incorporated in the final strategy adopted.
- The lack of a clear formalised advocacy strategy, coupled with only an informal power analysis, may in future efforts compromise the ability of the organisation to understand its target and deliver a rounded influencing plan.
- A stronger focus on delivering complementary advocacy through Save the Children country offices may have increased the likelihood and perhaps speed of change in DFID. Future advocacy aimed at DFID should harness Save the Children's broad and potentially powerful national offices.

Recommendations

The following recommended actions for Save the Children to adopt for future advocacy efforts of a similar magnitude, aimed at DFID, follow partly the lessons learned above. Many of these were broadly part of the effort on this occasion but are complemented by some refinements and additions.

- 1. If possible and appropriate, pick unusual or complementary partners for joint advocacy work that add value and credibility to your reputation and skillset.**
- 2. Adopt a clear strategy, with agreed and understood objectives, targets, clear messaging and forward-looking plans.**
- 3. Incorporate power analysis tools at an early stage and regularly refresh throughout their use. Ensure a wide a group of staff is involved in such discussions.**
- 4. Agree clear, measurable, achievable objectives and ensure that criteria exist for measuring the team's impact, as well as the success of the target institution. Work out advocacy solutions in advance.**
- 5. Make sure that tactics employed are flexible according to political and contextual circumstances. For example, going to the media should be used only if the judgement is that progress is unlikely to made on a purely inside track. The 'threat' (implied or otherwise) of going public with a particular story or criticism should be employed appropriately. DFID staff and ministers should always be put on notice when considering using the media.¹⁷**
- 6. Make better strategic use of Save the Children country offices in support of advocacy objectives.¹⁸**
- 7. Stay engaged with the process until the outcomes sought are fully achieved or as near to fully achieved as possible.**
- 8. Target key staff in DFID using a sophisticated, and regularly refreshed, understanding of where decision-making lies within the organisation. Keep lines of communication open and measure and take up offers to become involved in strategic partnerships, if appropriate.**

¹⁷ These recommendations are based in part on the consultant's understanding of the relative 'insider' political positioning of Save the Children. A different choice of positioning might imply a different set of interventions.

¹⁸ This is easier said than done, and is a common weakness across the sector. Where it has worked well in the past, however, it has been seen to be a formidable vehicle for change.

- 9. Credible parliamentary accountability mechanisms can have a significant impact and should continue to be employed judiciously. If recommendations (for instance, of a relevant select committee) are clear, specific and backed up by evidence they are likely to be particularly powerful.**
- 10. Start to collect comparative data from similar future efforts for cost effectiveness analysis purposes.**

Appendix I: Approach, Methodology/Questions Framework

Final version, 11 May 2010

Evaluation objectives (taken from the TOR)

1. The degree of influence Save the Children has had on DFID between 2006 and 2010 on the re-prioritisation of nutrition (and its multi-sectoral causes/links) and the development of the nutrition strategy. Integral to this analysis is a better understanding of how the different stakeholders and parts of DFID came to common will and decision to move forward on nutrition.
2. What aspects of Save the Children's advocacy was most effective in a) changing minds directly b) creating the space for views to change in DFID?
3. The approximate cost effectiveness of the advocacy – including financial investments by Save the Children (staff time and other resources) set against the anticipated influence of the Nutrition Strategy affecting a) DFID's £5.5 billion expenditure b) the intention for 12 million fewer malnourished children c) DFID's influence profiling nutrition with other bi-lateral donors plus the EC and developing country governments.

Also to look at: Benchmarks to help Save the Children monitor the progress of the roll-out of the strategy over the coming 5 years up until 2015 would be valuable.

Approach

This will be a qualitative evaluation, designed around a set of semi-structured interviews, complemented by desk research. The approach will be 'impact' or 'outcome' orientated, with formative or forward looking elements of learnings and lessons for Save the Children to draw upon in the future. Methodology will concentrate on the difference that the effort made, the added value of Save the Children in the context of wider advocacy on nutrition, what worked and what didn't work, and will attempt to measure the cost effectiveness of the effort in a qualitative wayⁱ. This will include an analysis of costs incurred by Save the Children and a means of comparing that against the likely outcomes of the strategy both now (more of policy emphasis) – and if implemented in full.

