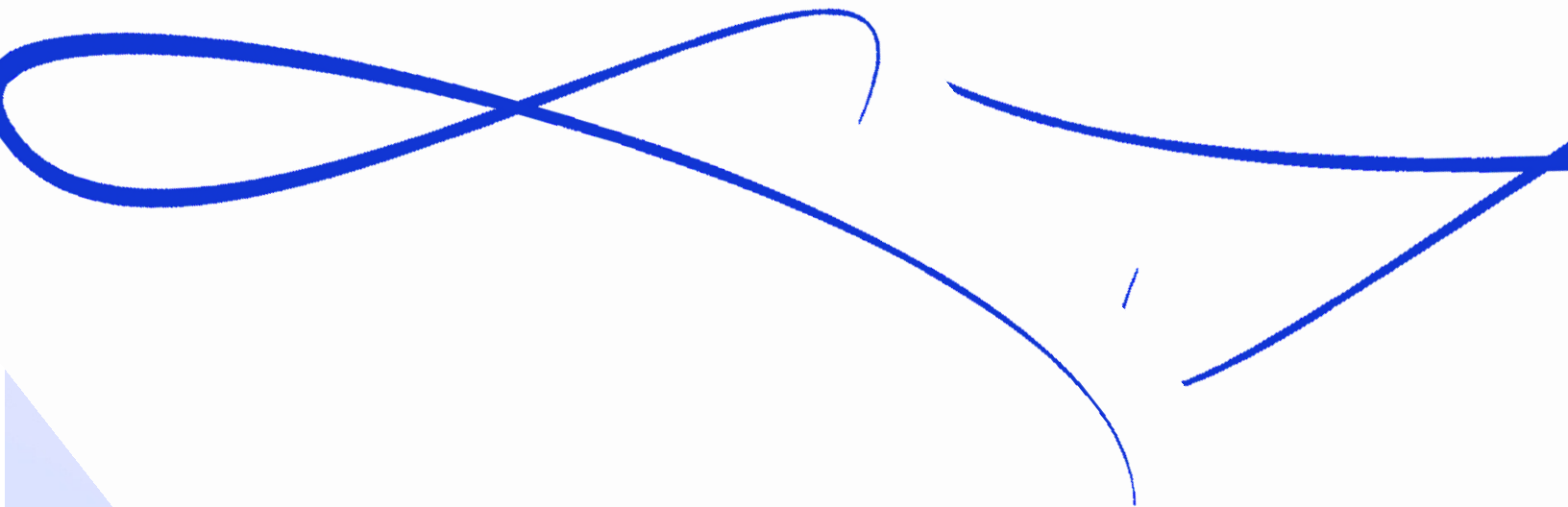


Save the Children Norway – Lao PDR Country Strategic Review

Final Submission

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While this report aims to reflect the situation in a clear and accurate way, any errors are solely the responsibility of the author.

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GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------|--|
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| CPN | Child Protection Network |
| CPWG | Child Protection Working Group |
| CR | Child Rights |
| CRC | (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CRSA | Child Rights Situational Analysis |
| CSP | Country Strategic Plan |
| DCMC | District Committee for Mothers and Children |
| DEB | District Education Bureau |
| DGE | Department of General Education |
| DPPE | Department of Preschool and Primary Education |
| DTT | Department of Teacher Training |
| EFA | Education for All |
| EFA NPA | Education for All National Plan of Action |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| ESDF | Education Sector Development Framework |
| FLAMES | Friendship, Leadership, Action, Motivation, Education, Success |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GoL | Government of Lao PDR |
| HR | Human Resources |
| INGO | International Non-governmental Organisation |
| LDPW | Law on the Development and Protection of Women |
| LPRC | Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children |
| LYU | Lao Youth Union |
| LWU | Lao Women's Union |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MEAL | Monitoring Evaluation Action and Learning |
| MELS | Monitoring Evaluation and Learning System |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Sports |
| MoF | Ministry of Finance |
| MoFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MoJ | Ministry of Justice |
| MoLSW | Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NCCM | National Commission for Mothers and Children |
| NER | Net Enrolment Rate |
| NESRS | National Education System Reform Strategy |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisation |
| NGPES | National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy |
| NIR | Net Intake Rate |
| NPA | Non-Profit Association |
| NTR | Normal Trade Relations |
| NUoL | National University of Laos |
| ODA | Overseas Donor Assistance |

| | |
|--------|--|
| PCMC | Provincial Committee for Mothers and Children |
| PD | Positive Discipline |
| PES | Provincial Education Services |
| QEP | Quality Education Project |
| SCI | Save the Children International |
| SCA | Save the Children Australia |
| SCI | Save the Children in Lao PDR |
| SCN | Save the Children Norway |
| SQIP | School Quality Improvement Programme |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| TTC | Teacher Training College |
| TTS | Teacher Training School |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| VAC | Violence Against Children |
| VEDC | Village Education Development Committee |
| VGDC | Village Group Development Committee |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

Executive Summary

Save the Children (SC) is the world's leading independent organisation for children. SC's vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. SC's mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. SC has worked in Lao PDR over 22 years, at village, district, provincial and central level and implements its programmes in partnership with the Government of Lao PDR (GoL), Mass Organisations (Lao Youth Union (LYU) and Lao Women's Union (LWU)), INGO's and International Organisations. The Laos country office transitioned (SC Norway and SC Australia) to Save the Children International (SCI) in September 2011.

This Country Strategic Review (CSR) of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) of SC Norway (SCN) programmes was conducted between March and May 2013. It involved evaluation design, document review, interviews with key stakeholders at national, provincial, district and village level and with SC staff in the Vientiane, provincial and Norway offices, field visits and observations. The CSR report includes an introduction, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations. This executive summary focuses on key findings per objective as well as recommendations.

Achievements against the CSP 2010-14 and added value of SC in Laos

SC's progress against the SCN CSP 2010-14 is impressive, especially given its difficult unification process. It has been **effective** in implementing most of its forecasted activities within set timeframes and budgets. Its activities are also effectively resulting in the intended changes. It has been able to achieve **results at scale** in all its programmes, through its close collaboration with the government and SC's effective use of this relationship to influence policy making.

However, SC has not conducted its intended stakeholders assessment (including identifying new potential partners), nor has it reached out to civil society as planned. It also did not develop the intended integrated Country Programme Monitoring System.

SC in Lao PDR has gone through a difficult transition, in which turnover rate of staff was exceptionally high, resulting in loss of knowledge. Switching to new finance systems has been challenging and continues to be time consuming for thematic staff. Since the starting of SC's new country director and director of support systems in the autumn of 2012, the situation has improved; new finance and logistical policies have been developed ensuring they are in line with SCI and donor policies. Filling the current vacancies of Donor Relations Director, Human Resource Manager, Education Manager in Bolikhamxay and Luang Prabang will increase SC's **efficiency**.

The Lao Government as well as SC's development partners see a clear **added value** of SC in Laos, because of its technical expertise in the sectors it works in as well as its long presence in Lao PDR.

Cross-sectoral cooperation and synergies are in its early stages but on a central level, there is the intention to increase this. This should go hand in hand with training of staff in the wider mandate of the organisation beyond their own sectors.

SC has effectively raised the **voice of children** through its work with child led agencies and child radio stations. More can be done to ensure **child participation** is standardised across sectors and informs SC's programmes development and implementation.

Changing context and relevance of SC's work

SC's work in education, health, nutrition, disaster risk reduction (DRR), child rights governance and child protection in Lao PDR continues to be extremely **relevant**, as it focusses on the communities who are significantly worse off than others and in thematic sectors that are not reaching its MDG targets. SC's work on equity in Lao PDR is aligned with SCI's post 2015 focus on equity for those MDGs that are off track.

SC programmes are aligned with the Government of Lao PDR Socio Economic Development Plan, with the MoES'

education for all plan and with the NCMC implementation plan as well as with donors' strategies and the SCI strategy, which further ensures its contribution towards national development indicators, whilst maintaining its focus on the CRC obligations of the GoL and SC's commitments to the CRC.

SC's organisational capacity and partnerships

SC's technical expertise at national level and its strong relationship with the GoL position SC well to develop its new CSP. SC could increasingly use this access to influence policy and to have more control over its programmes' locations, quality and effectiveness. SC is highly regarded as a lead agency in all the sectors it works in and is a partner of choice for other INGOs. However, in order to bring about lasting change at village level, SC should invest more in training and monitoring of its community structures. SC currently does not partner with civil society / Non Profit-Associations, which is exceptional amongst development partners in Lao PDR, most of which partner both with the GoL and NPAs. Many donors require INGOs to have relationships with NPAs, in order to access funding. SC would currently not meet these requirements.

As the biggest independent child rights agency, SC should build partnerships with local civil society to independently monitor the GoL's implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and to hold it to account on its policies and practices for children.

The following recommendations are made by the CSR team:

- To invest in quality and in growth, SC needs to fill the current vacancies and create M&E and communication/advocacy positions and to ensure that staff salary and benefits are market value. The M&E needs more attention and the intended Country Program Monitoring System should be designed following the integrated Country Strategic Plan is completed. SC should consider hiring an M&E specialist for at least six months to facilitate this, to roll out this system through trainings and the establishment of an integrated data base. This will increase SC's evidence for good practices. Equally, communication needs more attention, to disseminate good practices to a wider audience, including donors. This position could also support the radio and TV programmes on child rights that SCI supports.
- As the only independent child rights NGO, SC should systematically monitor the GoL's implementation of the CRC, preferably in collaboration with local civil society groups.
- Ensure child participation, child protection and best interests principles are firmly rooted in all programmes and systems.
- SC needs to develop a partnership strategy. This partnership strategy should also outline how they identify new partners, how they build their capacities and how they monitor partners' progress. It should reflect carefully on the long relationship between state, civil society and private sector as articulated in General Comment 5 as part of this process, developing a long term vision as well as immediate adjustments.
- SC should look at developing an advocacy and communication strategy, possibly through the CSP process; a strategy that outlines the issues it wants to raise and how it wants to raise this. The recent BMS campaign could serve as a successful example.
- The VAC study needs to be a priority. NCMC wanted to push this through, there is a momentum and part of the funding is there.
- SCI is becoming increasingly visible again in the INGO network. Continuing this involvement and cooperation is important, especially with the recent misunderstandings between INGOs and donors and the perceived decreasing operating space for INGOs.

Introduction

This is an independent review of the 2010-2014 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) of Save the Children Norway (SCN) in Lao PDR, commissioned by SCN in March 2013. The review period covers January 2010 until March 2013.

Purpose of the review

The Terms of Reference (TOR) describes the main purpose of this Country Strategic Review as being “to inform and provide directions to the next SCI Lao PDR Country Strategy”.

In order to ensure relevance and maximize SCs contribution to children’s rights in Laos, SCN commissioned a strategic review to help inform and provide direction. Adding to the input from on-going sector-based evaluations, this review aims to contribute to the next country strategy being built on a thorough understanding of:

- previous results and the documented and potential added value of Save the Children in Laos
- the relevance of Save the Children’s programme in the changing context in the country and potential direction towards the post MDG agenda
- Strengths and limitations in SC in Laos’ delivery mechanisms and partnerships, including child and youth organisations, which might influence the ability to successfully implement the next country strategy now being planned.

The review should primarily be seen as a learning exercise for SC and partners, and the findings and recommendations will be used by the country office management, staff and stakeholders in preparing the next CSP. SCN (commissioning the review and being one of the major members supporting the Lao PDR programme) will also use the review to support the Lao PDR CSP process. Secondary use will be considered, if appropriate, in attracting future supporters, partners and donors to the Lao PDR programme; informing SCN strategic decision-making, reporting to and dialogue with back donors and potential future donors, as well as sharing the learning within SCI and with other SC country programmes that could benefit from it.

Specifically the review is intended to look at three overarching objectives:

1. Provide evidence of overall achievement against the objectives set in the SCN 2010 – 2014 Lao Country Strategy and a realistic understanding of the added value of Save the Children in Lao PDR.
2. Assess the relevance of the current programme priorities in the light of the changing context in Lao PDR and suggest amendments preparing for the post MDG agenda
3. Identify strengths and limitations in delivery mechanisms and partnerships which might influence the ability to successfully implement the next SCI Lao PDR country strategy now being planned.

In a meeting between *theIDLgroup* and SC on 18th March, the client highlighted that a particularly pressing area for investigation are issues surrounding the transition in Lao PDR and the relevance of the current strategic plan. It was also deemed important to look at management and partnership models given the transition within SC. It was also felt that questions surrounding evidence of change or impact of the country strategic plan might best be looked at by way of looking at the existing Theory of Change and Monitoring and Evaluation systems. In other words, looking at how the desired change/impact has been articulated and understood, and the extent to which the programme is on track to achieve, measure, and demonstrate this change. It should be pointed out that this is a review of the overall country strategy and as such should

take the broad view of how the country programme is performing. It is not intended to look in detail at each individual project.

At the same time, *theIDLgroup* has completed the first stage of a **Child Rights Situational Analysis (CRSA)**, which is partly informing objective 2 and 3 and should further inform Save the Children International's (SCI) strategic process.

Limitations

The purpose of the review is broad and required looking back at programme implementation, outcomes and impact as well as looking at the changing context of children's rights in Laos, the extent to which SCI is well positioned to respond to the changing situation and lastly, comparing SCI's operational modality with those of other similar INGOs. With a limited timescale, this significantly impacted on the depth of this review.

The largest limitation however, is the fact that this review only covers SCN funded programmes and as such excludes half the country portfolio, which, after more than 1.5 years of unified operation, is a missed opportunity to assess the overall operations of SCI following a difficult merging process, from which it is still recovering. A countrywide review would have offered more insights in overall performances, operational modalities and limitations. This review can only offer that to the extent it relates to SCN funded programmes.

