

# **Evaluation Report**

## ***Thematic Evaluation of Save the Children Norway's Cooperation with Partners***

### ***Nicaragua Case Study***

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## **Abbreviations**

CSO	Civil Society Organisations
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NORAD	The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
SCI	Save the Children International
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SC-Ni	Save the Children Nicaragua (i.e. Unified Presence)
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP	Unified Presence

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This review of Save the Children Norway's approach to cooperating with partners in Nicaragua forms part of a broader study that aims to identify evidence of impact and lessons learnt that can inform the future partnership policy of SCN and possibly that of SC International. The fieldwork took place in June 2011 in Managua, Nueva Segovia and Matagalpa, based on interviews with Save the Children Nicaragua staff, and a sample of eighteen current and former partners, including one current SC Spain funded partnership and one funded by SC Canada. In addition, four focus groups and one workshop were held with children and adolescents. The main findings were as follows:

### ***Understanding of Partnership***

There is a considerable amount of shared understanding on 'partnership' and most of the interviewees and partners stressed its multiple dimensions - with the funding dimension not necessarily being the most important. A number of written references on partnership working had been produced in Nicaragua, and the new 2010 document 'Models for Programme Implementation' provides a clear framework. With regard to partner capacity building, there are references in strategic plans to specific initiatives but no conceptual or policy reference to frame the approach.

### ***Characteristics of the partnership approach in practice***

The relationship with SCN has historically been highly appreciated by partners. In addition to a general approach reflecting mutual respect, trust and openness, specific characteristics included

- a commitment to child rights/children at the centre of the relationship;
- the relationship operating at two levels simultaneously (with individual SCN staff and also with the institution as a whole)
- the 'accompaniment' approach was a key to success
- the holistic and strategic approach to the relationship.
- flexibility and openness to change decisions or ways of working together.
- a strong commitment by SCN to facilitating linkages and spaces for coordination amongst the partners (and with other actors).

This quality relationship was consistent across a diversity of types of actors, although some specific issues emerged in relation to partnering networks or federative membership bodies, governmental Ministries and child-led organisations. The quality however did suffer a decline during the unification process and new strategy period (2007- early 2010), but this deterioration is currently being addressed. SCN/SC-Ni staff have played a diverse range of roles including accompaniment, mentoring, provision of technical inputs, facilitation of linkages and knowledge development.

More recently (2009) a selection processes via public tendering was introduced, based on thematic ToRs reproducing SC-Ni Strategic Plan's programme objectives and intended results (with their indicators). This shift towards the more 'sub-contracting' end of the partnership spectrum was experienced as a major break from previous ways of working by the older SCN partners, and in particular the geographic prioritization generated a number of challenges for those affected. This selection process took place within a tight timeframe (3 months), reducing the opportunity for quality dialogue.

### ***Following up with Partners***

Historically, the accompaniment process was experienced as flexible and holistic, with formal and informal consultation mechanisms and specific technical assistance and advice available throughout the project/programme management cycle. There has been regular and timely grant disbursement and flexible MoU management. During the most intense period of transition (2008 to early 2010) the quality of follow up was reduced considerably.

During the transition period the SC-Ni office suffered from challenges in establishing coherence in its programme management approach and systems. In addition, funding parameters were in flux, with some partners experiencing several revisions to agreed amounts and reductions ranging from 20% to 50%. There were some weaknesses in the communication to partners about the causes and criteria for the cuts, and most partners reported a major impact of this reduced funding – in geographic or programme scope, reduction in personnel or reduced investment in their own capacity development.

### ***Financial Accountability***

SCN was known amongst various partners for its robust and demanding requirements regarding financial accountability, which was particularly appreciated by some and for which relevant training was provided.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

SC-Ni has introduced new processes and instruments in this area, in response to weaknesses in the old reporting formats (overly oriented towards lengthy descriptions of processes and insufficient concrete data on achievements). Indeed, the overall approach to monitoring and evaluation needed to be more orientated towards producing more concise, quantifiable expressions of change, as SC internationally has developed its internal processes and instruments. However, the more recently introduced reporting formats have been experienced by many partners as somewhat restrictive, limiting their expression of achievements, reflection on the methods and processes involved and identification of internal capacity changes. There does not appear to be any means to systematically monitor and evaluate the capacity building efforts, as there are no tailored instruments for this work or specific capacity indicators to facilitate assessment.

### ***Capacity Building***

The second approach was to *support capacity strengthening of individual partners* by incorporating an element of this, identified by the partner, within approved project funding. In the last few years of reduced funds, this has been the area that many of the partners have felt obliged to cut. Indeed, in general there has been a reduction in capacity building initiatives in the last few years, with the major current investment being in results based management and some advocacy training. SCN/SC-NI has not used an approach based on a holistic organisational or capacity assessment, followed by the development of an individualised capacity building plan

### ***Exit Strategies***

There has been little practice of discussing timeframes for partnerships, nor of identifying how SCN might support the partner during any eventual exiting from the partnership. There is no evidence of SCN/ SC-Ni having discussed how the partner's work would continue in the absence of SC support. The 2010-14 Strategy indicates that developing exit strategies is an area that needs attention.

### ***Children as Partners***

There were some impressive examples of child led organisations which partner directly or indirectly with SCN/SC-Ni e.g. young people from one network shared their experiences of their child-led initiatives and diverse range of relationships (including funding sources), as well as seeking to ensure the sustainability of the network by investing in the development of the next generation of leaders. Another example of a strong, strategic and child led approach to its work was shared by a second network of young people working on protection issues. Whilst the child-led organizations themselves expressed their desire to be treated as direct partners, there are institutional requirements which appear to restrict this.

### ***Changes in the Capacity of Partners***

The early investment (late 1990s) by SCN in the development of strategic capacity and internal policies and procedures has contributed to CSO partners of that time being now strong, consolidated and established actors for child rights in Nicaragua. SCN staff accompaniment through times of internal difficulties or crises was cited by affected partners as having played a critical role in helping them move forward. Support provided by SCN and SC Spain for the establishment of internal processes, systems and structures for national networks or coordinating bodies played a key role for them to effectively fulfil their mission as 'value-added' actors within the child rights field.

All types of partners praised SCN's support to their internalisation of a child rights perspective to their work, with several referring to SCN as having been *the* key actor for building such sector-wide awareness and capacity. Examples include child rights perspectives being integrated into work carried out by multi-sector municipal commissions with the establishment of local level children's councils; the integration of a child rights perspective to the work of the Civil Defence in Disaster Risk Management, and the use of child-to-child methodologies, and support to child-led organizations providing an effective means of children and adolescents engaging in ensuring their own protection. In addition, working in

Overall capacity to address child rights is not just about the policies, laws or collective spaces for decision making and coordinated action. It is also about ensuring there are individuals spread across all realms of society who are aware of, and work towards the fulfilment of child rights in their different spheres of action. Many of the partners' programmes and initiatives supported by SCN have focused on achieving changes in understanding, behaviours, skills and knowledge of these individuals.

With regard to capacity of children and adolescents to address their rights, there were many impressive examples of positive outcomes of partner work. This was seen in relation to increased *awareness* of rights, increased *self-esteem, and confidence*, increased capacity to *take action* in defence of their rights and increased capacity to *organise* themselves, to be protagonists of their own future in sustainable ways by running their own groups, making their own decisions, developing strategic approaches to the issues they face, and developing strong and effective relationships with each other and others as they pursue their shared goals.

Finally, a number of examples were shared with the consultants about how, with SCN's support, the efforts of partners have made contributions that have spread beyond the national boundaries.

### ***Evaluation Recommendations***

Recommendations include: a) maintaining the core approach of support to networks and other collaborative efforts, and adapting institutional requirements accordingly; b) reviewing some elements of the selection and project development process, including the use of competitive tendering and the process of defining indicators of results; c) seeking to reinforce partner reporting on qualitative changes and lessons learnt; d) identifying some core 'bottom lines' regarding important good practice that should be reintroduced or protected in the future; e) strengthening partner capacity building through the development of a strategic framework, 'ring fencing' funding for this work, and exploring ways to build on earlier efforts in the field of resource mobilization capacity building; f) developing a strategic approach to core alliances such as with Plan Nicaragua and UNICEF; g) investing in systematizing certain key partnership experiences; h) Oslo to seek the incorporation of good partnership practices within programme management guidelines for Unified Presence and International Programme countries; i) SCI to ensure full discussion amongst Members on the strengths and weaknesses of different implementation models, and the agreement on indicators or criteria for establishing country implementation frameworks which can guide decision making about working in partnership, self-implementation or co-implementation.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background to Evaluation

This evaluation of Save the Children Norway's (SCN's) approach to cooperating with partners across the world is taking place a decade after a similar exercise was carried out by INTRAC in 2001. This current evaluation is timely, as Save the Children internationally continues to undergo major organisational transformation, building on the move away from the model of each SC managing its own programme in a given country, to a transition model of Unified Presence (UP – that is a single SC presence in a country managed by one SC member such as SCN) and now towards a single presence managed by Save the Children International (SCI). In this process, the wish would clearly be that the positive aspects of what has been the experience to date in partnership are not lost, while the negative aspects are recognised and addressed.

This Nicaragua report is just one of four case studies being carried out as part of this evaluation – the other countries being Mozambique, Nepal and Zimbabwe<sup>1</sup>. These countries will each have a report like this, and then there will also be a global report bringing all these experiences together, synthesizing the key learning points.

**Note:** To facilitate analysis, the following abbreviations are used:

SCN = Save the Children Norway. This will be used to refer specifically to its Nicaragua country programme before unification,

SC-Ni = the Save the Children unified programme in Nicaragua, formally established in 2008 and managed by SCN

## 1.2 Terms of Reference and Summary

The main purpose of the global evaluation as expressed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) – is to provide an insight into SCN's work with partners, build learning and ensure accountability by:

1. Providing evidence of impact (positive and negative, intended or unintended outcome/impact) of SCN's cooperation with partners in five different countries; to what extent and how a) partners have been strengthened as providers of and advocators for children's rights, and b) how SCN through partner cooperation has added value to the overall capacity of key actors in the society where we work to address and fulfil children's rights.
2. Provide an oversight of different implementation models and identify and document good practices in cooperation with partners, both government and civil society, appropriate to the aim

4. Based on the above, provide input to the formation of future partnership cooperation in SCN supported programmes and SCI.