The approach will seek to get feedback from a range of stakeholders both inside and outside Save the Children and will remain open to inputs throughout the research period.

Methodology and questions framework

The evidence for the inquiry will be gleaned mainly from a set of semi-structured interviews, along with desk research, scrutiny of any relevant documentation provided by Save the Children, and wider intelligence-gathering. This will be further complimented by the consultant's own knowledge of influencing DFID and other policy targets.

Area of inquiry	Questions ¹⁹	Respondent groups	Tool
Starter and background	1 What was your relationship to the influencing effort?	All	Interview
	2 What was your overall impressions/view of the influencing effort?	All	Interview
The degree of influence Save the Children has had on DFID between 2006 and 2010 on the re-prioritisation of nutrition (and its multi-sectoral causes/links) and the development of the nutrition strategy. (Integral to this analysis is a better understanding of how the different stakeholders and parts of DFID came to common will and decision to move forward on nutrition.)	3 How influential was Save the Children in the eventual adoption and design of the DFID nutrition strategy?	All	Interview/literature review
	4 Who else was influential? Who was most influential?	All	Interviews/wider intelligence gathering
	5 How does policy or strategy decision making happen at DFID in general? What are the key drivers of internal change? (internal and external drivers)	DFID staff	Interview
	6 What were the key decision-making processes in DFID that lead to the changes in, and adoption of a nutrition focus? 7 Did Save the Children affect these processes? How? If not, what/who else did?	DFID staff	Interviews/intelligence gathering
What aspects of Save the Children's advocacy was most effective in a) changing minds directly b) creating the space for views to change in DFID?	8 What was it about Save the Children's influencing that was most effective?	All	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	9 Was Save the Children's timing/'choreography' right?	All	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	10 Were the reports influential? Which one(s) in particular?	DFID staff/All	Interviews
	11 Were there internal allies in DFID on nutrition? Were there external allies (e.g. IDC and WFP) that proved important as far as changing minds were concerned? Did Save the Children use these allies effectively?	All	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	12 Did Save the Children do anything to undermine or reduce the chances of change within DFID?	DFID staff	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	13 How important is/was outside pressure and criticism?	DFID staff/all	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	14 Which academic partners and think tanks are most influential with DFID in	DFID staff	Interviews/intelligence gathering

		the food, economic, nutrition, health sectors?		
Measure the approximate cost effectiveness²⁰ of the advocacy – including financial investments by Save the Children (staff time and other resources) set against the anticipated influence of the Nutrition Strategy affecting a) DFID's £5.5 billion expenditure b) the intention for 12 million fewer malnourished children c) DFID's influence profiling nutrition with other bi-lateral donors plus the EC and developing country governments.	15	How much was spent on the campaign? What other resources were used?	Save the Children Staff	Documentation and interviews
	16	How effective have the changes in policy in DFID been in changing DFID priorities?		Interviews/intelligence gathering
	17	How sustainable are the changes in policy?		
	18	Do you expect the Nutrition Strategy to be effectively implemented as per the commitment? What changes a) have already been made or b) do you expect to be made to DFID's programmes and country influencing on the ground?	DFID staff/all	Interviews
	19	What difference have the changes made in DFID's work with (and influencing of) other donors/the EC?	All	Interviews/intelligence gathering
	20	Was the effort worth the money spent on it?	Save the Children staff	Interviews/documentation/intelligence gathering
What benchmarks might help Save the Children monitor the progress of the roll-out of the strategy over the coming 5 years?	21	What benchmarks might help NGOs such as Save the Children monitor the progress of the roll-out of the strategy over the coming 5 years?	All	Interview/intelligence gathering
Finish	22	Are there any other lessons that Save the Children should take from the process?	All	Interview
	23	Any other feedback/insights?		