Introduction to SC's work in Laos

SCN has been working in Lao PDR for over 18 years, in which its programmes focussed on primary and pre-school education, child rights governance and child protection. In September 2011, SCN and Save the Children Australia (SCA) in Lao PDR transitioned to become one organisation, SCI in Lao PDR. Where the education and child protection programmes were already merged to a certain extent, this was not the case for child rights governance, Disaster Relief Reduction, and Health and Nutrition Programmes, the latter two previously falling under SCA's country programme. Following the transition, the role of the Norway office towards the Lao SC office changed from a direct managing role overseeing all aspects of the operations to a funding and technical backstopping role. The transition period witnessed high turn-over rates of both national and international staff and a difficult merging of the financial systems. No less than four country directors managed the Lao country office between September 2011 and now.

This review has been informed by the School Quality Improvement Programme (SQIP) midterm review (April 2013); the final evaluation of the Lao Youth Union (LYU) radio programme and the evaluation of the social work curriculum programme in collaboration with the National University of Laos. The Child Rights Situational Analysis, simultaneously carried out by *theIDLgroup* at the time of this review, particularly informed the section on the changing context in Lao PDR from a child rights perspective.

Methodology

1. **Team approach and learning**

The review was led primarily by two consultants from the independent development organisation, *theIDLgroup*. A national consultant, Phukham Sipaseuth was contracted by SCN to support Kunera Moore in the field. She provided contextual knowledge; translation support and facilitation of group work with beneficiaries.

Table 1: methodology and information sources

| Methodology | Information sources | Scope |
|---|--|---|
| Desk review | Data provided by SCI and SCN internal SCI data as well as external data from Lao PDR that were deemed relevant for this review | Strategy documents, reports, annual plans, SCI and SCN strategic documents, government, UN, donor strategies, other agencies' report |
| Key informant Interviews | Government of Lao | <u>National level</u> (MoES, NCMC, NDMD, Lao Youth Union, MoLSW) <u>Provincial level</u> (Education and Sports Department, Social Welfare Department) <u>District level</u> education and Sports, Social Welfare and Child Protection Network <u>Village level</u> – school directors, teachers and VEDC |
| | SCI | <u>Vientiane based staff</u> (directors, programme, support) <u>Sayaboury and Bolikhamxay based staff</u> (Provincial Managers, Education and CP/CRG managers and officers) |
| | Donors, UN, INGOs, NPAs, University | <u>All Vientiane based</u> Ausaid, EU, UNICEF Education & CP, Plan International, Child Fund, Oxfam, INGO Network, FLAMES, PADTEC, Dongsavath Dev. Association, National University of Laos |
| Group work | Government partners and SC senior staff CPNs and VEDC | Introduction workshop national level District and village level |
| Participatory work with children | FLAMES, Lao Youth Union, Youth Group School going children Child Led Groups Youth | National workshop 2 villages in Khamkeurd district, Bolikhamxay 2 villages in XiengHone district, Sayaboury |

The review team consulted just under 200 people, the majority of whom were children. An evaluation matrix was developed with detailed interview questions for key informants, with specific questionnaires for SCI staff, SCN staff, donors, UN INGOs, government partners, NPAs and community members. In addition, tools were developed to guide focus group discussions with teachers, Village Education Development Committee Members and Child Protection Network members at district and village level. A workshop was held with Government partners and SCI staff members to inform them about the review and get their feedback about the proposed methodology, tools and interviews. In addition a full day workshop was organised with FLAMES, the Lao Youth Union radio and television DJ's and the Ban Akath child protection youth group. Specific child friendly tools were used with children, including time line, body mapping, stories of most significant change and challenge as well as a simplified SWOT analysis, H-assessment. All tools are attached in Annex D. Below tables specify the number of people consulted as part of this review.

Table 2: Number of people consulted

| | male | female | Total |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| GoL at national,provincial,district,village | 36 | 13 | 49 |
| Donors | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| INGOs plus UN | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| SC staff members | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| NPAs | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Children aged 8-12 | 24 | 40 | 64 |
| Children and youth aged 13-25 | 15 | 28 | 43 |
| Total | 90 | 90 | 180 |
| Out of whom children | 39 | 68 | 107 |

Findings

Results for Children

| |
|--|
| Objective I of the review: |
| A. Provide evidence of overall achievement against the objectives set in SCN 2010-2014 Laos Country Strategy: <i>Achievements of overall objectives in the current country strategy plan – outcomes and if possible impact, intended as well as unintended, positive and negative</i> Key issues to be addressed are: <u>Sustainability, Scalability, Cross-sector synergies, Examples of good practices/lessons learnt that could be incorporated in to the next strategy</u> |
| B. Provide a realistic understanding of the added value of Save the Children in Lao PDR |

The strategy was developed in 2009 mostly based on SCN global strategy: *“the strategy was designed in Norway more than in Laos and follows their priorities¹.”* It is further informed by SCN CSP for Lao PDR 2006-2009 and its lessons learned; it is aligned with Government of Lao policies, most notably the Education Sector Development Framework (2009-2015), the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) as well as with the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interest of Children 2006 (LPRC). It is informed by GoL statistics on education, GoL’s implementation of the LPRC and an analysis of the gaps. The goals and objectives of the strategic plan were and continue to be very relevant, which will be further discussed under objective II of this review. However, the analysis of the context in Lao PDR focused on the areas in which SCN was already working and planned to continue working in. A wider analysis of children’s rights was not conducted and is not reported on in the CSP. As an example, resettlement, already a major issue affecting children in 2010, does not feature in the 2010-14 CSP.

Table 3: levels of implementation of cross-cutting focus of CSP 2010-14

| Cross cutting focus 2010-14 | Degree to which this has been implemented |
|--|---|
| 1. Improving efficiency and cost effectiveness; | Partly implemented - efficiency decreased during the transition period but now there is a stronger focus on these issues, especially in terms of support. However, efficiency has decreased due to the reporting requirements to different SC members, which have not all been aligned with SCI reporting requirements. |
| 2. Sharpening geographical focus; | Partly achieved – SC has decreased the number of districts it works in but SC needs to be more strategic in its negotiations with the GoL to ensure it works with communities who are most vulnerable. |
| 3. Maintaining commitment to improving quality of programme and management; | After losing many staff members during the transition, there is a higher commitment again to improving quality <i>once</i> all policy changes resulting from the transition are implemented. To date though this commitment has not translated into tangible training plans or trainings. |
| 4. Achieving measurable results and ensuring systematic monitoring of progress made; | Partly implemented; education results are measurable as are some CRG/CP results, however more emphasis on disaggregating data and regular monitoring is |

¹Interview with Save the Children staff member, Vientiane, April 2013.

| | needed |
|--|--|
| 5. Foster partnership with SC members, civil society organisations, new institutions, extended collaboration with like-minded organisations; | Low level of implementation; collaboration with like-minded organisations in CRG/CP is evident as it is in DRR ² , but less so in education. No progress on partnership with civil society; partly due to the focus on internal changes and the decreasing space for civil society, but also because SCI has shown little interest in changing its implementation and partnership strategy to include NPAs. |
| 6. Foster programme ownership of counterparts including local authorities, teachers, parents and children | Medium level of achievement; government shows strong ownership as to the CLGs, FLAMES and the LUY but parents or other targeted children do not show ownership. |
| 7. Open to new ideas, embrace change and take disciplined risks to develop sustainable solutions for and with children | Low levels of achievement; change does not seem to be high on the agenda. SCI is a change organisation, which is currently not reflected in SCI's practices – SCI has a reputation as being risk adverse, compared to other INGOs. |

Achievements against objectives

SC implements mainly through government partners. Its work contributes to both increased and improved quality government services and is effective in reaching high numbers of the target population. Please refer to Annex E, which outlines the extent to which results were achieved and the extent to which progress against indicators was/is systematically monitored.

- SC's progress against the SCN CSP 2010-14 is impressive, especially given its difficult unification process. The majority of activities have been implemented within the timeframe and within the agreed upon budget.
- SC has been able to implement the majority of its forecasted activities and is realising many of the intended outcomes and results.
- It has been able to achieve results at scale in education and CRG, mostly through implementing its programmes through the government and SC's efforts to influence policy.
- Key examples are the integration of SCI's pre-primary education model into the Education Sector Development Framework, the inclusion of child rights in national teacher training modules, the inclusion of children in the national monitoring of the implementation of the CRC for the CRC reporting obligations, the establishment of 6 district CP committees and 24 CPNs at community level and NCMC's support for Violence against Children's study.
- It has been weak in its implementation of cross-cutting objectives on M&E and partnerships with civil society. SCN's CSP planned to specifically target girls in education, but there is no evidence that it did so.

² DRR is not part of the CSP of SCN 2010-14. However, the head of DRR participated in an attribution analysis and was subsequently interviewed. Hence examples are included from the DRR programme where they have informed this review.

Education

Table 4: progress against results framework CSP 2010-14 in education

| Sector/ Theme Area | Planned Objective | Expected results including quantifiable indicators/targets | Progress against objectives / expected results |
|---|---|---|--|
| Education Fulfil children's right to basic education | Objective 1: More out of-school children, especially girls, have access to education ³ . | <p>Primary</p> <p>Result 1: 100% primary school net intake rate (NIR⁴) in the target areas: 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces (BOL, LBP, SAY) by 2014</p> <p>Result 2: 50% of newly enrolled Grade 1 children had undergone pre-primary classes in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 3: 100% net enrolment rate in primary schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 4: 98% survival rates for primary level in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 5: 90% transition rate from primary to lower secondary in 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 6: Registration and instructional fees abolished in all primary schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Result 1: Increased admissions of 5-year olds into pre-primary classes and play groups to 50% in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 2: Introduction of school grants for community-based play groups, pre-primary classes in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 3: Appropriate management and pedagogy used in ECE ensuring that 50% of community-based play groups, pre-primary classes meet the minimum standard in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 4: 200 new classrooms constructed and equipped in SCN target primary schools for pre-primary school children in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 5: 200 new pre-school teachers recruited and deployed to teach in pre-primary school classes by PES in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> | <p><i>There is no focus on girls in programme design nor monitoring</i> <i>Enrolment and retention figures disaggregated by gender but exam data aren't, nor are pre-primary data (at least not in reports)</i></p> <p>Result 1: 98.98%</p> <p>Result 2: see result 1 ECE (48% enrolment in target areas of 5 year olds in pre-schools)</p> <p>Result 3: 95.5%</p> <p>Result 4: 80.93% - changed schools to poorer district</p> <p>Result 5: no data reported</p> <p>Result 6: Now according to MoES and SC; no more fees collected, According to MoES only contribution through VEDC, but exception for very poor families</p> <p>ECE:</p> <p>Result 1: 48.72%</p> <p>Result 2: Might be introduced through FTI/WB? John Howe??</p> <p>Result 3: not reported on</p> <p>Result 3: unsure? John Howe</p> <p>Result 4: On track, 171 constructed, 16 more constructed in 2013</p> <p>Result 5: On track, 171 trained and currently 16 in training</p> |

³ Out of school children includes children who have never been to school and children who drop out of school.

⁴ Net Intake Rate (NIR): Number of children enrolled in Grade 1 at official age divided by the total number of children of official Grade 1 age (6 years old).

| Sector/ Theme | Planned Objective | Expected results including quantifiable indicators/targets | Progress against objectives / expected results |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| | <p>Objective 2: School going children benefit from improved quality in education</p> | <p>Result 1: All SCN target schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces meet the standards of "Schools of Quality" as defined by MoE by 2014</p> <p>Result 2: All SCN target schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces adopted code of conduct for school teachers and students and are free from corporal and humiliating punishment by incorporating PD in all Schools of Quality by 2014.</p> <p>Result 3: EFA Action Plans formulated and implemented in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014.</p> <p>Result 4: EMIS and baseline data set up and implemented for target PES and DEBs with the support from SCN and MoE by 2014.</p> <p>Result 5: VEDC members adopt "School Improvement Planning and School Governance" approaches in SCN target areas in the 3 districts of each of the 3 province by 2014.</p> <p>Result 6: Knowledge of Lao language in grade 5 (including reading skills) increased. Number of children who passed the exam increased by at least 50% in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014.</p> | <p>Result 1: Currently not all schools are SoQ, according to SC monitoring 52 % -</p> <p>Result 2: 76.44% of schools adopted code of conduct for school teachers and students are free from corporal and humiliating punishment (reportedly) Field research – evidence for this: children reported decrease in humiliating and physical punishment by teachers but still some physical punishment reported by children</p> <p>Result 3: not reported on in annual reports</p> <p>Result 4: idem</p> <p>Result 5: Some of VEDCs function very well, others not – difficult to know if they all have SIPSG</p> <p>Result 6: Too early to tell</p> |

The education programme is generally on track in terms of increasing access and quality of education and the activities/input under those objectives: especially in the pre-school teacher training program. Trainings for primary school teacher and school directors are still on-going. There is still a percentage of teachers and directors in the target districts who have not been trained at all, but on track to all be trained once before end of SQIP program. The construction work is also on track, provided that funding in the remaining timeframe for SQIP remains commensurate with needs.

Outcomes are clear and quantifiable: increased enrolment at pre-school level, increased net intake rate primary school, increased survival rate and a decrease in drop out at primary school level in target districts.

A great achievement is the official inclusion of the 30 weeks pre-school training curriculum into the teacher training college as is the official inclusion of child rights in the teacher training curriculum on a national level.

The programme has great support from The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) at all levels; there is a very close relationship between SC and MoES and SC is seen as a true partner that jointly plans programmes with MoES, complements their work and contributes both to quality improvement and to increased access.

“According to the technical report of the quality control sector, teachers that pass the 30 weeks training course offer better quality than the normal pre-school teachers.” (MoES interviewed Vientiane, April 2013)

The introduction of school block grants through the World Bank’s Fast Track Initiative, was meant to release parents of their payment duties to schools. It is unclear to what extent this has been achieved. Some Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) members reported that parents still need to contribute and that exceptions are made for poor families. District and national education staff reported that parents do not need to contribute any longer now that the block grants come through. Further information/research is necessary to ensure communities benefit from the block grants.