The full ToR is shown in **Appendix A**. The first, second and fourth objectives are covered in this report with respect to Nicaragua. The third has already been addressed by a separate paper on current thinking on partnership more widely, which will be incorporated in a summarised form into the global report.

### 1.3 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation was initially outlined in the ToR issued by SCN and further developed by INTRAC through its Inception Report, which was then revised in the light of comments made by SCN staff and other stakeholders. The pilot case study in Zimbabwe shed some light on the need for further slight adjustments to some of the data gathering instruments. The key aspects of the methodology can be summarised as follows and most data was collected from 6-17<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

- Literature review
- In Nicaragua (see **Appendix C** for itinerary), there was an initial workshop with SC-Ni staff and partners to present the study and to hold an initial conversation on a few core questions.
- Semi-structured interviews with a sample of SCN/SC-Ni partners, of which one partner agreement had terminated and a further partnership had been terminated and then restarted as a sub agreement within another project. In addition, one SC-Ni partner principally supported by SC Spain and one principally supported by SC Canada. (**Appendix B** for key informants list)

In terms of children's participation:

- A workshop with participants from two child led groups (Red de Jovenes Distrito VI and Grupo de Jovenes Ciudad Sandino)
- A focus group with child beneficiaries of a youth-led national organization in Esteli
- A focus group with members of that youth-led organization (MNAJ)
- A focus group with members of a national movement based on children's leadership but with adult involvement (MILAVF)
- Focus groups with child and adolescent participants in adult-led work in Ocotal (MCN) and in Managua (CAPRI and Dos Generaciones)
- Interviews and focus groups with SC-Ni staff.
- Interviews with other key informants and stakeholders: UNICEF; Plan Nicaragua; Representative from Norwegian Embassy
- Preliminary feedback and discussion workshop with staff and partners at end of Nicaragua visit.

A number of criteria were used to select the **sample** of partners to ensure a representative spread of type, thematic area being supported, length of relationship with SCN/SC-Ni, and size of grant. The

## 1.4 Constraints of Evaluation

- Not all of the selected partners were available to participate – this in particular was a limitation with regards to accessing the views of people from central government partners (Ministry of the Family and Ministry of Education staff).
- The emphasis of the evaluation was on the partnership process itself, and not so much on the programme implemented through that partnership, although the two are closely related, so this is hard to separate out at times.
- Wherever possible, every effort has been made to retain the primary focus on the partnership work of SC Norway, whether it be in the context of the separate SCN programme before unification (i.e. before 2008) or partnerships that are taking place within the SC-Nicaragua unified presence (UP) but identified as SCN supported projects. However, at times references made by interviewees may not have always held such a clear-cut distinction.

## 1.5 Structure of Report

As mentioned, this is one of four case study reports, which all in turn feed into the global report. It is thus meant to stand alone, but also be part of a broader process. The report follows the same questions as in the ToR, but in some the order is adjusted to help the logical flow as follows:

- Programme description (brief overview of partnership in Nicaragua – descriptive part of Objective 2)
- Relationship between SC and its Partners (analytical part of Objective 2).
- Changes in Capacity and Behaviour of Partners (first part of Objective 1)
- Contribution to Overall Capacity to Address Child Rights (second part of Objective 1)
- Summary and Recommendations (Objective 4).<sup>2</sup>

## 2. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

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### 2.1 Historical development

SCN started its first projects in Nicaragua in the early 1980's as partnerships with local organisations, managed from Oslo. An office was established in Esteli in 1988 by a Norwegian woman who had been a development worker there, based in an NGO working with war orphans. Seen as someone with 'compromiso' (commitment to a cause or process), this profile and background was referred to by a number of the older partners as expressing the historical identity of SCN in Nicaragua. SCN never directly implemented its own programmes, although it did enter into co-implementation with a few government bodies.

## **2.2. Context**

Nicaragua is experiencing a context which is characterised by political polarization, with very high tensions in the relationships civil society/state and church/state, perhaps heightened even more in this pre-electoral period (elections due in November 2011), However, in comparison with previous ones, the current government has introduced some economic and social policies, which have been favourable for the poor.

The past decade has also seen some advances at local government level, with the municipal authorities taking on responsibility for the promotion of child rights and, in some cases, increasing their social investment in child rights areas. However, overall social investment in education has reduced, which is a matter of great discussion within the country.

In other areas the current government has acted in ways which have threatened existing human rights – particularly those of women (e.g. in eliminating the Legal Code article permitting abortion for health reasons). Certain parts of the Children’s Code relating to penal elements are currently under scrutiny by the government, as a response to the rise in social violence. This is strongly contested by all organisations working for Child Rights.

A few International NGOs have been the subject of the current government’s attention when they have overtly advocated on sensitive issues, and whilst this does create an uncertain climate, SCN/SC-Ni has not encountered serious difficulties in its relationship with the authorities.

## **2.3. Summary of Strategy**

The Strategic Plan 2010-14 states that SC-Ni aims to “.. foster an enabling environment between the children, civil society, NGOs and the government seeking sustainable and innovative solutions to the development challenges in Nicaragua.” There is a prioritised geographic focus given to the “...’most vulnerable municipalities’ in 7 departments which receive little attention from the State and NGOs alike.

The programme is shaped around seven thematic areas: Education; Child Rights Governance; Child Protection; Emergency (including Disaster Risk Reduction); Health; HIV-AIDS; Livelihoods. Each area has identified a General Objective, and several Specific Objectives, each with a set of concrete expected results expressed in quantitative and qualitative indicators. There is also reference to how each thematic area is expected to relate to other themes, with the aim of avoiding isolated programming.

Work on child participation, gender, capacity building and child rights based programming are seen as ‘cross-cutting’ areas to be supported through technical support and training of SC-NI and partners’ program staff and they are expected to be mainstreamed in the project cycle. With regard to Child



Start date	2010/11	06-09	00-05	Before 2000	No date				
Total SC-Ni partners	1 <sup>8</sup>	8	20	13	2				
SCN	0	4	11	13	1				
Sample	1	3	7	9	1				
Thematic areas	Education	Protection	Governance	Health	HIV/Aids	Livelihoods	Emergencies		
Total SC-Ni	12	12	9	4	3	2	2		
SCN	12	5	6	2	2	1	1		
Sample	7	6	5	1	0	1	1		
Grant size (in 2011)	Up to \$20k	\$20,001-40,000	\$40,001-60,000	\$60,001-100,000	\$100,001-500,000	Over \$500,001	No info		
Total	6	10	4	7	10	0	2		
SCN (portion)	3	8	5	7	5	0	1		
Sample	1	3	2	4	4	0	3		

## 2.6 SC-Ni structure and staffing

Many changes in senior management positions within Nicaragua and in the SCN Oslo Latin America team took place during the period 2007-2010. These are summarised below:

Position	Start date	Leave date	Origins
SCN Country Director (before UP)	2005	Fall 2007	SC Norway
SCiNi CD (i.e. once unified)	Fall 2007 Fall 2009	Fall 2009 To date	SC USA SC USA
SCN Programme Director		Fall 2007	SCN local
SCiNi Programme Director	July 2008 <sup>9</sup> Summer 2010	July 2010 To date	External SCN local
SCiNi Adm/Finance director	July 2008	Fall 2010	External

SCiNi Finance Head	2007 2010	2010 To date	External External
Oslo Regional Head LAC	2007 spring 2009	Spring 2009 To date	SC Norway SC Norway
Oslo Coordinator covering Nicaragua	Mid 2006	2010	SC Norway
Oslo Financial controller	2006	To date	SC Norway

Currently there are 107 staff working in SC-Ni, distributed as follows:

Managua	48
La Dalia	17
Siuna-Alamikamba (RAAN)	30
León-Chinandega (Occidente)	12
TOTAL	107

These are lead by a senior management team composed of eight people, headed by a Country Director, Programmes Director and Finance Coordinator. A slight majority of current staff come from a SC background, primarily from SC USA:

Externals	48%	48%
SC-Canadá	5%	53%
SC-Norway	17%	
SC-USA	31%	

### 3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCN AND PARTNERS

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#### 3.1 Conceptual issues – understanding of partnership and capacity building

There would appear to be a great deal of shared understanding between SC-Ni and its partners about the concept of 'partnership'. Many staff and partners of all types expressed this understanding in terms of autonomous actors who share aims and objectives, seeking complementarities of approach whilst

relationships with each other. Nearly all partners explicitly referred to this also as key to their understanding of partnership.

With regard to partner capacity building, there are references in strategic plans to specific initiatives to strengthen partners' organisational, technical or relational capacities using a range of capacity building methods and diverse resources. However, there is no conceptual or policy reference which outlines what is understood by capacity building (as opposed to working in partnership), what are the principles guiding the approach taken, how the content and methods are chosen etc. (see below for more). The 2007 Oslo paper does not really address this, and SCI has not yet produced such a document.