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference

Evaluation: Save the Children's advocacy influencing of DFID's nutrition strategy

Background

Tackling undernutrition in the developing world has not been an overt institutional priority for DFID since its inception in 1997. However, hunger reduction and food security have been emphasised at points in time. DFID has provided emergency and development funding as well as institutional attention to these global challenges in varying degrees around the world. DFID remains a significant funder of the World Food Programme and other global bodies seeking to enhance global food security and improved agriculture (including research). DFID funds large-scale social protection and health programmes that implicitly rather than explicitly contribute towards nutritional outcomes. The impact of these programmes on undernutrition is unknown.

Nutrition, particularly of women and young children has not been a lens or outcome that DFID has explicitly applied to its ODA measurements, relevant programmes and policy influencing discussions in the developing world. DFID has not measured its achievement in its public service agreement against the underweight indicator of MDG 1c, but against the main income indicator of MDG 1a (income poverty).

Save the Children's hunger reduction activities focus on tackling undernutrition primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia with full recognition of the multi-layer and sectoral causes as outlined in the UNICEF nutrition causal analysis framework. Since 2005 Save the Children has been seeking to strengthen the profile of nutrition on the international stage and galvanise action by a range of stakeholders to help achieve MDG 1c. Save the Children has sought to bring attention to the underlying and root causes of undernutrition because these areas are the most neglected.

The Lancet Series on undernutrition early in 2008 and the food price crisis in 2007/8 helped to consolidate an enabling environment for discussions to tackle hunger and undernutrition in a more effective and rounded manner.

Before, during and since these developments Save the Children undertook specific activities to influence DFID thinking and increase the institutional focus on tackling undernutrition. A selection of these is outlined below:

- In 2006 Save the Children set an explicit advocacy objective for DFID to prioritise nutrition to a much greater degree and to develop a nutrition strategy.
- In 2007 Save the Children engaged the Institute of Development Studies to research the profile of nutrition in DFID and the European Commission. This culminated in a robust report and briefing called *Everybody's Business, Nobody's Responsibility* that was launched and communicated to a range of stakeholders, media and the institutions concerned. It also set the basis for a dual influencing approach with IDS.
- In 2008 Save the Children sent a nutrition focused submission to the International Development Select Committee investigation of Global Food Security and the World Food Programme. The submission by Save the Children caught the imagination of the IDC and we were invited to

provide oral evidence. The subsequent IDC report strongly encouraged DFID to take significant and specific steps to tackle child undernutrition.

- In early 2009 Save the Children convened a workshop with a range of stakeholders from around the world to discuss the nutrition architecture at global level – raising awareness and problem identification on these issues for DFID and the EC who attended at a senior level.
- In 2009 Save the Children was invited by DFID to second a nutrition adviser to DFID to draft the first version of the strategy
- The Head of Hunger at Save the Children was appointed as the Senior Nutrition Adviser at DFID in the summer of 2009 (the first and only nutrition focused position in DFID London although there are nutrition focused posts elsewhere in DFID)
- The DFID nutrition strategy was launched on 10 March 2010 supported by Save the Children on the panel.

Objective

The consultancy will evaluate:

1. The degree of influence Save the Children has had on DFID between 2006 and 2010 on the re-prioritisation of nutrition (and its multi-sectoral causes/links) and the development of the nutrition strategy. Integral to this analysis is a better understanding of how the different stakeholders and parts of DFID came to common will and decision to move forward on nutrition.
2. What aspects of Save the Children's advocacy was most effective in a) changing minds directly b) creating the space for views to change in DFID
3. The approximate cost effectiveness of the advocacy – including financial investments by Save the Children (staff time and other resources) set against the anticipated influence of the Nutrition Strategy affecting a) DFID's £5.5 billion expenditure b) the intention for 12 million fewer malnourished children c) DFID's influence profiling nutrition with other bilateral donors plus the EC and developing country governments. Benchmarks to help Save the Children monitor the progress of the roll-out of the strategy over the coming 5 years up until 2015 would be valuable.

Outputs

- A main report no more than 15 pages (including one page executive summary) fulfilling each of the 3 areas outlined above in the objective including one page executive summary.
- A 2 page popular briefing paper that communicates the findings in an engaging manner in non-technical language that might be used for fundraising for Save the Children's future policy influencing.

Present key findings to Save the Children (including Director of Policy and hunger.