Evidence of outcomes during field visits:

1. 2 out of 3 schools visited showed signs of group work, the use of a blackboard, making their own materials, and children’s work was displayed on the wall
2. Children confirmed this; 65 children currently in primary school (36 girls, 29 boys) were consulted. They reported the teachers are now using the blackboard, Q&A, using the textbooks, letting children do group work

“Teachers are now kinder with students and stopped beating us. When we don’t understand, the teacher used to shout, but now the teacher is friendly and explains it. If there is a student who isn’t so good, the teacher gives him extra lessons. The teacher concentrates more on the poor students.”⁵

3. All children reported decrease in violence and humiliating treatment by teachers but also reported that teachers still used violence but on a limited scale.

⁵CLG member, Khan and May village, Xhienhong district, Sayaboury, 30-04-2013

“Teachers need to be trained to punish children who do something wrong not by hitting but by growing trees.”⁶

4. Children reported teachers are no longer absent during school hours as much as they were – this is most likely attributable to higher salaries for teachers by the MoES and cannot be attributed to SC’s trainings alone.

“Before, the teacher had lots of meetings and was always missing school; now if the teacher goes to the meeting, he has to ask other teachers to replace him in class.”⁷

5. Beautification of outside area (plants, no rubbish)
6. Directors have the indicators of Schools of Quality on the wall and half the teachers we interviewed were aware of the different indicators they were striving towards and some were even actively planting shrubs in the garden when we arrived! All teachers were aware of child rights and remembered that training specifically.
7. Teachers reported supporting each other and also reported assisting children with special needs more than they did before. Children requested more teacher support for math and Lao language and for teachers to help children who have learning difficulties.
8. VEDCs interviewed shared their achievements and what they remembered of their trainings. parents contribution for schools (with exception of poor families)

“We encourage our villagers to repair the school when something breaks. It isn’t difficult to get parents involved. The school will ask the village to contribute, in materials and in labour. At least once a month we meet with our village. Our village has a revolving fund and we use the interest from this fund for school repairs, to hire a technician or to buy materials.”⁸

Sustainability

1. The pre-school programme design is sustainable. There was no pre-school *capacity* in the target communities before, and SC together with the MoES has established this. The fact that the pre-school teachers are on the payroll of the MoES means that the *motivation* for teachers is there to stay on. The *resources*, in terms of the skills and knowledge of the teachers and the infrastructure, have also been addressed. Involving the VEDCs in monitoring quality would increase *accountability* and as such, offer increased chances for sustainability.
2. The fact that the training has been included in the official training curricula at the teacher training college also makes the model sustainable. However, the high costs associated with this training (higher per diem, smaller classrooms, more intense training) decrease opportunities to bring it up to scale as alternative pre-school trainings at the Ministry have lower associated costs per beneficiary and receive more donor support.
3. Both pre-school and primary school teachers and heads of school as well as the VEDC show *motivation* to practise what they have learned in SC trainings. But *capacity building* through training and follow-up is limited, which might decrease sustainability of the impact of the trainings. Refresher trainings or at least more intensive monitoring and follow up are required to increase sustainability. In addition, increasing school’s *accountability* to the community through

⁶FGD with Child (not CLG member) in Phountong village school, Khamkurd district, Bolixamsey province, 26-04-2013

⁷ FGD with CLG member, Khan and May village, Xhienhong district, Sayaboury, 30-04-2013

⁸FGD with VEDC member, Phountong Village, Khamkhurd district, Bolixamsey, 26th of April 2013

the 769 VEDC members and the the CLGS monitoring school quality, can contribute to increasing the sustainability of the trainings' impact. In addition, all teachers reported to need more *resources* to effectively use child centred teaching methodologies.

4. The VEDCs *capacity* is being built. Some are *motivated* and have access to *resources* both through the block grants and parents' contributions. The VEDCs did not report receiving input from parents but they reportedly meet with parents on a monthly basis. The VEDCs in the two visited locations are actively involved in the school upkeep. They encourage parents' contribution to the school maintenance. It is encouraging to see the exceptions being made for poor families. The VEDCs did report the need for more funds to assist the poorest families with purchasing clothes for their children to go to school in. Currently, the VEDCs do not use the school funds to assist individual families.

Scalability

1. A great example of scalability is the incorporation of child rights into all SQIP funded teacher training carried out by the MoES. Child rights have been incorporated in all MoES' pre-service and in-service teacher trainings.
2. SC should consider working closely with the provincial departments of education to advocate for the pre-school teacher training model to be more widely implemented by the MoES with support from other donors/INGOs. SC and the MoES would have to consider cutting costs of the current model as the associated costs seem to be preventing scalability. This model could also be shared with other countries in Asia that have similar low enrolment rates amongst ethnic minorities, like Vietnam and Cambodia.

Areas for improvement

1. There is limited follow-up support for trained teachers: All teachers are trained once, because of lack of funds. The current programme design supports visiting each school once a year through monitoring visits but in 2012 this was not achieved because of funding (in Sayaboury) or because of limited time (Bolikhamxay). However, in Bolikhamxay, it was reported that the M&E committee in the cluster village meets every month with the VEDCs. The assessment team had insufficient time to follow up on this but it would be interesting to learn to what extent teachers access other sources of support. It is recommended to strengthen the focus on sustainable follow-up support to teachers in schools, either through a cluster model if not from SC and district Education office, directly through trainings.
2. Ensuring data is disaggregated by gender, disability and ethnicity, where possible, to better inform SCI/MoES about inclusiveness of education and girls' education, especially in ethnic minority areas. This would enhance its analysis and evaluation of the programme's success increasing girls' enrolment, ethnic minorities' children's enrolment and enrolment of particularly vulnerable children. Long term disaggregated monitoring is part of the GoL's responsibility under the CRC, which SCI should emphasise with the MoES and other line ministries. Currently, monitoring is conducted infrequently and because it is embedded with MoES. Data might also be inflated because of the pressure on MoES to increase access. M&E is disaggregated by gender, not by age, disability and ethnicity for primary schools and pre-schools.
3. Increase support to district Education Offices to improve their organisational capacity and their ability to support schools and VEDCs better, as per the CSP's objectives.
4. Increase support to VEDCs to facilitate better understanding of their role, responsibility, and administration of the block grants.
5. Increase school accountability vis-à-vis community by involving VEDCs in monitoring school quality.

6. Involve CLGs in monitoring school quality and school going behaviour of their peers. This will increase schools' accountability vis-à-vis children. Interviewed children knew exactly which children were out of school and why but it was unclear to which extent they shared this with the VEDC/teachers for follow-up.
7. Decide whether SCI wants to improve quality of MoES Teacher Trainings. Already in 2010, SCN in Lao reported to SCN that the quality of the Teacher Training at district level was insufficient and that SC needed to step in to improve this quality. It is unclear to what extent SC has been able to provide its own trainers to this course.

Issues for further research:

1. The extent to which VEDCs / schools receive support from cluster M&E committees.
2. To question whether block grants are meant to replace parents' contributions to school needs.
3. High demand for libraries and other learning materials, from teachers, VEDCs, school directors, and most importantly from children.
4. The potential role of NPAs to support VEDCs.
5. To look at entry points where SC can enhance its cooperation with other INGOs and donors to increase scalability.
6. At provincial level, SC needs to improve coordination with other INGOs to ensure equal distribution of development funds.

Child Protection

Table 5: progress against results framework CSP 2010-14 Child Protection

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Child Protection Fulfil the rights of children to protection against violence and abuse</p> | <p>Objective 1: Stronger systems for the protection of children</p> | <p>Result 1: By 2012 a specific social work curriculum (with focus on children) has been developed by the FSS at NUoL and approved by the MoES Result 2: By 2012 child rights, child development, child protection, and social work are taught by quality trainers at FSS Result 3: By 2012 the GoL will integrate social work graduates within government structures Result 4: By 2010-2011 SCN has formed partnership with the MoLSW and LWU for working on child protection mechanisms at local levels Result 5: By 2013 child protection focal persons have been selected and trained at MoES, PES and DEB and in all SCN target schools Result 6: Child Protection mechanism established and functioning in one target province.</p> | <p>Result 1 & 2: Partly achieved; some courses now exist but not a full curriculum that covers all aspects of social work with children; also questionable whether what exists is geared towards social work at community level. Result 3: only partially achieved but in process Result 4: delayed –started in 2012 and now in process Result 5: Not yet achieved – the current PD training might result in achieving this result? Result 6: 6 district and 2 provincial committees as well as 24 CPNs have been established and are starting to function</p> |
| | <p>Objective 2: More children are protected against, and get support after violence and sexual abuse</p> | <p>Result 1: Information on positive discipline is disseminated and applied in selected schools and villages in one of SCN target provinces Result 2: Teachers, parents and local authorities in 50 selected villages will be trained on the children’s law, and violence against children Result 3: By 2014 children in 50 schools are through child-to-child activities informed about child protection issues and have basic skills for protecting themselves from violence</p> | <p>Result 1: on-going Result 2: on-going Result 3: 6 groups have been established – 3 school based, 3 youth groups Also work with LUY on radio programmes until end 2012</p> |
| | <p>Objective 3: More children are heard and participate in the prevention against violence and abuse</p> | <p>Result 1: Children are included into and participating in at least 50 Child Protection Network (CPN) committees in SCN target areas Result 2: By 2014, 27 child led groups (3 in each SCN target district and 4 at provincial and central level) are developing and promoting advocacy campaigns aimed at the prevention and response to violence against children Result 3: By 2014, 80% of all established CPN will receive reports of child abuse from children Result 4: Serious cases of child abuse are being referred by CPN to responsible local government authorities and action taken in the best interest of the child</p> | <p>Result 1: 24 village CPNs have been established but children don’t participate in these nor were they informed in the village we visited (informing children is planned for 2013) Result 2: some CP groups have started in 2012, more will in 2013; they conduct awareness on national holidays/rights days Result 3 and 4: none of the CPNs currently reporting – very low level of understanding of their function</p> |

The three objectives for child protection; stronger systems for the protection of children; more children are protected against and get support after violence and sexual abuse; more children are heard and participate in the prevention against violence and abuse; are partly implemented.

Objective 1: focused primarily on the development of the social work curriculum; the placement of graduates within the GoL; working on child protection mechanisms at local levels with the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW); and the establishment of a child protection mechanism in one target province.⁹

Part of the challenge for the social work curriculum and placement was that the time in Lao PDR was not ripe for the placement of students as the government was not actively involved in child protection mechanisms at that time. The second challenge has been that the curriculum might have been too advanced for the actual needs on the ground. Training grass root level social workers would have contributed to more effective nascent child protection networks.

Now, timing is ripe for more advanced social workers, whilst the grass root level needs for basic social work continue to exist. MoLSW, NUoL and SC will finalise the placement of graduates in district labour and social welfare offices. In addition SC will continue its support to NUoL to ensure all modules for year 2 and 3 are completed.

Recommendations

1. SC should be more involved in the programme than it has been during the first three years of the project and should closely monitor inputs versus outputs and outcomes, as some of the inputs have not resulted in the desired outcomes (most notably the investment in teaching staff).
2. SC should also consider investing in basic social skills training of child protection focal persons at village level to empower the CPNs and create a first referral link for CPNs.

Objective 2: More children are protected against and get support after violence and sexual behaviour and training on positive disciplining has taken place firstly in 2010 to MoES and NCMC. The SC Positive Discipline Manual was translated into Lao and officially launched by National Commission for Mothers and Children (NCMC) in 2010 as a key reference document for their work. Positive Discipline (PD) orientation sessions were conducted in May 2011 with the NCMC (this included a planning session on the next steps). The momentum of this was stopped with the change in secretariat however. The former NCMC Secretariat was trained by Save the Children Sweden (SCS) in Positive Discipline and was a great advocate.

A five day PD orientation was also conducted with technical CP focal points from the district and provincial level and child protection partner organisations from both Luang Prabang and Sayaboury in May 2012. Further training was conducted in April / May 2013. As such this objective has been partly achieved. Follow-up monitoring visits and linkages with CPNs and VEDCs need to be fostered to have responsible community based bodies to monitor progress and changes in behaviour.

⁹Capacity Building for Social Work with a Focus on Children' Project', Evaluation of Save the Children and the NuOL's Cooperation, Vientiane, December 2012

Also under objective 2, six child protection child and youth groups have been established at schools who are not yet engaged in child to child awareness activities. All provincial volunteers have been trained (Dec 2012) in Protective Behaviour (prevention of sexual abuse) and subsequently have trained 2 district and 4 school-based child/youth clubs. The assessment team was unable to meet with these children and youth groups, so is unable to illustrate outcomes/impact. One recommendation would be to establish strong linkages between the child and youth child protection groups and the CPNs. This will help the child and youth groups to clarify their role in terms of awareness raising and referrals, which will empower them and contribute to a more pro-active CPN.

Objective 3: 24 CPNs have been established and trained at village level; 2 Child Protection and Assistance Committees at provincial and 6 at district level in Luang Prabang and Sayaboury provinces have also been established and training has commenced. Whilst the model SC uses builds on the previous work conducted by UNICEF and MoLSW (who set up 400 CPNs in 2009), UNICEF only provided one training session of 5 days without follow up support. SC is planning a second batch of training to the CPNs this year. No cases have come forward through the committees as yet and the CPN members interviewed stated that they had not dealt with any case to date.

The assessment team conducted focus group discussions with a district Child Protection and Assistance Committee¹⁰ and a village CPN. Especially at district level, there was confusion about their role. As they have not received reports from the village CPNs, they seemed to focus on processes (meetings, per diems, reports) rather than on child protection issues. Both district and village CPN members showed a low conceptual understanding of child protection as an issue as well as their responsibility to protect children.

The ToR of the district CPN is long and discusses processes of meetings at length but has little focus on outcomes for children. The meeting with the district CPN highlighted this and the assessment team also found it to be overly complicated.¹¹ This ToR is the first official ToR developed under the LPRC, which in itself is an achievement. The national level CP Committee has not got a ToR yet and is now referring to the ToRs SC has developed at provincial and district level. SC will work with the committees to develop an action plan to implement their ToR.