The current Strategic Plan describes its partner capacity building objective as: '100% of SC partners and rights guarantors have improved their technical and organizational capacity of M&E, reporting, systematizing, and publication with rights focus as well as the follow-up, reporting and management of administrative-financial aspects of their projects'. The Plan indicates that a diagnostic was to be elaborated in November 2009 and the capacity building 'project' would be coordinated and supported by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. This does not appear to have taken place as of our visit, and it is not clear to the consultants the reason for this other than the general factors of workloads and staff changes (particularly relating to those with M&E development responsibilities)

### **3.2 Characteristics of SCN's partnership approach in practice**

These characteristics can be analysed in two ways - the different *dimensions* of partnership, and the *quality* of the relationships:

#### ***Dimensions of the partnerships***

The partnerships are characterised by their multiple and simultaneous dimensions – it is not just about funding projects or programmes of work. Different types of roles were played by SCN (and mostly continue to be played under SC-Ni), in addition to the project/programme funder role:

- *Accompaniment, mentoring* - very much appreciated by all partners, and includes providing informal feedback and suggestions on the work of the partner, sharing of concepts, accompanying research initiatives etc.”
- *Provision of technical inputs* through bringing international and national experts as well as through inputs from SCN/SC-Ni staff
- *Facilitator of linkages* – particularly in the initial formation of different networks through SCN support to events/processes of different actors getting together
- *Convenor* – when specific things happen SCN would call together its partners to discuss



### ***Quality of the relationship:***

The relationship with SCN has historically been highly appreciated by all partners interviewed. The depth of appreciation was reflected in the strength of emotions and words used to describe how partners felt about the partnership, using key words characterising the approach such as 'mutual respect'; 'trust'; "openness"; "commitment"; "accompaniment". A few CSO partners specifically said that they felt that SCN never used its position of donor to impose things on them.

Some specific characteristics that were identified include the following:

- *Commitment to child rights, with children themselves always at the centre of the relationship.* SCN was perceived as taking decisions on the basis of what would be best for CR and the children, rather than based on their own institutional needs.
- *It was a partnership that operated at two levels simultaneously – at the human and organisational levels.* Many partners of all types placed great emphasis on the human qualities and interpersonal dynamics established with individual SCN staff, but also stressed that the relationship was with the institution. One expressed it as a 'SC Norway way of doing things' - a 'mistica' which was very much valued.
- *The 'accompaniment' approach was key to the success of the partnership.* It was about being a 'critical friend' – being there for the duration, accompanying in the good times and the bad but also being prepared to challenge each other. It may be that at times SCN staff were not challenging enough, but the closeness and trust was quoted by one partner as facilitating the dialogue and enabled them to be frank and honest about the difficulties or challenges they were facing and not hide them for fear of losing support.
- *It was a holistic and strategic approach to the relationship.* The partnership had not been based on 'projects'. The older partners particularly felt they were seen holistically, "as an organisation" and that this was also reflected in the modalities of funding before the current strategic period (5 year agreements based on the partners' own strategic frameworks or plans).
- *There was flexibility and openness to change decisions or ways of working together.* For example, responding positively to requests to provide core institutional funding to the umbrella body CODENI rather than just fund specific thematic areas of work.
- *There was a strong commitment by SCN to facilitating linkages and spaces for coordination amongst the partners (and with other actors).* This was much appreciated by all – operating beyond the bilateral partnership and investing in the development of Child Rights' oriented coordination spaces and relationships.

More concretely, references were made by the older partners to reduction in accessibility; to lower levels of accompaniment; to the use of modalities of working that appeared not to recognise the existing relationship (particularly the tendering process); and most importantly to the lack of space to engage in dialogue about the changes being introduced. It is important to add here that partners who expressed these concerns also indicated that there was a difference between the 'transition' years and the current situation, whereby there has been some change for the better with increases in accompaniment and availability.

SC-Ni staff who previously had worked for SCN also reflected similar concerns about the loss of the quality of relationship they had experienced before.

***Finally, when asked whether they perceived any specific partnership characteristics in their experiences with SCN as compared to other INGOs, comments included:***

- It's the human qualities – not just being concerned about results alone, but also about the development of the people and organisations related to the network (CSO network partner)
- Support to internal processes of reflection and debate which very few INGOs provide, and which are seen as critical processes which strengthen them (particularly by networks) (CSO network partner)
- It's less about evaluating achievements against money spent, and more about changes in the lives of children (Government partner)
- It's a relationship of listening to us, feedback – others are more vertical relationships (Government partner)
- Less complicated requirements (NGO partner)

### **3.3. Selection of partners**

#### ***Resulting portfolio***

Once or twice over the past decades, SCN staff in Nicaragua have produced written reflections on their portfolio of partners – the most extensive being a reflection covering the period 1998-2001. However, within the organisational strategies there does not appear to have been an explicit definition of what kind of overall portfolio of partners would be the ideal, other than an interest in ensuring that there would be partners from the state and municipal sectors as well as from the non-governmental sector. Similarly, the new 2010-14 strategy does not explicitly describe the kind of partner portfolio that is desired.

The current portfolio, as can be seen in 2.5 above, does reflect a diversity of partner types – beyond the simple government/non-government divide. The presence of a number of different types of collective entities (movements, single sector and cross-sector networks) is of particular interest as an indication of the potential reach of SCN/SC-Ni's partnerships. The portfolio retains many of the historical relationships with actors (particularly NGOs) who are key agents for child rights in today's Nicaragua

National Movement of Municipal Commissions for Children generated internal debate and would have potentially left a major gap in the portfolio. As SC-Ni recognised in its 2010 Annual report, these Commissions make a key contribution towards child rights and the National Movement facilitates and strengthens these actors. It is very positive that flexibility was found within the system in order to retain that important and strategic relationship.

### ***Selection process***

Up until 2009, the process of partner selection was a highly organic one, based on knowledge of the actors working in different areas of child rights and also heavily dependent on historical relationships that do not appear to have been explicitly reviewed at any point in time. The resulting portfolio benefited from the fact that the people who entered as SCN staff had the necessary knowledge, experience and range of relationships with all the key actors in their specialised fields to ensure an appropriate mix of partners.

The partner selection process which took place within the context of the new 2010-14 strategy developed under unified presence was very different, being based on a public tendering model. SC-Ni published in the newspapers Terms of References for the different areas that it was interested in supporting. These ToR reproduced from the SC-Ni Strategic Plan the specific programme objectives and intended results (with their indicators) and applicants were invited to present concept notes indicating how they would contribute to these. Interested parties were invited to a half-day event in September of that year, where the terms and conditions were publicly presented. Potential partners were identified on the basis of the concept notes, and then accompanied in developing detailed proposals in line with SC-Ni's interests. The whole process took place within a tight timeframe (3 months).

For the historic SCN partners, which form the majority of the partner portfolio, this selection process was experienced as a major break from the previous ways of working. It entailed a shift away from discussions on specific projects located within their own strategic frameworks towards pure project 'fit' with SC-Ni's strategy. Aims, objectives, targets and geographic areas for intervention were pre-defined by SC-Ni. From the consultants' perspective, this new approach could be considered as a shift towards the 'sub-contracting' end of the partnership spectrum. One more recent, non-CSO partner did not express particularly strong feelings either way on this subject.

The detailed selection criteria (as opposed to eligibility criteria) were not clear to all (including SC-Ni staff), with a set of draft criteria used by a selection committee but not widely shared with staff and interested applicants.. Several interviewees referred to feeling confused about the parameters – references to financial limits, collaborative proposals, geographic focus etc kept changing during the proposal development process. In summary, it is possible to conclude that the selection process was somewhat confused and contradictory, and it impacted negatively on the quality of the relationships built up until that time.

Conscious de-selection has taken place more recently, with the decision in 2009, described above, to end the partnership with the National Movement of Municipal Commissions for Children. Weaknesses in meeting reporting requirements were the cited reasons for the decision, which was not made with full consensus of the Coordinator of the Programme concerned. It would appear to the consultants that, whilst SC-Ni's concerns may have been very valid, there are potentially a number of factors for consideration which could lead to some valuable lesson learning about what it means to partner with relatively new, emerging membership bodies (see 3.5 below).

### **3.4. Development of proposals**

#### ***Shaping the work***

Before 2008, the projects approved were of a strategic nature, both in terms of the length of time covered (5 years) but also because they emerged from the partners' own strategic frameworks. Partners described how their institutional strategies guide their decisions about partnering with SCN. This was across all partner types, including the movement *MILAVF*, where the strategic plan is developed within the movement and approved by the children at general assembly, with the adults in the secretariat then identifying and establishing the links with projects. Many interviewees of all types described how, at that time, the proposal development process was based on a sustained dialogue with the SCN staff person, exploring where the areas of common interest were, where the partner's strategies fitted with the general objectives from Oslo, and how the targets and indicators were open for definition according to their contexts.

With the current strategy, 5 year agreements have been retained as broad programme frameworks for the partnership, based on strategic objectives for the period and specific objectives explicitly reflecting SC-Ni's own objectives and indicators. Those partners whose concept notes had been selected as a result of the first phase of the tendering process in mid- 2009, were then accompanied in the process of developing detailed proposals in line with SC-Ni's interests particularly with regard to identifying contribution to the predetermined results/indicators. 1 year operational plans form the basis for the funding relationship, with detailed plans being presented by partners in June-July of each year. There was only a short time dedicated to the whole selection and proposal development process (3 months) and both staff and partners felt that that this reduced the opportunity to really ensure quality dialogue over the proposals

#### ***Intervention areas***

The strategic decision was taken by SC-Ni in 2009 to prioritise the work outside the capital in municipalities with high poverty levels, little access to basic services and in receipt of little attention by NGOs (international and national). This was a positive move to focus efforts and aim for increased impact in child rights within particularly difficult contexts. However, the repercussion was that partners who were not already working in priority areas were faced with the critical decision regarding the transfer (or expansion) of their work to new contexts, often at quite a distance physically from their base

It is perhaps worthwhile for SC-Ni and SCN to reflect upon this experience. It is a very different matter when an INGO that implements its own programmes decides to prioritise particularly challenging geographic or cultural contexts. The INGO can consider all the implications and ensure it is fully resourced in order to develop its work in the new areas, build its own capacity to adapt its successful work to the new contexts, and set itself realistic and achievable targets and results indicators. However, if an INGO implements its strategic objectives through the partnership model, it will need to be flexible and ensure dialogue with the partners about the kind of support and extra resources needed to make the change; realistic timeframes for delivery of results etc.