Children's involvement in the CPNs

SC planned for children to be involved in the CPNs. This has not been possible because of the official nature of the committee's structure. Children to date have not been informed about the CPNs but child participation training for the CPNs is being planned. Parents are not members either (although many of the members are parents and live in the community) but representation of ordinary parents who do not represent a government position in the community (e.g. school, LWU, LYU, police, health / traditional birth attendant) has in other contexts proven to foster citizens' involvement in the structure rather than it primarily being a government body / authority. This is not possible in the Lao context.

Currently the CPNs are not linked to the youth and child led groups or to the child protection groups. This is planned for the future and will likely enhance the functioning of the CPN as children/youth

¹⁰ In Xieng Hong district; out of the 8 committee members who participated in the meeting, only three had been trained by SCI. The other members who did participate in the SCI training were not present at this meeting.

¹¹ SCI has wanted to make the ToR simpler but reportedly, the district and provincial committees want to continue using the current ToR.

groups have a vested interest in the CPN functioning and responding to cases, including following up referring to service providers.

As cases have not been reported to date, a culture that endorses local resolution mechanisms for criminal cases like rape and violence rather than referring them to criminal investigation and the judicial system, prevails and is actually endorsed by the CPN. This is contrary to the best interests of the child. The best interest principle was discussed in the training in 2012 and will be revisited at the next CPN training this year.

The assessment team consulted children and youth from a CPN village. None of the children/youth knew about the CPN or any such committee in their community. Without informing children and youth in the communities about the CPNs, CPNs offer little help to children and cases will not come forward. This is a key area for SC to focus on. Reportedly CPNs in Sayaboury are planning community awareness sessions on their role in the community as part of their annual plan.¹²

Children reported that they would go to the local police officer or the head of the village (both CPN members) in case of child abuse, but that they had not done so to date.

17 out of the 20 children did report a decrease in parents' use of violence to correct children's behaviour in the last year, which they linked to the teachers' training of parents in child right.

Approximately half the children reported that alcoholism of fathers is a problem and is linked to violence. When fathers are drunk and aggressive, children reported to consult grandparents, siblings or friends. When parents are fighting and children are scared, they will go to neighbours who will sometimes solve problems or will go to the police. When the assessment team inquired about consulting the teacher, it was unanimously dismissed. Equally, children all stated that teachers continue to correct pupils' behaviour with violence approximately on a weekly basis.

Recommendations

1. Increase awareness: As child protection is a new concept and traditionally family problems are not discussed outside the family, SC will have to continue to work on public awareness within the villages, especially focussing on children and youth. Children and youth are more likely to open up than adults are. Equally the wider population needs to be aware about their role to follow up when children have shared their concerns with them. Only with demand for services, will the CPN's become more pro-active.
2. Increase capacity building of district level CPN. SCI staff should participate in monthly district level meetings and assist them in developing annual plans and strategies.
3. Increase capacity building of village level CPNs; SCI should participate in meetings, together with district Labour and Social Welfare and MoLSW representatives to ensure follow up support from the district.
4. Child Participation: Children currently have no role in the CPN. Involving children in the CPNs directly, or if this is not possible, by establishing strong linkages between youth/children's groups and village and district CPNs, will ensure children know about the CPN. SC should make effort to hear children's feedback about the CPN and ensure children's recommendations are followed up to make the CPNs accessible and effective. This is a key factor influencing

¹² All 24 CPNs have developed an annual plan for 2013

sustainability of the CPNs; where CPNs are linked to youth/children's groups there is a vested interest in the existence of the CPNs.

5. Support action plans that focus on informing children about the CPNs, children's rights and the way children can report violence against children or other breaches of their rights
6. Ensure parents representation as members of CPNs
7. Ensure the principle of "best interests of the child" and its application are widely shared and understood, by programme staff, government partners and CPNs at all levels.
8. Consider a sustainable model of providing small emergency funds to CPNs to enable them to respond in extreme cases, where direct medical assistance is needed. This contributes to their effectiveness and is likely to increase their caseload
9. Continue to work on national level to ensure a systems approach to CPN is being developed by NCMC and MOWLSA with support from UNICEF and other child focussed INGOs/NPAs
Follow up on UNICEF's up-coming referral network study and focus on referral systems in the two provinces. Save the Children is planning to develop a Directory of Services at provincial level.
10. Link CPN with schools to encourage positive discipline in the schools, possibly through an active linkage with the VEDCs; as teachers are members of the CPN, they should be encouraged to discontinue using violence against children. This is planned for July/August 2013.
11. Continuing the planning of the national Violence against Children study: NCMC supports a VAC study being carried out in Lao PDR, which in itself is a huge break through as violence against children or in the family in general was a taboo topic even in government. However, current funding is insufficient. This window of opportunity should be grasped though and funding should be sought as VAC data and a report could positively influence government policy and future funding for national CPN roll-out.

Child Rights Governance

Table 6: achievements against results framework CSP 2010-14 child rights governance

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Child Rights Governance Strengthen child rights governance | Objective 1: Strengthened international mechanisms, national systems and institutions for monitoring the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child | Result 1: By 2013, 110 staff from member agencies under NCMC at national, province and district level have received capacity building to conduct monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the UN CRC. Result 2: NCMC Secretariat, with support from SCN, have prepared 3 rd CRC report and the 2 Optional protocols reports and timely submitted to Geneva by 2013. Result 3: Concluding observations from the UNCRC committee are incorporated into sectoral plans. | Result 1: on track, children involved in monitoring took place Result 2: Optional Protocol has been approved by Prime Minister's office and is now with MoFA. Result 3: to certain extent but unclear whether budgets have been allocated |
| | Objective 2: Improved capacity of governing bodies to realise the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child | Result 1: Child friendly National Plan of Action for Children formulated and endorsed by the Government by 2014. Results 2: Evidence based advocacy and recommendations from the concluding observations from UNCRC committee are incorporated as amends to the LPRC through a law reform process by 2014 Result 3: NCMC and LYU capacity enhanced, (financially and technically), to promote children's rights through various advocacy initiatives reaching at least 150,000 children Result 4: CRC modules developed by MoES providing teachers with a skills based approach are incorporated as an integrated part of the national teacher training curriculum by 2014 Result 5: Throughout the strategy period 30 staff of PCMC and DCMC in each of the 3 SC target provinces are trained and supported to implement high quality child rights, child protection and child participation project activities | Result 1: the NCMC refers to the concluding observations from the CRC committee as the action plan – no actual NPA for children; but very detailed plan so SC works with this. Result 2: no activities reported Result 3: LYU and NCMC trained and through radio and leaflets dissemination, many children have been reached Result 4: achieved – CR incorporated in TT Result 5: planned not implemented yet. Given the low capacity of the PCMC and DCMC it is questionable whether this result (high quality child rights, CP and CPart project activities) is achievable. |
| | Objective 3: Strengthened capacity of civil society, including child led groups, to promote children's rights | Result 1: At least 5 new child rights focused Associations/NGOs are identified and supported by SCN to promote children's rights Result 2: At least 4 children and youth led groups established in SCN target areas with the aim of giving children a voice, valuing them as responsible citizens and promoting child rights through various activities, events and campaigns | Result 1: in annual plans, focus on child led groups, not on child rights focussed NGOs – work with CR NGOs has not taken place Result 2: 3 CLGs established up to end of 2012 (6 more established Feb 2013 with match funding – EU and SCN/NORAD) |

SCI has accomplished a lot under its child rights governance objectives. SCI works very closely with the NCMC, the coordinating body for the implementation of the CRC in Lao PDR, which has given it unprecedented access to and influence over policy makers at a national level.

In 2012, SCI developed a new CRG strategy 2012-15, which incorporates some of the SCN 2010-14 strategy but is more ambitious and more aligned with general comment no.5 (2003) of the CRC, the general measures of implementation of the CRC. Most notably, it includes an objective on increased budget allocation for children at all levels as well as an objective concerning children's involvement in local governance mechanisms. SC's CRG sector monitors progress against the new strategy as well as against the agreed upon objectives and results with SCN, SCA and other donors in its funding agreements. This has resulted in SCN's CSP for Lao PDR where it comes to CRG, being less relevant (other than where its objectives are still funded through SCN's annual funding).

Objective 1: Strengthened international mechanisms, national systems and institutions for monitoring the UN CRC. SC has organised capacity training for NCMC at national, provincial and district level and has ensured child participation in the collection of data for the CRC report. SC is investing a lot of time in assisting the NCMC in its obligations, both in implementation, coordination and reporting. However, some of its work has been lost because of the recent restructuring of the NCMC, when it away from management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to sit directly under the office of the Prime Minister. This does show a stronger commitment by government to the issues raised in the CRC. *“The NCMC know their obligations but they rush to complete their reports with little interest in following up the recommendations. They are also highly dependent on support from international organisations which blurs the line of responsibility between themselves and the development partners. There is a need to ensure ownership”* (Interview with Development Partner 2013).

UNICEF, the other main partner of NCMC, is focussing its assistance to the NCMC on assisting them with the drafting of a National Plan of Action for Children and to take a step back from other support, in order for NCMC to become more independent. This has resulted in the NCMC depending more on SC. SC is trying to link the NCMC with other child focussed agencies, which could decrease the NCMC's dependency on SC.

Objective 2, improved capacity of governing bodies to realise the UNCRC is on track and activities under this objective have mostly been implemented. SC and UNICEF have accepted NCMC's detailed implementation plan for the concluding observations from the CRC committee as a temporary National Plan of Action for children (as NCMC currently is unable to develop an NPA) and it is sufficiently detailed.

SC has been very successful in including child rights in the MoES' teacher training curriculum. This is a good example of cross-sectoral cooperation. This part of the CRG work is now under SQIP, education and no longer falls under the CRG's team responsibilities. SC has been instrumental in NCMC including children in the consultations for the Optional Protocols Report. NCMC now wants to develop a mechanism for involving children in the reporting processes. NCMC has now got their own training manual for child participation based on their experience with child consultations under the optional protocols reports.

The LYU's radio programmes have included messages on the CRC and reach a wide number of children in Lao. Their programmes are broadcast live and lively discussions take place (reportedly) between callers and DJs. It monitors its reach through monitoring the number of incoming calls. During a one day

workshop with the Radio Groups, children and youth proudly shared their success stories of training other youth in provinces in being a DJ and also their own success stories.

“I joined before 2010 and I am very happy to join and represent the voice of young people. Before I didn’t know anything apart from how to read and now I have more skills and I can be a DJ at the radio station or in the field. I do not need to read, I have things in my head now and I can speak from my memory. We also involve others in our activities peer to peer education.”
“Before, children did not know that they have rights, but now they do and they are very happy with that. Also their parents listen and like to learn about this.”¹³

It is unclear to what extent the messages change over time or respond to emerging issues affecting children in society. Reaching SC’s target districts is hampered both by the language of instruction, Lao, which is not understood by a large proportion of the ethnic minority children in SC’s target areas. Secondly the radio programmes at both AM and FM frequency do not reach all target areas.

Recommendations:

1. SC will need to work very closely at district and provincial level with the NCMC, provide regular on the job training and guidance in PCMC and DCMC’s understanding of the CRC and its responsibility in coordinating the GoL’s implementation of the CRC at provincial and district levels.
2. SC will also need to continue its cooperation with the NCMC, PCMC and DCMCs to improve the collection and analysis of disaggregated quality data on the extent to which the GoL is meeting its obligations under the CRC.
3. Increase other agencies’ involvement with NCMC by involving them in the development of a National Plan of Action for Children. This will enhance chances of more agencies becoming involved in the implementation of the NPA.
4. A recent evaluation¹⁴ of the radio programme recommended more involvement of SC in designing the messages to be broadcasted, designing an annual work plan which details SC’s support as well as conducting an audience survey to gain feedback from its listeners and to get a better understanding of who is reached and who isn’t. To ensure SC’s target group is reached, research needs to be conducted to inform why the frequency does not reach all target districts.
5. In addition, SC should support radio programmes by ethnic minority children in their own languages. The Lao Youth Union raised this issue during a one day workshop that the assessment team organised with them and FLAMES.
6. SC will continue funding the radio programme for another year; in this year, it should enable the Lao Youth Union’s radio programme to seek funding elsewhere by 1) increasing their organisational capacity 2) establishing linkages with other child focussed INGOs and UN agencies.
7. NCMC is eager to set up a national database on child rights. Even if SC will not get involved in supporting this, it is something that SC should advocate for, as this will stimulate NCMC and its government partners to improve data collection and analysis practices.

Additional activity under objective I and II:

¹³LYU radio DJ, during workshop with CSR at SC in Vientiane, April 2013

¹⁴ Ageros, N., CRC Advocacy through Radio-Television Programs for Children and Youth, Lao Youth Union and Save the Children Evaluation, Lao PDR, 2013

SC's newly developed CRG strategy 2012-15 includes monitoring the government's budget allocation to children in one of SC's target districts; this is work in progress and NCMC's support increases chances this might happen although the GoL' budget transparency is extremely low, in all the sectors SC works in. The influx of unregulated FDI into the country, which the GoL states will contribute to the development of the country, should also be taken into consideration when monitoring budget allocation to children. Budget monitoring offers a unique chance to involve NPAs in accountability of the GoL, which is the role of international and national NGOs across the globe. SCI should consider ways in which it could do this.

Objective 3: Strengthened capacity of civil society, including child led groups, to promote children's rights has been partly achieved. SC has worked with FLAMES for over eight years (a national youth group) to organise awareness campaigns around child rights and specific issues, including drugs and alcohol abuse as well as trafficking. FLAMES have held many successful events, including all kinds of creative media, which gathered wide interest from local population and especially children.

"When we organise dramas in communities, the adults participate and listen to us. They support the children to participate in activities and when we perform dramas about rights, we incorporate folk stories so that parents and local people understand. They understand the problems of child abuse. There is a lot of interest."¹⁵

Their focus and campaigns have been informed by SC and until now, have not been informed by what FLAMES see as changing needs in the society. In addition, FLAMES in cooperation with SC and the MoES has helped establish and train three (plus six very recently) child led groups in schools in SC's target districts. Consultations were held with two CLGs. The children showed incredible confidence and good knowledge of the CRC. They were very proud members of their clubs and shared stories of their achievements.

"Before, I was afraid to talk to other children, now I have confidence, to lead training in my school and to sing songs and do drama."¹⁶

SC monitors input, in terms of FLAMES' training of the CLG but these are not always attended by SC, which is positive to the extent that the MoES accepts FLAMES to support activities independently of SCI. The activities, in which the CLGs participate, like children's days and other events, are monitored by SC, in terms of number of people attending these activities. However, outcomes for children are not monitored - whether CLG members come together outside these events; whether they plan activities independently and whether they reach out to children, who are having troubles in school, is unclear. The CLGs should be guided more closely by SC to increase their effectiveness and responsiveness to issues facing children. SC should consider involving the CLGs in monitoring the quality of education in their schools. CLGs gave very detailed account of the changes that had occurred in their schools as a result of SC's trainings so to formalize this more, would increase the CLG's position and outputs.

SC had planned on assisting FLAMES with their registration as an NPA during the period of this CSP. FLAMES is still unsure whether it wants to become an NPA because all of its members are studying and as such, cannot dedicate full days to their volunteering work with FLAMES. In addition, the current precarious situation of NPAs in Lao PDR, is not stimulating FLAMES to rush into registration. However, as

¹⁵FLAMES member, 5th April 2013, Vientiane workshop

¹⁶Child Led Group female member, Khan and May village, Xhienhong district, Sayaboury 30th of April 2013

FLAMES would like to assess other funding opportunities outside SC, it needs to carefully assess whether it can be funded by others without being a registered agency. Equally, assessing what registration might mean in terms of FLAMES' independent mandate and agenda if registration would result in stricter monitoring.

Under **objective 3**, SC also planned to identify at least five new child rights focussed associations/NGOs for SCN to support them in their promotion of children's rights. This activity has not been implemented to date. It has not been prioritized in 2010-12 and with the space for NPAs to operate in decreasing since November 2012, SC is likely to proceed carefully. However, there are a small number of NPAs that work on child rights and awareness raising in child rights,¹⁷ which SC should reach out to. Especially in child rights governance, it is part of SCI's global mandate to enable local civil society groups to monitor the GoL's progress in the implementation of the CRC and to be a voice for Lao children, as per their Theory of Change.

Recommendations/follow-up

- Selection of CLG members: The selection criteria for CLG members are not entirely clear but children need to be in school, need to be between 8 and 10 and in 4th or 5th grade. These selection criteria exclude children who a) have never been to school / working children b) have dropped out c) are not performing well in school, as they repeat their years and therefore do not meet the age criteria. The assessment team's observation during the field visits, when comparing CLG members with children in other schools and communities where SC implements its education and CP/CRG programme, was that CLG members seemed better off. The data is insufficient but still warrants further investigation in selection methods used by the MoES who selects the students. SC should also look into widening its selection criteria to include children of all ages in the school based child led groups and at extending / linking these groups to children who are currently out of school as a means of getting them into school. This will ensure SCI indeed reaches the most vulnerable children in society, including the hard to reach.
- Improved monitoring and guidance of FLAMES and CLG to better understand outcomes and impact of the activities with FLAMES and CLG
- Building the organisational capacity of FLAMES and linking them with other child focussed agencies; this will also increase their training skills beyond child rights, drama etc.
- Focus on establishing linkages with NPAs focussing on child rights / child development; help build the capacity of these organisations in monitoring of child rights, awareness raising activities and in establishing a stronger network amongst youth/child focussed agencies.
- There is always a risk that presentations/shows about child rights are prescriptive, theoretical and not linked to issues that children face in their daily lives; conceptualising child rights, linking them to day to day issues and enabling child groups to respond to issues in addition to awareness raising about child rights will foster a better understanding of the CRC amongst children and communities. The evaluation of the EU funded project "Children as Agents of Change" can further inform this process.

Examples of good practices/lessons learnt

SC's work in Lao PDR over the last three years includes many good practices that could be incorporated in the next strategy:

¹⁷ PADTECT, LSDA, Dongsavath Children and Youth Development Association, Peer workers in Health and Development Association, Vulnerable Youth Development Association, Y Peer (working on reproductive health)

- Working closely with line ministries in programme design and implementation can lead to policy changes at national level. Save the Children has achieved this in:
 - The education programme: inclusion of child rights in teacher training programme; acceptance of the 30 weeks pre-school teacher training into two teacher training institutes' training courses
 - The Child Protection Programme: the establishment of district and provincial level CP committees were the first official committees to be set up under the LRPC and the national Child Protection Committee is replicating the ToRs developed at district and provincial level.
 - DRR: contribution to national guidelines to mainstream DRR into education, health, agriculture and further, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and NDMO.
 - DRR: most likely, the Provincial Authorities in Sayaboury will include DRR in its new 5 years Socio Economic Development Plan, which the government is obliged to fund.
- Working as part of Consortiums with other NGOs at national level, most notably in the DRR programme and the upcoming CRSA, is seen both by donors and partner NGOs as a positive, cost-effective and efficient implementation mechanism. SC should emphasise this with its field staff, where coordination and cooperation levels are very low to non-existing.
- Working in close alliance with UNICEF at national level influencing policy makers, most notably NCMC, has directly impacted policy and implementation.

Lessons Learnt

- Monitoring of programme inputs and outputs needs to improve, especially at community and school level. Data needs to be collected more regularly, needs to be disaggregated by age, gender, disability and if possible ethnicity, to inform better targeted programmes for the most vulnerable and to increase understanding of programmes' impact on the target population. Currently reports do not move beyond outputs to look at impact. More rigorous systems are needed to support improved monitoring and learning.
- In order to further influence national policy making and in order to replicate successful models, more evidence based research is needed.
- Where SC at a national level is coordinating well in CRG/CP and education, on a provincial level, little suggests that coordination takes place with other agencies working in the same field. *"This is the responsibility of the government"* according to SC team members in both provinces. More focus on cooperation at this level will minimise overlap and ensure more efficient targeting of schools and communities.
- Increase SCI's involvement at provincial, district and village level. SCI is not a community based organisation but is currently building capacity of community based structures. This requires more input from SC. Sustainable community development models cannot be achieved by working through the government alone.
- More focus on capacity building at district and village level, either through joint monitoring and guiding visits together with government partners or through reaching out to NPAs at local level that are specialised in community development (organisational capacity training for the VEDCs, CPNs for instance) Good working relationship with government has resulted in SC's smooth implementation of programmes and a privileged status. This gives SC incredible access to government partners, which they could use to their advantage to tackle more sensitive issues affecting children.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The SCN CPN 2010-14's recognised the need for joint monitoring and evaluation system for SCN and SCA. This was realised for the SQIP programme as well as for the CP and CRG programmes before unification. However, despite SCN's recognition that its M&E systems were weak, there is little to suggest that SCN made efforts to improve the overall M&E system prior to unification or that it invested in this.¹⁸ The Country Programme Monitoring System, which would include the critical baseline data of communities, schools, teachers and children in the target areas, was never realised nor were standard guidelines and training modules developed as per the plan.

Monitoring practices are weak, especially at the outcomes level. In interviews, all CP/CRG staff and partners referred to monitoring training events. Monitoring outcomes /outputs and results of training have not taken place yet. When the assessment team requested information at the district Education Office about the schools we were to visit (number of students, broken down by gender and the number of trainings given), this information was not available. There is a need for more systematic follow up and monitoring at community level to inform programme implementation and strategic development, to better understand desired and undesired changes as a result of SC's interventions. The lack of monitoring visits to communities does not only limit learning within SC but also limits capacity building of the local structures that SC trains. This undermines SC's effectiveness in bringing about lasting change at community level.

Four evaluations/reviews (the SQIP mid-term review, an evaluation of the radio programme, an evaluation of the Social Work Strengthening programme and the review of the EU (EIDHR) funded programme - Children as Agents of Change) have taken place in the last six months. The evaluations as well as this review are an excellent opportunity for SCI to learn and improve its programme design and management of MEAL systems to better support its programmes.

In order to be an evidence based learning and change oriented organisation, SCI needs more rigorous MEL practises to be put in place. There is a need to systematize the CP and CRG M&E system and to ensure the SQIP M&E system is fully implemented. It is highly recommended to develop an integrated monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, linked to a central database, to enable improved analysis and learning. Hiring an MEL specialist, at least temporarily, would enable SCI to realise these needs.

The GoL is obliged to monitor progress against its obligations under the CRC, which it is currently doing insufficiently. SCI needs to advocate for disaggregated data collection by all GoL line ministries. To adhere by the UNCRC principle of non-discrimination, SC and the GoL need disaggregated data to ensure its programmes lead to positive changes for the most vulnerable. Currently, SCI has insufficient data to back this up. Gender dimensions are not considered, and gender is hardly mentioned in reports or plans despite girls, especially of ethnic minority backgrounds, being significantly worse off than boys. Again, this is an area that SC as a rights based organisation needs to monitor closely and it needs to work with the GoL to promote these practises.

Currently, SC shows little evidence of learning, partly because it does not have the systems (documentation is weak) nor the staffing in place. Sharing information and lessons learned with province staff and cross-sectoral learning should both be improved and regularised. In absence of a human

¹⁸ Financial reports of 2012 demonstrate that the budget for M&E was hardly touched during the year. Financial data for 2011 and 2010 are insufficient to analyse the expenditure on M&E.

resources director, organisational learning has been weak and staff capacity building has not been a focus throughout transition.

There is little central oversight on MEAL. Data is also not centrally stored or analysed and there is an absence of field trip reports. As cross-sectoral cooperation is weak, data of different programmes covering the same communities is not centralised or compared, which would enable SC to better understand impact of holistic programming. This is partly due to the fact that SC's programmes are implemented by government, so data is collected and stored by the different ministries and digested through those rather than through a centralised monitoring system within SC. The quality of the GoL's monitoring practices is low, as is reported by donors and UN agencies across Laos.

Most INGOs and UNICEF reported that cross-learning is insufficient. Especially lessons learned are not shared with other agencies. SCI could be proactive / innovative and try and change this in the various coordination mechanisms that exist at national level. It should also emphasis learning with its partner agencies, to ensure they have a chance to improve practices based on the recommendations coming out of the evaluations.

Effectiveness

SC's work is mainly through government partners. This contributes to both increased and improved quality of government services and is effective in reaching high numbers of their target population. SCI is widely recognised for its technical expertise in the sectors it works in.

However as most of SCI's experts are expatriate staff¹⁹; a strategy needs to be designed to build capacity of local staff to decrease costs of expatriate salaries and ensure SC's continuous leadership in the technical sectors. Other child focused agencies said to rely on SC for its quality work, as did government partners.

*"Save has a good reputation, particularly around DRR, health and child protection as they have been here for so long. They are our first point of contact. We share a lot through working groups but also bilateral."*²⁰

*"SCI has done a good job to integrate DRR in their development programmes. We have good connections with them and no problems. Financial disbursements are timely. Especially since the transition to SCI, there are more SCI Lao staff involved which has really improved cooperation at local levels."*²¹

Its close access to government at national, provincial and district level government gives SC the opportunity to implement its mandate to be a voice for children and influence policy and practise for children in Lao PDR. SC has effectively used its close collaboration with the government to improve policies and practises for children but SC can do more to use its position and to raise more sensitive issues currently affecting children in Lao PDR.

SC staff all reported that working through the government is the most effective way to work in Lao PDR. Whilst the context in Lao PDR indeed requires very close working relationship with the government, this should not stop SC from being smart negotiators to ensure it reaches the most vulnerable children in

¹⁹ SCI currently has 8 expatriate staff members; one in CRG/CP; 3 in health/nutrition/watsan;1 in DRR, 1 in ER, CD, Director of Support

²⁰Interview with development partner, April 2013

²¹Interview with National Disaster Management Department staff member, April 2013

Lao PDR and to ensure its joint programmes with the GoL continue to develop and have increased GoL ownership.

SC staff all stated that the GoL decides where INGOs work, following agreed upon criteria by SC and the GoL (poverty index, school attendance, province, number of other NGOs active), but in practice the criteria might not always be followed by line ministries as was demonstrated by the fact that three donors were active in one of the schools SC works in and in the way children were selected for the CLG by teachers. Being more closely involved in this process could increase the chances that the criteria are strictly adhered to by government partners. However, other agencies report that there is room to influence where one works, as illustrated by the figures below:

Figure 1: INGO, UN and donors views on targeting

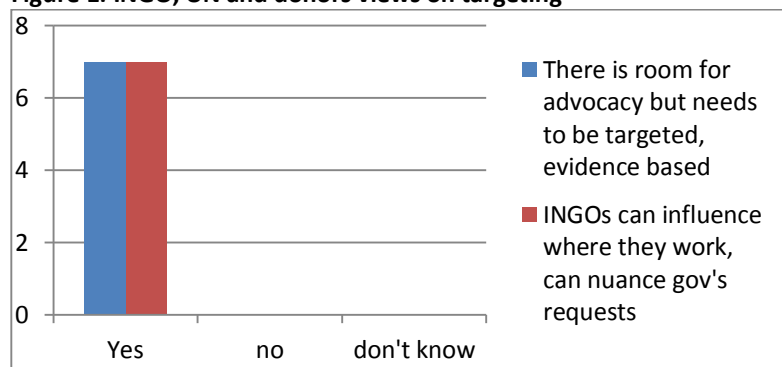
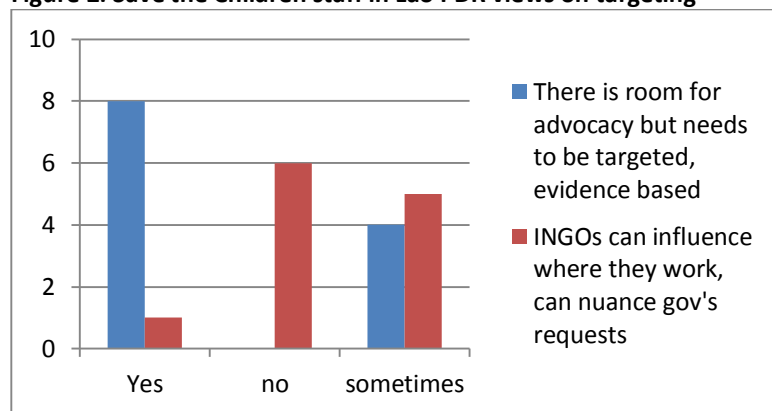


Figure 2: Save the Children staff in Lao PDR views on targeting



SC comes out as the most risk-averse INGO of the 5 NGOs the assessment team interviewed in Lao PDR. Whilst there are reasons to be risk-averse, there are also intelligent ways to influence policy and implementation. It is part of SCI's global mandate to advocate for the implementation of the CRC and General Comment 5 on the CRC, paragraph 58 states that: *"The State needs to work closely with NGOs in the widest sense, while respecting their autonomy; these include, for example, human rights NGOs, child- and youth-led organizations and youth groups, parent and family groups, faith groups, academic institutions and professional associations."*²²

²² UNCRC, General Comment 5, general measures of implementation, November 2003

SC's programmes are effective in creating more space for children to express themselves but it should do more to involve local NPAs in this - to ensure professional agencies like SC continue to raise children's voices and to keep the GoL to account on CRC implementation.