#### ***Developing proposals with particular types of partners***

There may be some difficulties in the ‘fit’ between SCN/SC-NI’s programming methods (and related needs) and those of *child-led organizations*. One informant (adult) stressed that the children are creative, spontaneous – operating with another logic which may feel pressured to adapt to adults’ planning logic and order. For example, being asked to define the subject of a campaign a year ahead proves difficult if, as desired, the children are to be protagonists in this decision but are not currently thinking about that. The timeframes are different, and the interviewee expressed the desire for greater flexibility and accompaniment in developing an appropriate planning method.

#### ***Joint programming***

An interesting feature of the SCN approach in the previous strategy period was the initiative to encourage joint programming across a range of actors working in the same field or territory. Those partners who had participated in these initiatives spoke highly of the process and of the benefits, citing the importance of undertaking joint diagnosis and identifying the different contributions to be made by each actor. The education sector initiative was welcomed as being a highly effective means of ensuring appropriate, contextualized responses to the educational challenges in a specific region. In addition, the consultants heard examples of how diverse partners now have the confidence and trust in each other and are able to identify opportunities to work together in order to achieve desired results that they could not do on their own.

### **3.5 Visits, Communication, Accompaniment**

*“SCN was always nearby, providing advice in an attitude of respect and understanding of our autonomy”*

The term ‘accompaniment’ has no standard definition, but is used by most CSO actors in international development as a term to express a critical dimension of project or programme implementation. It may be considered to cover a diverse range of actions and behaviours which take place between two (or more) actors as they journey along an agreed path towards shared goals. In some contexts this may be interpreted by some as giving scope for the INGO to be unnecessarily intrusive, but in the opinion of the

(2008 to early 2010) partners reported that SC-Ni staff “disappeared” – the level of accompaniment, communications and accessibility reduced considerably.

Communications and coordination on the ground across the thematic programmes appears to be facing some challenges. A majority of partners and staff recognize that particularly in the work in the Matagalpa and Jinotega regions, more could be done to identify the linkages across the different areas of partner work that SC-Ni is supporting and also with work it is implementing itself.

With regard to accompanying membership-based partners (movements, networks, coalitions), a particular point regarding the focus of the accompaniment was raised by a former partner. The interviewee indicated the need for SC-Ni to establish multiple relationships within the membership body, including a direct relationship with the overall governance body and not just bilateral relationships with one or two individuals who have the responsibility for the SCN-supported project. In this way, SC-Ni can be sure that it is communicating with the entire entity and when difficulties arise (as they did in this case), there are various channels through which to address the issue.

### **3.6 SCN’s Systems and Procedures**

The standard Memorandum of Understanding is felt by all partners to be flexibly managed, with dialogue and transparency. Examples were shared where SCN made changes to the standard format in order to incorporate specific needs.

The procedure for agreeing the actual amount for the grant has suffered some inconsistencies in the recent years, and partners of all types reported confusion and significant changes to funding parameters. After hearing at the public event to launch the tendering process that there were no financial parameters for initial concept notes, during the subsequent selection and project development processes the partners experienced major adjustments. Some partners experienced several revisions to agreed amounts, with reductions ranging from 20% to 50%. It is not clear how this situation was managed by SC-Ni overall – there doesn’t appear to have been a clear and consistent communication to partners about the causes and criteria for the cuts - some partners thought it was due to reduced donations in Norway or that decisions were made on the basis of who was thought to be doing good work or not. Most reported that the reductions had had a major impact on them – reducing their geographic or programme scope, reduction in personnel or reduced investment in their own capacity development.

The actual disbursement of grant amounts has consistently been regular and timely, with partners being informed if there were to be difficulties. Financial controls were strict, and several partners said they experienced SCN as one of the more demanding amongst INGOs regarding financial reporting and controls. Two partners specifically mentioned that they welcomed the regular audits and learnt a lot from them.

clear purpose and a set of specific objectives. It is a structured process that is framed about the answer to the question 'capacity for what?'<sup>11</sup> It would appear that, in practice, there have been two principal ways in which such explicit efforts to strengthen the capacities of Nicaraguan partners have been approached:

***Implementing capacity building activities for the partners as a whole, based on SCN's own prioritisation and interests***

This has tended to be the primary way in which some of the more sustained, and non-partner specific capacity building work has taken place. SCN staff identified key capacity areas, sometimes in consultation with partners, and made a commitment to provide partners with the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge, and experience in these areas.

In the 1990's the focus was on the internal capacity of partners through the provision of training, workshops and follow up support in the areas of strategic planning and organisational policies and procedures. This provided many long-term benefits in terms of investing in partners' strategic capacities (see 4.1 below). In 2003 there was an intent to strengthen partner capacity to mobilize resources and ensure financial sustainability, via a modular training programme. However, this was not followed up and no such support has been a feature of the capacity building work since then.

With regard to technical and programme capacities, there was a push in the late 1990's to build a broad base of understanding amongst partners on Child Rights and Child Rights programming, followed by a number of seminars, courses, workshops etc on specific topics such as protection standards and child participation methodology. Concerted efforts by SCN in the programme management realm also took place, with early training in log frames followed by budgeting and financial reporting, and more recently in monitoring and evaluation, focusing on instruments and techniques that are of interest to SC-Ni. Most recently there has been training in advocacy skills for a selected group of partners.

There has been a continuous and coherent commitment to developing collective relational capacity amongst partners and key actors in different arena. Much effort and resource has been expended in facilitating the emergence of national networks and coalitions and in the provision of opportunities for exchanging experiences and knowledge via the funding of events, visits, systematizations and disseminations of experiences etc. There have not been any specific activities aimed at developing individual skills and competencies in related capacity areas such collaborative working; management of strategic relationships; negotiation and communication skills; conflict management etc.

In addition to these initiatives, SCN invested in the capacity of the *sector as a whole* via:

- Provision of grants for individual staff members to study specific topics or undertake postgraduate studies (open to SC staff, partner staff and staff of other organisations involved in child rights related work)
- Development and implementation of a Masters in Social Policies, Rights and Children's

***As a result of partners' identification of small scale and specific capacity building activities which are presented within the overall project proposal***

Generally a small amount, this could be for any initiative identified as important to the partner and covered general organisational functioning e.g. gender policy development; as well as technical areas. Unfortunately, in the last few years of reduced funds, this has been the area that many of the partners have felt obliged to cut. There was no reported use of an approach based on a holistic organisational or capacity assessment followed by the development of an individualised capacity building plan.

Again, it is important to stress that individual SCN partners did receive constant support which they highlight as having contributed to their capacity development such as the provision of specialist technical advice (by SCN staff and consultants); mentoring; financing and accompanying research initiatives etc. In addition, SCN was open to funding one-off initiatives such as exchange visits; attendance at national and international events etc.

Overall, the last few years have seen a reduction in capacity building initiatives and the major current investment could be seen as being linked to SC-Ni's own needs e.g. training in monitoring and evaluation linked to results based management.

### **3.8 Children as Partners**

SCN emphasizes its approach to child participation in the context of partnership. This manifests itself in two ways: firstly, there are some projects which involve child led groups or organisations (which are partnered directly by SCN or through an intermediary); secondly there has been a huge investment over the years to working with partners in developing and applying a rich range of child participation methods, in all spheres of action.

There were some impressive examples of child led organisations with which the evaluators interacted. These demonstrated that children need not be passive recipients of benefits supplied by adults, but can take responsibility themselves. For example, the Youth and Adolescents Network operating in Districts VI-VII of Managua, which works with SCN-partner CAPRI. The young people from this network shared with the consultants their experiences of taking control of their own organization and its programmes, obtaining a place to meet, developing a diverse range of relationships (including funding sources), and ensuring the sustainability of the network by investing in the development of the next generation of leaders. Members of another, youth-led partner organisation (MNAJ) shared their experiences of child protection work, which emerged from their collective decision making around which themes to prioritise in their nation-wide strategy. The consultants had the opportunity to verify the quality of the work of adolescent members of MNAJ with younger children from vulnerable communities in Esteli, with its focus on awareness raising around protection issues.

An issue of working with child led groups is whether SC-Ni can formally treat them as partners (as with other NGO/Government partners), or have to engage with them through other organisations. Whilst the



working with a different partner indicating more of a joint collaboration approach. Both groups indicated greater leadership was sought from the adults on the monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

### **3.9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The SCN reporting process and formats were previously experienced by most partners as facilitating the expression of achievements, reflection on the methods and processes involved and identification of internal capacity changes. SC-Ni current staff believe that the old formats and overall approach to monitoring and evaluation was not sufficiently 'tight' or results-oriented, and that the reports received tended to be extremely long and difficult to consolidate. Certainly, previous evaluations and studies do indicate that the area of Monitoring and Evaluation was one which presented SCN with challenges in the past. The reporting formats have been changed over the past few years, reducing their length and placing a greater emphasis on quantitative, results-oriented data over process information.

There does not appear to be any means to systematically monitor and evaluate the capacity building efforts, as there are no tailored instruments for this work or specific capacity indicators to facilitate assessment.

### **3.10. Exit strategies and sustainability**

Whilst working with funding agreements of up to 5 years agreements gives partners a welcome degree of stability, it would appear that there has been little discussion of timeframes for the duration of the relationship nor identification of support for the partner during any eventual exit process. When the decision to exit has been taken within overall SCN/SC-Ni strategy changes, it would appear that there had been some explicit discussion with partners about the reasons for the change. The 2010-14 Strategy does have a paragraph on the importance of establishing exit strategies with partners, but it is probably too early to say whether this is being effectively put into practice.