However, SC is not effective in realizing its mandate to be innovative and evidence based as discussed under the MEAL section, which limits its ability to implement SCI's Theory of Change.

SCN has not been effective in realising its cross-cutting focus of the CSP 2010-14, most notably under partnerships with NPAs and MEAL.

The effectiveness of SC's training of its local government partners can be increased if SC could put more pressure on its partners to ensure trainings are attended by the persons who are responsible for implementing the training afterwards. It has been challenging for SC to ensure those who are trained are then also leading the follow-up of the training. It realises this now and is making efforts to train both heads of departments and technical department staff.

Efficiency

SCI has been efficient in its programme implementation despite the difficult transition. It has implemented the majority of its planned activities in time and this has achieved this mostly within the allocated budget.

However, focus on quality has been low during the transition period which was also reported by partners. Quality of reporting to donors has reportedly been low during the last 18 months but has recently improved. Donors raised this issue but also acknowledged recent improvements. SC programme staff all reported spending too much time on budgeting and too little time on actual programme implementation and quality oversight. The Senior Management Team was aware of this and was looking at ways to decrease the time programme staff spends on budgets and finance.

A high percentage of SC's financial support to the government goes to per diems for government staff to monitor programmes and to attend trainings. During the assessment, we had four staff members from the Provincial and district Department of Education accompanying us to the schools, none of them using this opportunity to monitor / check data. Whilst this is only anecdotal, it does illustrate a problem, as highlighted by SC team members, donors and other INGOs - that government staff, despite their recent pay rises, continue to demand high per diems and often join field trips without contributing to them. SC needs to continue its work with the wider development community to make current practices more effective so that field trips are result oriented and pose greater value for money.

"The Government needs to recognize that we (development partners) cannot fund their services and leave them to spend their money as they like. Budget transparency is a big issue that INGOs also need to question, in an intelligent way, not in a political way, using the right language."²³

Disbursements to government partners take place at district levels mostly on a monthly basis, the majority of which is given in cash. This process is labour intensive as it requires monthly budget requests, approval and reporting as well as the physical hand over of cash. SC is planning to assist partners with establishing bank accounts, which will solve part of the problem. Heads of sector

²³Interview with donor, Vientiane, April 2013

(education, DRR, CRG/CP) are currently budget holders, which means they have to approve and sign all the different checks and budgets on a monthly basis. The SMT is looking at a way to change this, to free up time of heads of sector to focus on programme quality and implementation.

Many of the issues affecting SC's efficiency relate to the fact it is facing difficulties in filling the positions of director of donor relationships/communication, HR manager and the merging of the two director positions into one. During transition, SC lost many staff members, which in combination with low levels of documentation, has resulted in loss of knowledge. SC is recovering from this and has a new and enthusiastic team. Over the last six months, SC has not lost staff, which can be taken as an indicator that the team is coming together. A market survey was conducted demonstrating that SC's salary scale is market value. SC should strive to hire Lao Nationals as much as possible, especially at the Head of Sector Level.

The fact that the health sector currently does not report to the Programme Director undermines the Programme Director's authority and his ability to coordinate programme synergies and to integrate monitoring systems.

A wider issue influencing efficiency is the increased reporting requirements for country offices from different SC members since transition. The country office now reports to different SC members as well as SCI. Especially the SCN reports require additional work. To a certain degree, the transition has generated more complexity for country offices as they receive conflicting instructions, changing priorities for different members and because of the additional requirements from SCI and from members. In addition, the lack of reverse accountability between members and country offices has decreased efficiency.

The majority of SCI's grants have a one year cycle. This reduces efficiency significantly as a lot of time and energy is spent on developing proposals and budgets annually. Proposals for SCN NORAD funding also need to be developed on an annual basis, despite the fact that NORAD commits funding to SCN in four year cycles.

Stronger cross-sectoral cooperation and planning can also lead to more efficient implementation of training and monitoring events, especially at community level.

Cross-sector synergies

Some evidence of cross-sectoral cooperation exists. Good examples are the Child Rights training of teachers, the training of children in disaster preparedness through FLAMES, the cooperation between DRR and education to better prepare schools and school going children for disasters. However, reportedly, this cooperation has been ad-hoc and has not been formalised.

CP and CRG are part of one team now but interviews with Project Managers and Project Officers demonstrated that this is still work in progress. They have worked together on the CRC forums held at the NUoL and have developed materials on awareness raising jointly. During the short field visit, examples of cross-sectoral cooperation between health and education or health and CP/CRG were not shared. There are plenty of opportunities, including WASH in school, reproductive health messages for child protection and child rights groups and it is hoped that SCI will explore these.

Stunting and undernourishment continues to be a major problem affecting a significant part of the population. The first 1000 days of children's lives are the most important ones for children's physical and therefore hugely impact on their mental development. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes per definition are cross-sectoral and SCI has multiple starting points in its current programmes from which an ECCD programme could potentially take off.

The fact that activities are implemented by line ministries who often do not cooperate with other ministries, impedes synergy between programmes. SCI can again refer to General Comment 5 to the CRC, which obliges states to foster cooperation between ministries.

Another impeding factor is the absence of SC at the community level. Save the Children in Lao PDR is not a community based organisation and therefore has little room to ensure synergies take place at local levels (between VEDCs, CPNs, the different children's groups). SC will need to increase its presence at local level through more intense guiding of community structures to ensure increased quality and understanding and as such, improved chances of synergies and thus cost effective programming. The risk to create too many structures at community level with the same community members is present, which can lead to confusion and loss of interest.

Meaningful participation of children

Child participation in public space is reportedly a relatively new concept in Lao PDR. SC is doing much to change this and has integrated this message into its CP, DRR, CRG and Education programmes. All child club members interviewed during the field research demonstrated greater confidence in speaking in public than other children who were consulted. Some have spoken in front of government officials, which is a great achievement.

Equally, SC has raised awareness of its government counterparts about the importance of child participation. This has to some extent trickled down to adults in the communities in which SC implements its education, CP and CRG programmes through training by government counterparts about child rights and child participation. This has been formalized into the NCMC training manual on child participation, based on the SC Practice Standards on Child Participation, which was translated into Lao.

There is a risk that child participation becomes event oriented, where children perform the same dramas and songs on children's day every year instead of being *agents of change* who can respond and are flexible in their ability to improve child rights around them. In order to ensure children's participation is meaningful and effective, it is important that SCI links the children groups to community based institutions or schools and to assign them a continuous role. This could be to monitor quality of education and reach out to out of school children or to report abuse of children to the CPN. In addition, SC should consult children to inform programme design, targeting and monitoring.

A high percentage of rural youth is out of school and unemployed. Youth are easily motivated and can take a lead in community based activities and can also assist children's groups in their actions. SC needs to systematically consult children to inform programme design and targeting as this leads to better programming and to more meaningful children's participation.²⁴

²⁴ Save the Children, Getting it Right for Children, a practitioners' guide to child rights' programming, London, 2007

Sustainability and Exit Strategies

The majority of programmes lack exit strategies, which is critical. SC should develop these for all its programmes to increase chances of sustainability.

In CRG/CP, DRR and education, Save the Children is influencing policy makers at a central level, resulting in a better structure for children, which is both sustainable and allows SC to work to scale. In the education sector, SC has managed to include child rights in all MoES' teacher training courses across the country. As such, SC is having a lasting impact on children in Laos. The pre-school model being included in the training curriculums in two teacher training colleges in Lao offers great opportunity for sustainability and scale. However, research needs to be done to assess whether the relatively high associated costs stop the ministry and other education partners from investing in this model.

Implementing through the government offers the best chances for programmes to be sustainable. However, they *are only sustainable to the extent that the government also allocates budget to continue* programmes where SC's support phases out and to the extent the government takes full responsibility for these programmes and fully takes on the responsibility. SC needs to negotiate this with its government partners as part of the programme development, especially now that the GoL's income through FDI is growing. In the future, NPAs could continue to monitor the GoL's implementation of programmes and policies that SC has contributed to increase government's accountability. The argument that *"it is cost-effective to continue to support the health programme in Sayaboury despite the fact that all districts are trained, because we can keep the indicators for access to quality basic health services high"*, does not offer high hopes for the sustainability of joint programming with the Lao Government, given SC has implemented health programmes in Sayaboury for 20 years. It could even be argued that by doing so, SCI has possibly undermined the state. Sustaining assistance just to ensure indicators do not go down, does not equal cost-effectiveness in the long run as it impedes government ownership.

NPAs that work on children's issues whether focusing on children's participation or the monitoring of government child related policies are a necessity for a sustainable INGO model. General Comment 5 (general measures of implementation) on the CRC underlines the importance of civil society in the implementation of the CRC.

A factor currently impeding sustainability is the low intensity follow-up support provided to district and community based target groups, including teachers, CPN and VEDC members. Before handing over responsibility to them, there is a need for more intensive guidance, especially of the committees, on their role and responsibility. With the current level of input, it is questionable how long these committees will be active for.

Added Value

SC's overall added value in Laos contributing to positive change for children

SC's overall added value is highly regarded by government partners and the wider development community. It is interesting to note that especially in education, DRR and CP/CRG SC's added value is noted, demonstrating its commitment on a national level to improve policies and systems in cooperation with other agencies.

However, the fact that SC is not contributing at all to the capacity building of NPAs undermines SC's reputation as a rights based NGO amongst other INGOs and donors, as it does not contribute to

increasing the voice of Lao people to hold their government to account on their policies and practices for children. Below figures illustrate this.

“Save the Children has an excellent reputation, particularly around DRR, health and child protection, as they have been here for so long. They are our first point of contact.”²⁵

Figure 3: External Views on SC’s Added Value

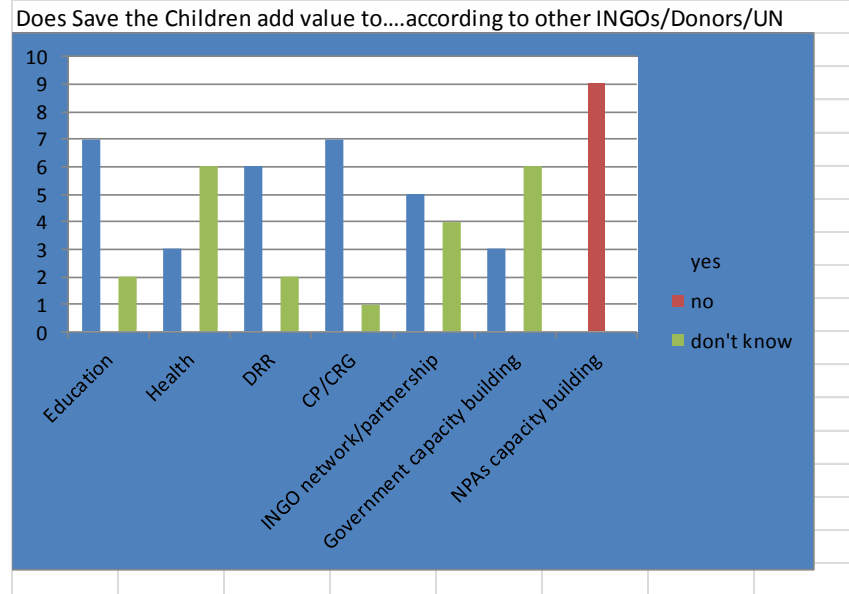
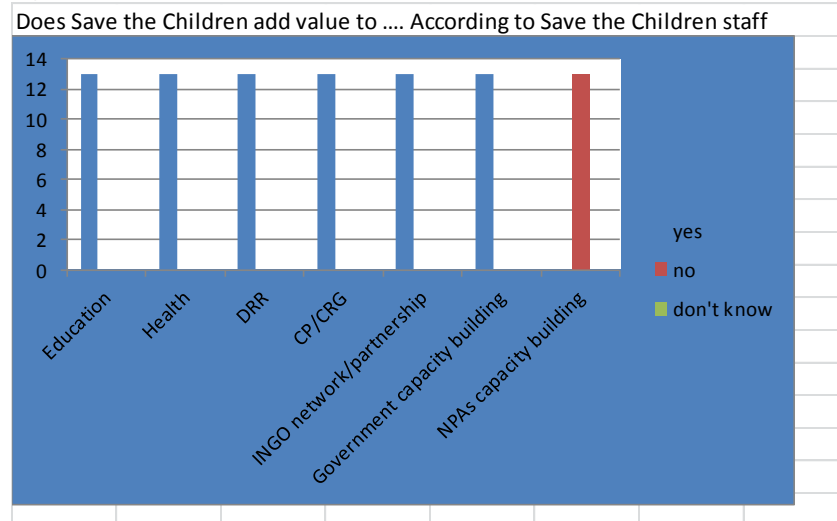


Figure 4: SC’s View on its Added Value



²⁵Interview with INGO staff member, interviewed April 2013

Change in Laos and Programme Relevance

Objective II: Under this objective, the relevance of current programme priorities in light of a **changing context in Lao PDR** is assessed. Furthermore changes/adjustments are suggested in light of the changing context in Lao and a post MDG agenda.