There is no evidence of SCN/SC-Ni having discussed how the partner's work would continue in the absence of SC support. In the cases of ex-partners interviewed for this study, both expressed their experience as having been a rather 'abrupt' ending, in one case "*..without establishing conditions so that we could carry on on our own.*" The message they had heard from SC-Ni was that there were shortages of funds, as well as possible difficulties in the partnership (differences of approach in one case; internal weaknesses in the other). Both would like to explore continuing to maintain a collaborative relationship, even if project funding were not to be available e.g. for SC-Ni to facilitate linkages with others, invitations to participate in events etc.

One consideration is that of how SC-Ni currently is communicating to its partners about its future in the country. There have not been any conversations about the future of SC in Nicaragua, and particularly in

the organisation (document on cooperation with partners, alliances and networks 1998- 2001; strategy for alliances in May 2009). Interviewees praised the quality of SCN/SC-Ni's participation in a variety of coordination spaces. One example of good practice is where SC-Ni participates both as a member and a donor (through SC Spain funding) of the National Coalition against Trafficking, with what appears to be good management of these different roles with no apparent contradictions or impositions due to SC-Ni's financing role.

Current alliances with UNICEF and Plan Nicaragua are focused on the issues of protection – particularly Trafficking; birth registration; public sector investment in Child Rights areas but these have tended to be tactical alliances rather than emerging as a result of a discussion about longer term strategic alliance. SCN is seen by Plan as historically having specific strengths in its agility to respond to situations (largely based on administrative agility in comparison with Plan); in communications and dissemination and in its advocacy related work.

In addition to the specific relationships with these two actors, SC-Ni currently participates in the following:

- Alliance Group for Investment in Children (which SCN helped to create in 2006)
- Central American Learning Circle on Child Rights and Local Development (which SCN helped created in 1999)
- National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labour (CNEPTI)
- National Coalition against Child Trafficking (as mentioned above)
- Good Treatment Network (a network of national and international organizations doing advocacy to prohibit physical punishment in Nicaragua)
- Sponsorship Network (a network of INGOs that have sponsorship programs)

## **4 CHANGES IN CAPACITY AND BEHAVIOUR OF PARTNERS**

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This section examines what differences result from SCN's approach to partnership. How has the capacity and behaviour of partners changed? This question is answered at three levels, using the 'three circle' model developed by INTRAC to understand organisational capacity: 'to be', 'to do' and 'to relate'.

### **4.1. 'To Be' – Identity and Internal Functioning**

The early investment (late 1990s) by SCN in the development of strategic capacity and internal policies and procedures was reported by all CSO partners who participated as having been the major contributing factor to their current strong profile and organisational capacity and profile. These are now well recognised, established actors for child rights in Nicaragua.

Accompanying the development of internal planning capacities also takes place with partners from the

Support for the establishment of internal processes, systems and structures for national networks or coordinating bodies played a key role for them to effectively fulfil their mission as ‘value-added’ actors within the child rights field. This was the case with SC Spain’s support to the Coalition against Trafficking, as well as with SCN’s support to its network partners.

## 4.2 ‘To Do’ – Programming

Many references were made by all types of partners to how they changed and internalised a **child rights perspective** to their work as a result of their relationship with SCN. Several referred to SCN as having been *the* key actor for building sector-wide awareness and capacity to work with a child rights perspective.

In addition, there have been notable achievements by partners with regard to developing and implementing a commitment to **children’s participation**, with SCN support. This is both participation with their own projects and more generally as processes of participation within society:

- Technical support and funding for exchanges, workshops etc. provided by SCN to the national movement of multi-sector municipal commissions for children helped them support local level commissions in establishing children’s councils and provide training on children’s participation
- Technical support and funding for a specialist enabled the Civil Defence to integrate a child rights perspective to its work on Disaster Risk Management, and to design and implement an internationally recognised method of accompanying children in establishing their own defence committees and participating actively in their own protection
- Many partners interviewed described how, thanks to SCN, they developed their capacities in facilitating child participation in the design and implementation of their programmes. Some are leaders in the field, within the country and beyond (including public bodies such as the Ombudsman for Child Rights), and have also played an active role in contributing to SCN’s own methodology and instruments e.g. reviewing/adapting the Spidergram tool.
- The use of child-to-child methodologies, and support to child-led organizations (e.g. RAJ; MNAJ) has provided an effective means of children and adolescents engaging in ensuring their own protection – whether it be in relation to domestic violence; school-based violence; or threats to them posed by the activities of kidnapers and agents of human trafficking.

Working in partnership with SCN has facilitated the professional and technical **development of partner staff** – via the accompaniment model, mentoring etc or via structured inputs such as training courses, study grants etc. *“They keep us on our toes with new thinking.” (NGO partner)*

Support for the establishment of a technical unit for the Child Rights Observatory has enabled the NGO umbrella body, CODENI, to **fulfil its role** in monitoring child rights across the country.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL CAPACITY TO ADDRESS CHILD RIGHTS**

This section presents the contribution of SCN's partnership work towards the building of capacity at the level of the Nicaraguan society as a whole and any further leverage beyond the country. It considers capacity development to be in terms of strengthened actors for child rights, and positive changes in policies, laws, attitudes, behaviours in Nicaraguan society which will facilitate the obtaining/safeguarding of child rights. It also considers the strengthening of the capacity of the children themselves to take action in defence of their own rights.

### ***In general in Nicaragua:***

SCN's hard work over the decades to disseminate and locate the Child Rights agenda within Nicaraguan society at all levels can be seen to have borne fruit. By working in partnership with others, by building their trust and mutual respect and by accompanying them in their growing understanding of what it means to work with a child rights perspective, SCN has successfully built a broad and solid base of Nicaraguan child rights protagonists who have had some **critical policy successes** on behalf of child rights:

- Ratification of the Child Rights Convention in 1990
- The development and implementation of the Children's Code, which became law in 1998
- The establishment and implementation of the law prohibiting physical punishment in schools
- Increased municipal budgets for child rights areas
- Law of Responsible Paternity
- Laws and Decrees on Family and Gender-Based Violence

Another dimension to the SCN contribution can be seen in its work to facilitate the emergence of **relationships**, coordinating spaces, meeting places where actors from different segments of Nicaraguan society can collaborate to act on behalf of child rights, at national and local levels. Examples include the National Movement of Municipal Commissions for child rights; the Network of Municipal Governments Friends of Children; the Education consortium in Ocotol; the Network on Masculinity etc.

Overall capacity to address child rights is not just about the policies, laws or collective spaces for decision making and coordinated action. It is also about ensuring there are **individuals** spread across all realms of society who are aware of, and work towards the fulfilment of child rights in their different spheres of action. It is about attitudes and behaviours, as much as about their technical and professional skills and knowledge base. Many of the partners' programmes and initiatives supported by SCN have focused on achieving changes in understanding, behaviours, skills and knowledge of these individuals. Examples of achievements at this level that the consultants had the opportunity to hear

### ***Beyond Nicaragua:***

A number of examples were shared with the consultants about how, with SCN's support, the efforts of partners have made contributions that have spread beyond the national boundaries:

1. The Nicaraguan Network of Municipal Governments Friends of Children have, with SCN support, contributed to the production by a regional learning network of a Guide on how to develop Municipal Policies for Children which is being used in municipalities across the Central American region.
2. The manual on family violence and children's right to protection which was produced by ex-partner CEPREV with SCN support has been widely disseminated. In Colombia it was turned into a radio programme; in Mexico it was the basis for a workshop on violence; in Argentina it influenced another manual on gender; in Costa Rica and elsewhere in Latin America it is used by local organisations in their work to combat violence against children.
3. The support of SCN was quoted by CODENI as enabling it to act in the international sphere via its development and presentation to the UN of the alternative Nicaragua report on Child Rights.
4. The military have shared their materials and experiences on working with a child rights perspective in many international events and visits, "*... we have shown how an organism dressed in military uniform can be involved in this..it is not the same in other countries and people are astounded.*" (General of Civil Defence)
5. A journalists' ethical code, now disseminated in various countries in Latin America, was a product of the SCN supported post graduate courses at the Central American University on communication and children's rights.

### ***Impact on the capacity of children and adolescents themselves***

There were many impressive examples of positive outcomes of partner work in relation to the capacity of individual children **developing their awareness** of their rights. For example, children talked to the consultants about how they had become aware of their right to protection from threats of violence at home and at school or from the dangers of trafficking

Changes in the level of **self-esteem, and confidence** were cited in multiple occasions by adults and children as key results, leading to dramatic changes in the quality of life for individual children. Children with disabilities, with instable home conditions, working children, children from the marginalised urban neighbourhoods – many examples were shared of how, after participating in activities and programmes run by partners, these children had changed and were no longer seeing themselves as passive 'victims'. Improvements in their relationships with their families and teachers were also noted.

The confidence gained has led to increased **capacity to take action** in defence of their rights. Children are actively participating in the community level monitoring of access to education; they are organized and prepared to act and defend their rights in case a natural disaster were to strike their communities;

## 6. GOOD PRACTICES

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This section presents some good practices that SCN<sup>12</sup> has exhibited in building and nurturing effective relationships as well as managing effectively the partnerships.

1. ***Facilitating the emergence of, and on-going support to, the collaborative efforts of Nicaraguan actors.*** *This has been key to achieving scale of impact and to investing in a sustainable foundation of relational capacity for Child Rights.* Examples include:
  - SCN as key instigator and support to the emergence of a number of networks which today are key references for child rights in Nicaragua
  - Support to the Red Gobiernos Municipales reported as having been critical to achieving an impressive increase in investment in CR areas by local governments in the period 2005-8
  - Facilitating the coordination of partners working in the same thematic sector in some geographic areas has been a key contribution to ensuring complementarity and potential increased impact
  - Support by SC Spain (within SC-Ni) to the Coalition against Trafficking has facilitated the coordination of different services, with 17 multi-sector coordinating bodies spread across the country and a wide dissemination and awareness of the dangers of trafficking.
2. ***Accompanying partners in the construction of strategies and methodologies which respond to the principal needs of promoting and protecting child rights.*** SCN has contributed its experience of child rights programming, advocacy, participation etc from across the world, in a manner which has respected the Nicaraguan partners' own knowledge and capacities.
3. ***Community level work by partners has facilitated Child Rights achievements at a scale that would not be possible by the model of SC self- implementation without great costs, and in ways which are appropriate to the specific context on the ground.*** Examples include:
  - Civil Defence working on Disaster Risk Management with communities spread across the country in "...uniting all the local capacities to achieve the organisation of civil defence with a child rights perspective." The publication of the practical guide systematizing 10 years of experience in this work was called 'the greatest treasure we have achieved' by the General (in charge), who has ensured that a child rights perspective is included in all the other projects that the Civil Defence is involved in.
  - Partners and children involved in community monitoring of Child Rights (access to education; vaccination; HIV-AIDS etc) are working in ways which ensure a sustainability of effort and a commitment to this activity.

- Staff accessibility has been key to ensuring fluid dialogue and building the trust to ensure transparency and openness during the relationship.
- SCN staff with the competencies to be able to adapt and play different roles according to the specific requirements of the relationship
- An institutional culture of 'respect' towards partners exhibited not just in the behaviours of individual members of staff, but in the processes and methods employed in SCN-partner communications, project management etc.
- SCN 'seeing the whole' identity of its partners – not just as project implementers but as child rights actors in their own right, with a range of experiences and capacities beyond those specific to carrying out any individual project at any one time.

6. *In terms of **partnership management***: (note: some of the following have suffered some weakening in the last few years)

- Ensuring opportunities for partners and children to contribute towards the shaping of SCN's work and thinking (partner meetings; workshops; during strategy development;).
- Engaging in project development in a way which ensures 'ownership' by the partner and reflects their priorities and strategic decisions, whilst responding to SCN's own areas of interest. This good practice has been greatly reduced under the SC-Ni project selection/development process, particularly with the tendering method.
- Working with MoU's that are strategic in nature – 5 year commitments with one year operational planning is a modality that permits flexibility within an agreed impact-oriented framework.
- Experimenting with collaborative programming, whereby a number of partners collectively diagnose and identify responses via the design and implementation of a joint programme
- Providing core or 'institutional' funding to partners, particularly to networks in recognition of the value of supporting financially the internal processes of debate, decision making, learning etc.

7. *In terms of **strengthening partners' capacity*** (note: these have suffered some weakening in the last few years, largely due to reduced funds)

- Including a component for capacity building within individual partner grants, to be determined by the partner
- Allocating an amount within thematic budgets for workshops, seminars etc. that were carried out with groups of partners together.
- Investing in resource mobilization strategy development – the modular programme of 2003 was welcomed by partners, although it suffered from lack of follow-up

## 7. IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES WITHIN SAVE THE CHILDREN

2. Nicaragua was the first country where SCN was lead member, and so Oslo had no previous references to draw upon in guiding the process in-country.
3. In addition, during the critical transition period of 2007-mid 2009, the key Oslo posts of Regional Head and Programme Coordinator were filled by people new to the Nicaragua programme. These posts again underwent a change of staff since that period, although the current Regional Head is someone very familiar with the SCN history in Nicaragua.
4. The in-country leadership team and senior management structure also went through a second, complete change within 18 months of unification. One of the current team does have an SCN history.
5. The 'at distance' management style of Oslo (which could be described as exceedingly 'hands off') meant there was a wariness of taking a stronger stand to ensure some key continuity of approach within Nicaragua. There does not appear to have been accompaniment, guidance nor line management monitoring of what was taking place on the ground with respect to the changes being introduced during the critical transition period, and their repercussions for SCN's policy and approach to working with local actors.
6. The period of late 2007 to mid-2009 was critical for SC-Ni not just because of the unification process demanding the establishment of new systems, structures and change management processes within Nicaragua. It also saw a series of decisions being taken in Oslo and within the SC alliance with regard to funding and programme strategy and management, such as:
  - Oslo's decision to push forward for greater programme coherence via a desire to see increased linkage between national and global results in the 2010-14 strategy
  - A shift in emphasis in monitoring and evaluation towards the quantitative, results-oriented reporting and away from the qualitative, process-linked narrative.
  - SCN Board decision to only work with fully funded budgets.
7. Some actions taken by the SC-Ni leadership team with regard to the new strategy and mode of working under unification compounded all of the above:
  - The lack of a clear position within Nicaragua's 2010-2014 strategy document regarding the implementation model for the country programme under UP.
  - The decision taken by the SC-Ni leadership team in mid-2009 to use a tendering process to select partners for the new 2010-14 strategy period.
  - More recently, decisions by SC-Ni spanning FYs 2010 and 2011 with regard to the response to the reduced funding from Norway.

This is a complex mixture of factors which, in the opinion of the consultants, interacted during the critical period of 2007-mid 2009 to an extent where there was a danger of losing much of what had defined SCN's working approach over the previous decades. This opinion draws on much of the evidence described in sections above, including the strength of opinion of over 80% of the sample of SCN partners interviewed. In addition, it is interesting to note that SC Canada have similar concerns based on partner feedback about the nature and speed of changes that have taken place.

In the words of one partner



been managed, the apparent 'shut down' of dialogue and also about the lack of definition with regard to the desired future partnership approach. It could be said that the goodwill and respect that had been built up amongst the partners towards SCN over the decades was what, in the end, facilitated the continuity of relationships, together with the commitment of those SCN staff who remained in the organisation.

As of the time of the study visit, there are steps that have been taken over the past year or so that have helped to re-establish some of the partnership approach and start to recapture some of the quality of relationships. It is noteworthy that when asked about future possible changes, under the IP process, (former SCN) SC-Ni staff do not appear to be concerned and believe that nothing will have as much negative impact on their ways of working and quality of relationships as their experience under the transition period 2007-9.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

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### **8.1. Conclusions**

There is ample evidence of the achievements of SCN's historic partnerships in Nicaragua. Over two decades of working side by side with a diverse range of local actors from different sectors, and at different levels, has produced an impressive range of child rights related results as well as a considerable, well-established constituency of child rights actors.

The quality of the partnership relationships has been of a high standard, with SCN historically exhibiting 'good practice' in all phases of individual partnership management. The relationships did suffer during the key transition period as the unified presence was being established under a new leadership team, with little experience of the SCN partnership approach and weakened continuity of support from Oslo. However, the durability of the relationships established over the past decades has overcome many of the challenges presented during this recent period.

The SCN partnership approach in Nicaragua took a very relevant and effective step in investing in the nurturing and accompaniment of relationships beyond the bilateral, one-to-one partnership with one local actor. That is, the emphasis placed on supporting the emergence and capacity development of networks, coalitions and other collaborative initiatives has been a major contribution to the Nicaraguan child rights sector.

The relationships were historically structured around a dialogue on values, visions and strategic approaches, which formed the basis for identifying the potential for a collaborative effort which was then framed within a long-term partnership agreement. This has shifted somewhat in the recent years, with a more 'instrumentalist' influence appearing, whereby the primary driver for the relationship is expressed

Several key challenges can be identified for SC-Ni:

- whether SC-Ni/SCN is able to consider more flexible mechanisms of managing partnerships with some key actors which, because of their identity or their mission, may not easily 'fit' into the standard
- the degree to which SC-Ni/SCN prioritises the (re)establishment of a culture of consultation and participation with partners which facilitates dialogue and mutual learning, not only about the technical programme areas but also about the management of SC's programme and relationships in Nicaragua.

## 8.2. Recommendations:

### A. Regarding support to networks and other collaborative entities and processes:

Maintain this as a core approach, with the following characteristics:

- **Fund 'core' or institutional costs** as well as specific areas of work if desired. Because of the nature of a network/coordinating group, financial and other support to the central team or secretariat plus the costs of participation in internal debate, decision making etc are key areas to support.
- **Adapt reporting, and other, SCN/SCI management formats** to ensure that networks and coordinating groups can convey the achievements that may fall outside the dedicated area of focused funding, but that would not have been possible without the core or institutional support described above.
- Similarly, **consider flexibility in description of indicators** – networks and other coordination entities are at least two steps removed from direct work with children. It may be useful to revise some of the global or national indicators and adapt them to reflect the specific role that such 'umbrella' entities play.
- **Be open to negotiating deadlines and timeframes** that are realistic and that reflect the nature of these partners, thus facilitating the necessary internal participation and consultation processes that ensure a members-led and democratic organisational culture.
- Seek to **facilitate linkages and coordination across the different thematic programmes and programme partners** working in the same geographic territory.

### B Regarding selection of partners and proposal development:

- **Consider ending the use of competitive tendering** (licitacion) as the primary means of identifying and selecting partners, and develop clear criteria for when it could be appropriate. One such criterion might be when seeking new partners to participate in a very specific and focused initiative. This might open the way to develop relationships with new actors, without prejudicing already existing strategic partnerships.

invest in their capacity development, learn new skills, adapt methods and materials etc. Ensure that **targets and timeframes are realistic and that back-donors are aware of the specific challenges** that partners are facing as a consequence of having committed to accompany SC-NI/SCN in their decision.

- **Consider re-engaging in the support to the specific area of child-led communication within the child participation field.** The absence of this leaves a critical gap in the current portfolio.

C. Regarding planning and reporting:

- Ensure that reporting formats enable partners to **report on qualitative changes**, as well as communicate **key lessons** learnt.
- Explore how to work with **greater flexibility of planning methods and timeframes with child-led organisations**

D. Regarding past 'good practice':

It is recommended that SC-Ni make every effort to build on, or reintroduce a number of the good practices that have been lost or reduced in the recent years. It may be appropriate to identify some core 'bottom lines' regarding important good practice that should be reintroduced or protected in the future (particularly in the context of IP). Some of these could include:

- Working with **strategic agreements covering 5 year periods**, but incorporating within them any back-donor constraints regarding such a commitment. For example, in the case of back donors only committing to one year at a time, but SC-Ni sees the partnership as more strategic in nature, then this should be expressed as a 'statement of intent' or a 'framing agreement' which sets out the aspiration to work longer term together, but recognises that the funding dimension may be constrained by donor conditions.
- Having flexibility regarding the **provision of core/institutional funding** as well as project specific funds
- Maintaining a **dialogue with partners in a systematic manner** (e.g. in partner workshops or Partner Forum) about SC-Ni and SCI changes; ideas on new methods and instruments for partner management; financial and funding perspectives; implications of changes on ways of working etc.
- Ensure **resources are available for facilitating, amongst partners, processes of shared learning**; peer-to-peer exchanges (nationally and internationally); technical workshops etc the costs could be included within overall thematic programme budgets, as they used to be in the past.