Key trends influencing children’s rights in Lao PDR now²⁶

Table 7: key trends influencing children’s rights in Lao PDR

| Positive trends | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is becoming possible to talk about children’s rights • Media is beginning to pick up on children’s issues, and children are increasingly developing their own content for media programmes • Stronger economic growth as FDI increases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the UNCRC, and a stronger coordinating body (National Commission for Mothers and Children) • Increasing legislation for children and youth |
| Negative trends | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlessness / unequal land distribution Competition for land with private firms and little negotiating power of the people. • Household poverty and fragmented family structures. • No social welfare system and lack of child protection mechanisms. • Sam Sang Policy • Migration from rural to urban within Lao PDR, and across borders. • Increased trafficking (especially to Thailand). • Growing inequality and unregulated FDI. • Lack of funding and budget allocation to social services • Poor quality of data with little disaggregation and bad management • Lack of ownership by Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased drug and alcohol use. • Climate change and natural disasters. • Lack of implementation of legislation, policies and guidelines. • Weak government capacity, and unclear roles and responsibilities. • Few Non Profit Associations and NGOs working on child related issues. • Poor coordination between government ministries and between development partners. • Increasingly restricted civil society and slow registration process. • Despite rich resources, the government is still heavily reliant on international funding. • No National Strategy or National Plan of Action for Children |

Relevance of SC’s current work

The thematic areas in which SC operates continue to face challenges. Lao PDR is not on track to reach its education for all targets by 2015, to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters, to halve the number of people without safe drinking water and people without sanitation in rural areas. It is seriously off track to reduce hunger by half, to achieve universal access to reproductive health and in reversing the

²⁶ For more information on key trends influencing children’s rights in Lao PDR, please refer to Final Draft CRSA Lao PDR.

loss of environmental resources.²⁷ Non-Lao ethnic minorities in rural areas are significantly worse off for all these indicators, also those who have been resettled.²⁸ As these are MDGs, they do not require the targeting of the hardest to reach. As SC focusses on the communities who are significantly worse off than others in sectors that are not reaching its MDG targets, SC's leading roles in these sectors continue to be extremely relevant as they will be included in post 2015 millennium targets.

In addition, the absence of a social welfare system, the lack of child focussed policies, and the limited capacity and scale of child protection services, require SC's continued efforts on a national level to capacity build the state to fulfil its GMI obligations/ advocate for better social services, protection, national programmes and laws for children.

SC programmes are aligned with the Government of Lao PDR Socio Economic Development Plan, with the MoES' education for all plan and with the NCMC implementation plan as well as with donors' strategies and the SCI strategy, which further ensures its contribution towards national development indicators, whilst maintaining its focus on the CRC obligations of the GoL and SC's commitments to the CRC.

Table 6 below outlines the relevance of SC's current programmes in light of the above mentioned key factors influencing children's lives in Lao PDR.

Table 8: Relevance of SC's Programmes

| Education | Child Protection | Child Rights Governance |
|---|--|---|
| Basic education work on quality | Strengthening provincial, district and local level child protection systems, increasing children's access to protection. | National system strengthening for CRG with NCMC |
| preschool focus on access and quality | Building national capacity of social work and setting national standards for social work | Increasing space for child participation |
| increasing access to education for non-Lao children | Linking social work graduates to department of social welfare | Increasing NCMCs capacity to collect quality M&E data on children |

Climate change will have a significant impact on all the lower Mekong countries - Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. SC's DRR work will continue to be very important in preparing the populations at risks to deal with climate change. Health and nutrition indicators continue to be amongst the worst in the region, indicating a dire need for SCI to continue its health and nutrition programmes.²⁹

Suggested considerations

Growing wealth disparity

The equity agenda is a central focus of the UN and SC post 2015 agenda, and is extremely relevant in Lao PDR where inequality has risen across developmental indicators. The growing economy of Lao PDR has raised Laos' economic status to being a lower middle income country, but has adversely affected wealth

²⁷ UN LAO, United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2012-2015, page 10

²⁸ UNICEF, Child Well Being Disparities Study, 2010

²⁹ SCI, Presentation PHC, CSP, May 2013

distribution. It has contributed to increased wealth disparity and increased inequality. SC should monitor to which extent all its programmes and actions contribute to increased equity. In addition, if SC will be able to work on budget allocation for children, it can further research the impact of government's policies on equal access to services.

There is a growing need to consult children who are being negatively affected by the depletion of natural resources. SC is training children and youth in child rights and in representation. SC should consider extending the child led groups and child protection groups to those communities who have been affected, because the needs and risks these children and their communities face are high. Being the voice of especially marginalized children is part of SCI's Theory of Change.

Construction

Reportedly, the need for construction in education has decreased because of increased birth control. This in combination with the increased influx of FDI should make the government less dependent on INGOs and donors constructing schools. SC needs to consider whether it wants to continue to invest so heavily in construction, both in its education and health programmes. Some of the NGOs and UN agencies do not put in hardware at all and others do not put in hardware in resettlement areas. The GoL uses the lack of schools and health facilities as a justification to relocate people to areas where the GoL has/is planning to have services. SCI builds facilities in non-priority areas as an effective way to provide alternatives to resettlement.

Resettlement and the Sam Sang Policy

With increased uncontrolled Foreign Direct Investment, the government depends less on its traditional development partners. This has reportedly decreased the development partners' ability to influence government as reported by majority of donors and INGOs in Vientiane. Some of the FDI has contributed to landlessness, re-location and rural poverty as well as the worsening nutritional intake of families.³⁰ This has not gone unchallenged. Some INGOs have spoken out publicly and paid a hefty price, whilst others have challenged more tacitly, referring to socio-economic indicators only rather than discussing blame. As resettlement is a very sensitive issue, SC has indicated it does not want to raise its voice in order to mitigate its risks. However, it would be advisable to decide where it stands as an organisation in terms of its input in these settlements, using one of the many rights-based analyses conducted by other organisations.

This is a children's rights issue which SC can no longer ignore. Deciding where SC stands should be part of SC's next strategic plan, in terms of:

1. Working in resettlement areas
2. Putting in hardware in resettlement areas
3. Building children's assertiveness / capacity to increase rights' awareness within these communities
4. Working with NPAs to work in affected communities with children

"The capacity of CSOs is key. They need to understand sustainable development and to build partnerships with the government. If all NPAs agree, we can move forward with the four pillars of development and be more powerful in convincing the government to focus on land development and achieve improved livelihoods not just economic growth." Interview with NPA, April 2013

³⁰ UNDP, CSP 2012-2015

The Sam Sang policy, literally the three builds policy, is the GoL's main decentralisation policy in which it builds the province as a strategic unit, the district as a comprehensively strong unit and the village as a development unit. Part of this process is the merging of villages and as such, resettlement of people, potentially moving them further away from their fields (or maybe losing them) and livelihoods to supposedly access government services in the consolidated villages. Impact of this policy is yet to be researched and opinions vary widely. The GoL wants development partners to work in these consolidated villages, which are often economically more developed, as they serve as example development villages but they are not SC's focus group and some parts of the population might have been forced to move to these areas. SC needs to decide whether it will work in these communities.

ASEAN

SC needs to assess what ASEAN's 2015 open borders will mean for Lao children. It will influence labour market both positively and negatively; it will give more opportunities to Lao youth to work abroad but risks associated with this are high and need to be understood by youth and their families. Simultaneously, it might result in an influx of better trained workforce, which could negatively impact Lao youth's opportunities on labour market. This highlights the need for children to

- Be aware of the risks associated with labour migration and to be better protected against these risks, including birth registration, education and health certificates
- Be better prepared for labour market both within Lao and in the wider ASEAN countries, especially vulnerable Lao youth.

SC could explore this further in collaboration with the GoL using a child rights impact assessment.

Urbanisation

With growing landlessness in rural Laos and more investment in urban areas, urbanisation will continue to take place. Even though it is on a relatively small scale, especially compared to other cities in Asia, it will put pressure on limited services in cities and will expose children to both opportunities and risks that they are unaware about. Whilst it might not be a priority area in Lao PDR, SC should consider the impact of rural-urban migration on children, both those left behind with grandparents and those migrating to urban areas themselves.

Changing donor context and lack of coordination between donors and INGOs

More aid and investment is coming from China, Thailand and Vietnam and non-western investors. Already in 2011, the total FDI exceeded Overseas development Assistance to Lao and it is unclear whether traditional donors, with Lao PDR's increased wealth and status as a lower middle-income country, will uphold its current levels of development assistance. FDIs in Laos are primarily Vietnam, China and Thailand. SC should research the FDIs to Lao PDR to see if there are any potential partners, with a clear record, that do not undermine equity or rural development but instead, look to contribute towards it. Most FDIs currently seem to contribute to growing inequity and increased landlessness.

SC also needs to invest time in joint INGO-donors meetings and in explaining clearly the difficulties INGOs face in their implementation to donors.

“Donors have their eyes closed for the issues we (NGOs) face; there is a limited connection between INGOs and donors.”³¹

“The last few months, there has been tension between INGOs and donors. INGOs asked us for help but lacked a strategic plan and analysis of the problem; it was more a broad moan. We had to write a paper about the problems as INGOs couldn’t do it themselves.” “If the government makes it harder for INGOs to spend our money, we have an economic issue.”³²

Finalising the CRSA will help SC effectively raise the issues that affect children and INGOs that work for / with children. The CRSA is not a child rights governance document only, it is a document that should be analysed and owned across sectors as it should be the main reference document for strategic development of the country programme. It is important for SCI to continue to update the CRSA through on-going monitoring and learning, because the situation in Lao PDR is changing fast.

Table 9: Changes/issues affecting children, as reported by children during workshops with children in Vientiane, Bolixamsey and Sayaboury provinces

| Positive | Negative |
|---|---|
| Improved access to education | Food has become more expensive, not enough rain for our crops |
| Decreased violence against children in school and at home | Alcohol abuse by father, violent father |
| Children are heard more | Drugs abuse amongst children |
| We have access to internet | Teacher still sometimes hits us |
| We know our rights | The internet can be used for pornography, leading to dangerous sexual behaviour |
| Better health care, less children die in Laos | Parents work more hours, less parental control |
| Following ASEAN we can work abroad | Inflation and unemployment |

The issues children highlighted as negatively influencing their lives are mostly issues SCN is working on through its child protection, child rights governance and education programmes. It also demonstrates the positive changes that SC’s work has contributed to, most notably the improved access to quality education, reduced violence against children, improved health services and increased knowledge and understanding about child rights.

SC could further investigate the impact of internet/wider media access (even in the smallest villages in Sayaboury and Bolixamsay). In addition, research into children without appropriate care was carried out by McGill University in January 2013, which will contribute to a better understanding of the impact of parents migrating for work.

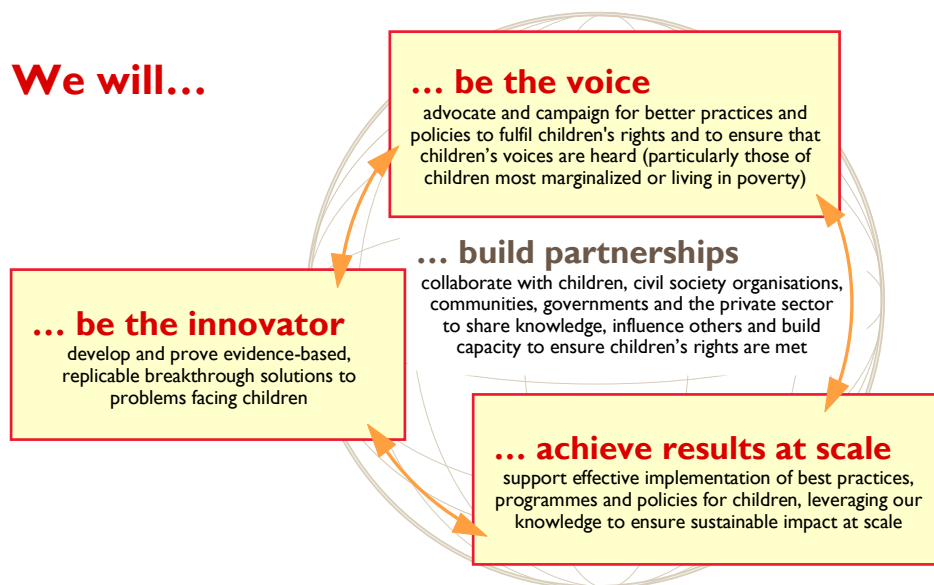
³¹ Interview with development partner, Vientiane, April 2013

³² Interview with development partner, Vientiane, April 2013

The relevance of the Theory of Change for SCI

Figure 5: SCI's Theory of Change

THEORY OF CHANGE: how we work to create impact for children



The Theory of Change is extremely relevant for SC in Lao PDR as it assists SC teams across the globe to look beyond donor obligations and to reach their full potential, whilst ensuring it increases children's voices being heard and represented.

Being the innovator: Being innovative/influencing government policies requires time, specialisation and evidence. Currently, SCI is insufficiently staffed to focus on producing this kind of evidence. More intelligent advocacy can be done in Lao PDR and SCI could consider hiring an advocacy officer. This person would digest evidence based impact studies into short and focussed advocacy messages targeting the GoL, in close cooperation with other agencies. Finalising the CRSA will help SC effectively raise the issues that affect children and INGOs that work for / with children. It is important for SCI to continue to monitor the CRSA, because the situation in Lao PDR is changing so fast.