E. Regarding partner capacity building:

- **Develop a partner capacity building framework.** This could include elements such as : definition of a shared understanding of what capacity building is and entails; principles guiding

- **Review the experience of the 2003 resource mobilization capacity building work**, identifying the contribution that such an approach can make towards the organisational sustainability of SC-Ni CSO partners. Based on the lessons learnt, SC-Ni should consider investing in this area, not only through a structured training programme but also through complementary activities such as peer to peer exchanges, mentoring, specific technical advice for the development of resource mobilization strategies etc.

F. Regarding working in alliances:

- Build on the positive experiences of working in alliance with other key Child Rights actors, and in particular with Plan Nicaragua and UNICEF, identifying a **strategic framework** to guide these core alliances.

G. Regarding SC-Ni learning and knowledge development:

- Invest in **systematizing certain key experiences** e.g. working in partnership with local government; working with multi-sector coordination efforts (e.g. Ocotal consortium; municipal commissions) working to facilitate the emergence and development of networks; working to support the 'voice' of children via the child communicators network etc.

H. For Oslo:

- Take on the leadership challenge regarding ensuring that good partnership practices are incorporated within programme management guidelines for Unified Presence and International Programme countries.

I. For SC/

- Ensure full discussion amongst Members on the strengths and weaknesses of different implementation models, and the agreement on indicators or criteria for establishing country implementation frameworks which can guide decision making about working in partnership, self-implementation or co-implementation.

## **Appendix A – Terms of Reference - SCN’s thematic evaluation of cooperation with partners**

### **Background**

Building local and national capacity to secure child rights is a key working principle in SCN’s global strategy, as it has been since the 1990s. SCN’s global strategy 2010-2013 states that: ‘Our primary goal is achieving results for children. Lasting change is dependent on building local capacity and, in certain situations, increased capacity for partner organisations are in itself a goal.’

As a working principle, ‘building local and national capacity’ acknowledges the role of local duty bearers and civil society in advocating for children’s rights and achieving sustainable results for children in the long run. Local ownership is essential to this thinking. SCN aim to strengthen local and national authorities as well as civil society including child-led groups, both in terms of their administrative capacity and competence, their professional skills, and capability to plan, implement, monitor, coordinate and interact as stakeholders in the development processes. Furthermore, a specific objective on building local capacity is set in the Child Rights Governance thematic priority area in the strategy: “strengthened capacity within civil society, including child led groups, to promote children’s rights”. SCN’s Policy for Strengthening Local Capacity (2007) gives guidance to how country programmes should approach and engage with local partners.

In Save the Children International’s Global Strategy 2010-2015 the Theory of Change puts building partnerships at the centre when exercising SC’s role as the innovator, the voice and the organization that achieves results at scale for children. In the strategy, it is stated that SCI will “ collaborate with children, civil society organisations, communities, governments and the private sector to share knowledge, influence others and build capacity to ensure children’s rights are met.”

### **Challenges**

Building local and national capacity is essential for a locally owned and sustainable development and yet very complex and challenging to achieve. SCN want to assess how and to what extent our strategies and policies are being implemented and effective in strengthening local capacity in the countries where SCN work, and how partnership cooperation could develop in the future in order to maximize the development effect.

INGOs’ added value in development in general and more specifically in building the capacity of governments and civil society is central to both public and professional discourse in Norway and globally. Some voices from the South and North alike are critical to what could be called an INGO-ification of development countries and lack of local ownership, the taking over of development agendas, the outside influence on power structures, the asymmetry of partnerships, etc. Donors have multiple interests in terms of strengthening local capacity whilst also requiring value for money, efficiency and results corresponding to their home public and donor development agenda and requirements. Issues

In the evaluation of SCN's cooperation with partners conducted in 2001, the evaluation team (INTRAC), made several recommendations addressing key challenges in North - South partner cooperation:

- the need for more flexibility in setting objectives in order to be more responsive to local needs and initiative and not stifling local ownership
- the need for long term development with partners, a broader and more coherent approach to capacity building
- a need to redefine SCN's role in the capacity building of partners and especially the role as facilitator rather than 'manager' or 'supervisor'.

In Norad's Organizational Review of SCN, conducted in 2008, the review team found some evidence of instrumental relationships with civil society partners in the two programmes studied. In some cases, partners seemed to be considered a means to reach Save the Children Norway's own objectives, while the team emphasized that strengthening the capacity of local partners should be an objective on its own. Norad strongly emphasizes the need for partnerships built on equality and transparency, respecting local ownership. Building the capacity and competence of partners should contribute to building a strong civil society in the countries where Save the Children Norway operates. These findings and comments have already had an impact in the way SCN defines its goals related to building local and national capacity, by feeding into the discussions and drafting of the global strategy 2010-2013. As shown in quotations from the strategy earlier, SCN concluded that it is legitimate to say that in some instances building capacity of partners is a means to an end, a way to ensure that we reach our target groups and in other instances it is the building of capacity which is the end. The review findings were nevertheless of such an importance to SCN that further follow up is needed to assess the impact (both intended and unintended, positive and negative) of SCN partner cooperation, hence reflected in this evaluation.

Fundamental to any relationship between SCN and a local partner (whether government or civil society) is to define the objective for the relationship: What do SCN and the partner want to achieve? Whether the objective is to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of childrens' rights in a particular target group, provide a service to children or it is to strengthen a particular partner as a voice for children in a society, capacity building should be pack and parcel in order to increase the likelihood that these objectives are achieved effectively in a sustainable manner and the partner is strengthened as an actor in the local development process. The main question is if and how SCN actually add value to the partners in terms of strengthening them in delivering on their objectives, and beyond that, as empowered, competent and sustainable actors anchored in the development process in their societies.

As Save the Children has come together as one international organisation, SCN identify the strengthening of local and national capacity as a key working principle which we would like to see develop in this new fellowship. Several Save the Children members (SC Sweden, SC UK and SC US) as well as several of the country programmes supported by SCN have engaged in evaluations and

1. Provide an oversight of different implementation models and identify and **document good practices** in cooperating with partners, both government and civil society, appropriate to the aim of the partnership and capacity building of the partner. This assessment should also provide evidence of enabling versus obstructing factors in different context and discuss how this could be taken into account when setting the objective for partnerships and selecting partners and modalities.
2. Contribute to **increased knowledge and understanding** by bringing the organisation up to date on research/evaluation findings on partner cooperation (short state of the art report) and bring insight into and awareness of different and sometimes multiple objectives in partner cooperation.
3. Based on the above, provide input to the **formation** of future partnership cooperation in SCN supported programmes and SCI.

This evaluation will go parallel to and be informed by an ongoing SCN mapping of administrative routines in partner cooperation in supported country programmes, aiming to identify gaps between current practises and the new requirements coming with the roll out of SCI programme administration and suggest corresponding adjustments.

The evaluation will start out with a desk review to 1) provide a short update on literature and knowledge on partner cooperation, 2) review SCN (HO and CPs) and SC policies in this field, and 3) map the nature of SCN partnership across supported country programmes, examining numbers and types of partners, etc., complementing the information gathered the above mentioned mapping.

### **Scope**

Four country programmes where SCN have presence or provide support are invited to participate in the evolution as case countries: Nepal, Nicaragua, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Additionally, Ethiopia will be offered financial and technical support to conduct a parallel external evaluation/study designed particularly for a context where government has applied an NGO law restricting the cooperation between local civil society and INGOs.

These cases are chosen because all have considerable experience in partner cooperation that the whole organisation can learn from and they differ on several dimensions assumed to influence on the implementation of good partnerships, helping to illustrate possible models in different contexts. Relevant dimensions are: conflict/post conflict/stable context (hence illustrating differences in partner cooperation in humanitarian versus long term interventions); # and nature of partners (government vs. civil society partners); level of government regulations and control of civil society; different level of civil society activity; SCN holds different roles (Managing member/Participating member/SCN country programmes), only to mention some. An acknowledgement of the uniqueness of each country context in which SCN work has lead us to play down the comparative approach and concentrate on analysing the impact, relevance and potential of partner cooperation in each case country.

Examples should be drawn that illustrate a wide range of partnerships. Criteria for selection of sample partnerships has to be carefully developed, but important dimensions are differences in terms of implementation of humanitarian and long term development interventions, small/large partner, different thematic areas (education and CRG are strategic priorities), delivery of services to children vs. innovation vs. advocacy/awareness raising, etc.

In search of good practises, examples can be drawn from both SCN partnerships and those of other SC members present in a country.

The question of self implementation versus working through partners is not within the scope of this evaluation. Although SCN promotes implementation of development projects with local partners, there are circumstances where self implementation is the only choice (unable or unwilling state actors, non-excising or weak civil society etc).

### **Objectives and Key Evaluation Questions**

#### **1. Assess impact:**

- a. What impact has different modes of partner cooperation had, and how, on the capacity of partners, both government and civil society, to implement and advocate for children's rights?
- b. How effective have SCN's support been in terms of strengthening the capacity of each individual partner organisation beyond the achievement of the defined/common objectives for the partnership?
- c. Has SCN through its cooperation with partners contributed to the overall capacity of society in general, and civil society in particular, to voice, address and fulfil children's rights?
- d. To what extent are clear and consistent objectives set for the partner cooperation in each case, which impact can be assessed against? And are the objectives known and shared by HQ, Country Offices and partners?
- e. Are SC partnering with key actors in government and civil society when compared to the actual child rights issues in each case country? Which processes are followed in order to assess and select strategic partners corresponding to the human rights situation and the intended objectives for partner cooperation? Are the selections of partners ensuring sustainability as well as strengthening the new and weaker voices and actors in the field of child rights?
- f. Are there any negative or unintended effects to be found in the selected sample of partner cooperation? Special attention should be paid to the most prominent known pitfalls of INGO presence.

Impact should be assessed against intentions/objectives for the partnership, and the contextual and organisational setting. Key dimensions of impact are *relevance* and *sustainability*.

#### **2. Document good practices:**

Through a mapping of partner cooperation in practice and the assessment of impact, identify and document some good practices which could serve as examples to be replicated. Examples should apply to government and civil society cooperation respectively, and illustrate different contextual



- a. Based on finding in this evaluation, with a special request for input from children, partners and stakeholders in general, what changes should be made to current modes of partnership cooperation in order to strengthen local capacity, ensure local ownership and sustainability in the future?
- b. Which modes of partner cooperation are particularly strengthening civil society in promoting child rights?
- c. Are modern technology and social media offering any potential to strengthen or change the way SCN work with local partners and networking?

### **Methodology**

The main focus of this evaluation will be on how SCN has and can strengthen local capacity through partnership. With capacity we mean both the capacity of partners (both government, private and civil society) to implement development projects effectively, the capacity to play a role/be the voice as advocates for children rights in line with the common objectives of SCN and the partner, and the ability of the partner organization to develop, define and perform according to their own full mandate (to manage their affairs successfully, to perform the functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives for themselves in a sustainable manner).

Assessing impact will mainly focus on the change in the capacity and potential of partners to perform better according to the common objective for the partnership. Capacity and potential will be analysed as strategic and organisational, relevance, sustainability and independence. This evaluation will not be a full assessment of partners' impact in terms of positive changes in the lives of children and society as a whole. Nevertheless, secondary sources (evaluations, project reports etc) and stakeholders should be consulted to a certain extent to get an impression of partner's ability to deliver according to their purpose.

The methods for data collection, analysis, review process and participation will be detailed in a dialogue between consultants and as outlined in the evaluation plan (Inception Report) to be produced by the consultants. A key principle in SCN evaluation is, however, child participation, which should be integrated in the research methodology. The methods will be finalized in detail in start up workshops in each country. Selection of sample cases of partnerships will be done by the consultants with assistance and advice from CO staff, based on pre-approved criteria for selection.

### **Deliverables**

- Evaluation Plan / Inception Report to be approved by the Steering Group
- Participatory workshops/meetings
  - Start up workshop in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nepal and Nicaragua, settling the evaluation teams and involving stakeholders, and detailing/adopting the evaluation plan and data collection in country

All documentation and reports should be in English, and the Inception Report and final reports will be subject to approval by the Steering Group.

**Criteria for selecting international consultant(s)**

- Proven record of excellent competence in evaluations and assessments
- Excellent competence in development partnership models and practises involving both civil society and government partners, as well as capacity building with partners.
- Good team leader skills
- Good writing skills
- Preferably have knowledge of SCN and/or child rights’ programming (at least one of the consultants)
- Preferably be familiar with the concept of children’s participation (at least one of the consultants)
- Preferably have knowledge of Spanish/(Portuguese) (at least one of the consultants)

**Time Frame**

December 2010 – January 2011	Case Country to confirm participation and give input to evaluation questions Set Evaluation Organization Finalize Terms of Reference
February 2011	Call for consultants Decide Evaluation Team Desk review
Mach 2011	Inception report/evaluation plan First kick off workshop in one case country
March – June 2011	Field work and data analysis
July – August 2011	(Summer vacation in Europe) Draft country reports due by end of August
August – September 2011	Sharing and discussing findings with stakeholders and Reference group
October 2011	Draft Global Report and review process
November 2011	Final country reports and global report
December 2011 (January 2012)	Approval and sharing

**Reference documents**

Key documents, but not exhaustive:

SCN strategies, especially 2006-2009 and the current strategy 2010-2013

SCN’s Policy for Strengthening Local Capacity (2007)

Norad’s ‘Organisational Review of Save the Children Norway’ (2008)

INTRAC’s ‘SCN- Thematic Evaluation of Co-operation with partners’ (2001)

be kept informed. The organisational set up for the evaluation in Ethiopia will be decided by the SMT there.

This should be an external evaluation, and external independent consultant(s) (hereafter called international consultants) will lead the evaluation process, analyse the data, and write up country reports and a final global report. Details will be outlined in a contract between SCN and the international consultant(s). To assist the international consultant(s), local national consultants and data collectors can be hired. As always in SCN managed evaluations, the evaluation will involve staff and stakeholders' participation, and special efforts will be made to ensure meaningful child participation. Evaluation teams will be set up for each country. One SCN focal person has been appointed in each of the case countries and in Ethiopia to facilitate the process in countries. These focal persons are also part of the project group. Although participation is encouraged, it will ultimately be the external global consultant's responsibility to ensure an independent and high quality evaluation process and reports. The SCN organisation will support them to the best of our ability to reach that end.

The interest and dedication of Country Directors and SMTs are always highly conducive to good evaluation processes.

## Appendix B – Key Informants

### Partners

Dos Generaciones	Candida Sequiera (Project Coordinator); Judith Rodriguez (Acahuancalica Programme); (Finance Manager) ;
CAPRI	Socorro Carvajal (Exec Dir); Rosario Bravo (Project Coordinator); Edwin (Finances)
Coalicion Nacional contra La Trata de Personas (SC Spain partner)	Dr.Eloy Izaba, (Exec Secretary)
Red de Masculinidad	Katty Navarro (Coordinator); Douglas Mendoza Urrutia-(Equipo Puntos de Encuentro)
Red de Gobiernos Municipales Amigos de La Ninez	Janeth Castillo Medal (Exec Secretary)
MNAJ	Harvin Toledo (coordinator, 16 yrs ) plus 4 young people members of Esteli group (ages 18-26)
MCN Ocotal	Noel Garcia (teacher, Somoto); Angela Guevera (pre-escolar); Nohemy Martinez (pre-escolar); Francisco Gomez (youth representative); Daysy Vasquez (Health promoter); Dory Pastrana.
INPRHU Ocotal	Martha Adriana Peralta (Director); Aura Estela Mendoza (Project Coordinator)
MINED Ocotal	Rolando Olivas Ardon (Departmental Representative); Martha Eudomilia Albir (Municipal Representative)
CECOCAFEN	Jazmina Padilla García (Project Coordinator – Food Security)
MILAVF	Yamileth Contreras (Director); Cristian Valverde (Project Coordinator); Gladys Guttierrez (President of Adult Council); Francisco Molina Mercado (Secretary of Management Committee, La Dalia); Mayely Ruiz Duarte- Municipal Coordinator, La Dalia-17 yrs)
CODENI	Maria Jesus Gomez (Exec Secretary)
IPADE (SC Canada)	Felix Lopez (Project Coordinator); Martha Mondragon (Administration Manager)
CEPREV (ex partner)	Monica Zelaquett (Director); Vilma Cuadra (Facilitator); Maria Luiza Teller

PPDDH Enrique- Technical Advisor

### **Children and Adolescents**

Facilitators of workshop Jesus David Picado & Selena Isodel Sanchez Montoya from Acahualinca group, Managua (ages 15-17)

Workshop participants – a) from RAJ (Network of Adolescents and Youth) in neighbourhood V-15, Carlos Nuñez y La Primavera, Managua (7 girls, 5 boys, ages 13- 19)  
b) from group of adolescents, members of the Masculinity Network, working with CEPS in Ciudad Sandino (6 boys, 5 girls ages 12-18)

Focus Group CAPRI 4 girls, 3 boys, ages 14-17

Focus Group children associated with MNAJ, Esteli (5-8 yrs old, 5 boys and 7 girls)

Focus Group of members of MILAVF, La Dalia (4 girls, 6 boys, ages 8-16)

Focus Group of children associated with MCN, Ocotal (6 boys, 4 girls, ages 8-14)

Focus Group children associated with Dos Generaciones (4 boys, 3 girls ages 11-17, Acahualinca group, Managua)

### **SC-Ni Staff**

Benjamin Phillips (Country Director); Luz Maria Sequeira (Programmes Director); Pedro (PC Governance); Mario Malespin (M&E); Enrique Molina (Internal Auditor); Luis Molina (Financial Manager); Mappy Lau (partner finances) ; Marlon Carcamo (external donors); Ramon (Advocacy & Communications); Georgina (PC Child Participation)

### **Others**

Plan Nicaragua Johana Chevez (Governance PC) ; Eileeng Obregon (Sponsorship)

UNICEF Analucia Silva (Child Rights Protection Officer)

Norwegian Embassy Ingunn Andersen (Second Secretary)

## Annex C: Map of Project Districts and Partners

### Zona Geográfica

#### 22 municipios priorizados

**Nueva Segovia (8):** Ocotal, Dipilto, Mozonte, Macuelizo, Jalapa, Quilalí, Murra y Willilí

**Madriz (4):** Somoto, Totogalpa, Telpaneca y San Juan del Río Coco.

**Matagalpa (2):** Tuma-La Dalia y Rancho Grande.

**Jinotega (3):** El Cuá, San José de Bocay y Willilí (Jinotega).

**RAAN (5):** Waslala, Siuna, Mulukuku, Bonanza y Rosita.

Proyecto de Salud se implementará también en León:

La Paz Centro, Nagarote, León, Achuapa, El Sauce, Jicaral y Sta. Rosa del Peñón

**Managua:** Distrito VI

Con proyectos que abarcan el ámbito nacional llegaremos a más municipios.