SCI has a real opportunity to replicate good work they have done through their cooperation with the government. The government / line ministries are extremely positive about SC and see SC as an example partner. The pre-school model especially is a model that is innovative in Lao PDR and could also be innovative in countries with similar access to education issues for ethnic minorities.

However, SCI needs to improve its monitoring of programme outcomes and impact and its documentation thereof, so that it can demonstrate **evidence of impact and evidence of methodologies that work**.

Being the voice: SC in Lao PDR is the largest child focussed agency and has successfully raised the profile of children's capacity in the eyes of the government and the wider Lao community. SC, as reported earlier in the report, has extremely strong relationships with Government of Lao which enables SC to **achieve results at scale** by influencing policy development at national level. SC should consider

developing a communication and advocacy strategy to increase the effectiveness of its close ties with the government. It has done so successfully, most notably recently in the Breast Mother Substitute Campaign, which was widely hailed a success by INGOs and UN agencies as an evidence based, joint agency initiative, led by SC.

On the downside, SC is significantly limiting its role of **being the voice** because of its limited partnerships with NPAs and weak institutionalisation of child participation into project activities.

Building Partnerships: In addition to its strong partnership with the Lao Government and INGOs, SC needs to create partnerships with NPAs to increase citizens-government dialogue and increased citizens' ownership in development. Currently, the government takes full ownership of development programmes, which decreases community involvement and as such, sustainability, as government resource allocation and local levels will continue to be insufficient.

None of the SC staff in Bolixamsay and Sayaboury knew of NPAs active in their fields. It would be helpful for SC to investigate what NPAs/other civil society organisations (be it private enterprises or non for profit) are active in the sectors and to establish relationships with these agencies to increase the voice of children and youth, also with an eye on the future as SC will most likely decrease its involvement in service delivery. Work with NPAs requires time, dedication and patience; they should not be seen as service deliverers but as partners in change whose capacity SCI can help build whilst learning from their unique perspective. SCI needs to think about the tools it uses to support organisational capacity of partners, not just train them in the technical sectors they need to implement.

SCI's Capacity to Deliver

Objective III: Under this objective, strengths and limitations of SCI's delivery mechanisms and partnerships are assessed. Especially where these might influence the ability to successfully implement the next SCI Lao PDR country strategy.

- a. Changing context in Lao PDR and implications for relevant staff capacities, modus operandi, partnerships.
- b. The role that Non Profit Associations – CBOs – should/could play in future programmes and analysis of current partnership.
- c. SWOT analysis of on-going partnerships/ opportunities for diversification of delivery mechanism /relation with partners, including child and youth groups and other NPA, in the future in order to maximize positive change for and with children
- d. Competiveness of SC in Laos relative to similar organizations in this setting (Cost-effectiveness (financial, human resources), scalability, operating model)
- e. Consequences of a continued reduction in funding opportunities and support. Future funding opportunities
- f. If support is not sustained and/or increased, how can sustainability be achieved?

SCI's delivery mechanisms & partnerships; strengths and weaknesses

Partnerships – strengths and weaknesses

SC implements all its programmes through or in close cooperation with the Lao Government. Strengthening service delivery and increasing access to services is the right approach from an equity and child rights perspective. SCI involves its partners in the design of the programmes, more so than it involves the target population in this process. To a certain extent, SC is being seen by the government as a steady contributor to the government's development programme. SC's plans and programmes have influenced government policies, but it is questionable to which extent it challenges them where they breach the GoL's obligations under the CRC, for instance in their resettlement policies. SC's approach to partnership has been extremely risk-averse.

*"It is not what you address; it is how you address it. I would encourage SC to take a dialogue approach, which is what we see most people doing. Explain their international commitments to the government and build the capacity of all levels of government. SC should support national civil society as well. Quieter approaches work better here. However, official statements from the government say they support civil society, what is presumed is an assumption."*³³

SC has built strong partnerships with other INGOs in the last few years. It is an active member of the Education Working Group and chairs a sub-group on pre-school and primary education. It also actively participates in the DRR and CP/CRG meetings. In addition, SCI is part of a DRR Consortium with Plan International, WFP and Child Fund and is planning joint CRSA field work with World Vision International, Plan International and Child Fund International. This is strongly supported by other INGOs, the UN and also donors and is seen as an added value of SC. They are a well-regarded partner by other agencies.

³³ Interview with development partner, Vientiane, April 2013

“We don’t see each other as competitors; we really see each other as partners, complimenting each other. Where Save the Children is sector lead, there is cooperation too.”³⁴

SC has recently started contributing again to the INGO network. In light of the perceived growing challenges for INGOs and NPAs, it is vital that INGOs have a collective voice and clearly explain the issues they face to the donor and UN community.

SC has established FLAMES and has been involved with them for over 8 years. In addition, together with FLAMES and the MoES, it has established child led groups in villages and SC has itself established youth and child protection groups in provincial and district centres. In addition, SC has a long standing relationship with the LYU’s radio programmes for and by youth and children. The national groups depend on SC for financial and technical support. SC has trained them in delivering their programme messages on Child Rights and Child Protection. However, training on organisational capacity to foster these groups’ independence has not taken place to date. This training was requested by both FLAMES and the Radio DJs as this would help them function more independently from SC, access funding from other donors and increase their chances of sustainability. SC should also facilitate linking these groups to other child focussed agencies.

SC has not established partnerships with local organisations during the last 3.5 years. It has not actively tried nor has it researched opportunities, despite its intention to do so as outlined in their CSP. SC should still consider doing a partnership analysis to inform its strategy and to decide whether or not SC wants to get involved with NPAs and if not, why not. NPAs do not need to work in service delivery but can involve local population in policy development and the monitoring of the implementation thereof. If NPAs succeed in involving the local population in their communities’ development, more demand might be created for quality services and healthier, self-reliant behaviour.

In the long run, steering away from civil society in its entirety and supporting the GoL so readily wherever the GoL wants SC to go, might harm SC’s reputation as an independent, rights based organisation in Lao PDR. It also undermines SC’s implementation of its internal policies, despite the fact that SC is ideally placed to provide a bridgehead between state and civil society, and “honest broker” guided solely by the UNCRC

“We would want more NGOs working on advocacy and capacity building elements and less on service delivery.”

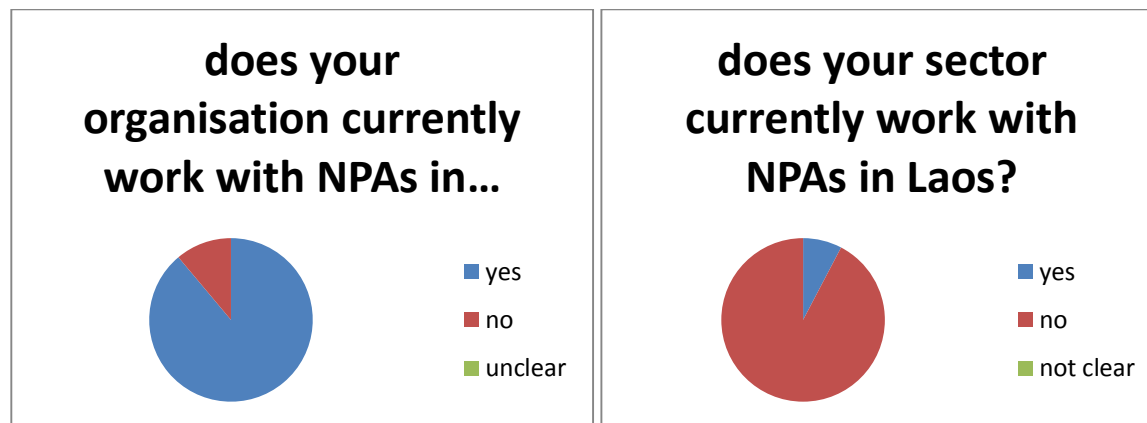
“We insist there is a partnership with local NPAs with the NGOs we fund. A genuine transfer of knowledge and involvement. With some it works better than others. Many NGOs put their heads down and do service delivery. Others are very rights based. There is little evidence of strategic partnerships between INGOs and NPAs.”³⁵

When comparing SC with other development actors in Lao, it is clear that it stands alone in its current lack of engagement with NPAs:

Figure 6: INGOs, UN and donors partnerships with NPAs figure 7: SC’s current partnerships with NPAs

³⁴ Interview with development partner, Vientiane, April 2013

³⁵ Interview with donor, Vientiane, April 2013



All INGOs agreed that INGOs must work through NPAs and have a role in building genuine capacity of those NPAs rather than seeing them as service delivery partners but as future replacements of INGOs where INGOs represent citizens' voices. Not citizens against the government but citizens, subjects of rights, playing their part and contributing through monitoring quality of services by government and extending government services through awareness. Other INGOs reported difficulties in their teams (both nationals and long term expatriates) understanding this role of NPAs but underlined the need to educate their own teams about the role of NPAs as to build the capacity of NPAs.

*"Internationals also don't really see benefit working with local society. Their framework is they sub-contract to CS, not to build local Civil society groups. We all need to work towards a sustainable model in our working in partnerships with NPAs and must educate our staff to understand NPAs are not service providers."*³⁶

If SC decides to partner with NPAs, SC should consider cooperating with NPAs that work on the community level in awareness raising and capacity building, as that is where SC's presence and current partnerships are weakest. Other INGOs work with NPAs in health, education and CRG/CP.

*"In the education sector, NPAs have a focal point. They have got their own challenges in terms of registration but they play a crucial role. The ministry (of education) has started to stimulate them to participate in coordination efforts. NPAs have done a lot of good stuff on early grade readers. There is insufficient advocacy from NPAs about what they are doing and how it could be replicated."*³⁷

*"Our Emergency Response team works with NPAs in Bolixamsey for food distribution and recovery of livelihoods. This NPA also works in health, vaccination post disaster. Increasingly we will look at working with NPAs on DRR; we have already met with Oxfam to find out more. This wouldn't be so much to increase efficiency but to increase the role of civil society."*³⁸

SC's staff regularly made the following analysis about NPAs:

*"Most NPAs are run by Party Leaders' bosses, many are brief case organisations and they have no role in service delivery as the government should do that"*³⁹

³⁶Interview with INGO staff member, Vientiane, April 2013

³⁷Interview with UN staff member, Vientiane, April 2013

³⁸ Interview with Save the Children staff member, April 2013

³⁹

A more thorough analysis of the different NPAs, their thematic and geographical focus as well as their linkages, should be carried out, preferably by SC team members themselves or by an objective outsider, to foster relationship building and understanding.

SC's capacity to implement its new strategy

Technical expertise

SC has the technical expertise at national level to develop and lead its programmes but more needs to be done to improve technical knowledge of field staff to increase impact at local level. This is where SC needs to invest more but especially in child rights and child protection, there is insufficient field based capacity to contribute to building stronger and sustainable systems. Thinking beyond input and activities, but at result level and the steps that need to be taken to realise those outcomes is limited. This inhibits SC's ability to build sustainable structures at local level. The government also lacks these capacities so SC needs to step up its investment at local level to enhance durable change for children beyond activities and meetings.

There is a need to improve SC's capacity at provincial and sub-head of sector level. SC needs to invest in staff capacity to implement better programmes. Interviewed staff members felt supported by their supervisors but would like more technical input and less administrative processes.

Proposal development / donor relations

Currently, SC is lacking staff who can concentrate on proposal development and reporting. This results in lower quality proposals as reported by donors and has resulted in unsuccessful proposals. There is a high need to fill the Donor Relationship Director position in the near future in order to raise funding and decrease pressure on Heads of Sector and the Program Director to deliver this.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems

As mentioned under objective I, the limited quality of M&E and the lack of a central database and documentation results in lack of evidence of the impact of programmes and as such, blocks communicating lessons learnt and good practices that can be replicated with further funding. The majority of SC staff identified the need for someone to support MEL to help them improve their systems.

Finance

Finance is proving to be time consuming for heads of sector, provincial managers, program managers and project officers. This results in less time being spent on quality of programming or cross-sectoral cooperation. The majority of staff feel that they have too little time to focus on programme quality aspects and that they want to spend less time on finance. The SMT is already adjusting the system to free up time of technical staff to increase their focus on programmes.

Opportunities

- The CSP Process is an exciting opportunity for team building, to involve as many staff members as possible to think about their organisation, its mandate, the Lao context and what it should focus on. It will also offer an opportunity for SC to reflect on what SC stands for globally and whether this is reflected in SCI's programmes and practices.
- To gear up for EU funding if the EU member states cut off EU funding to the Lao government. This will increase EU funding for NGOs and the UN. However, SC will need to make sure its proposals are of higher quality than the most recent ones it has submitted to the EU. Working

with NPAs is a requirement for the EU so SC's current operational modality would result in unsuccessful bids.

- With the new structure, SCI can reach out to all SC National Offices for support. It has already started reaching out to SCNZ, SC Korea, with positive initial results.
- Four evaluations have recently been conducted; these all offer opportunities for programme improvement and for sharing lessons learnt with development partners.
- The recent BMS campaign was deemed a success by all INGOs/UN agencies the assessment team interviewed. SC should assess what other campaigns it wants to get involved in, that are backed up by evidence in country and by the wider SC International.
- SC's close relationship with the government provides opportunities for sensitive advocacy and more steering, to ensure Save the Children reaches the most marginalised populations.

Threats

- Reportedly, new guidelines for NGO legislation are coming into place, which will have ramifications for taxing, per diems and staffing.
- Guidelines for NPAs are also expected which are thought to have ramifications for cooperation with NPAs for NGOs, as reported by the donor community.
- National staff of SC complained about low salaries and alleged this might have contributed to staff leaving. However, a recent salary market survey does not support the staff's claim. This perception needs to be followed up on to ensure employees feel rewarded for their work.
- SC's close relationship with and obliging position towards the Lao Government in combination with its limited cooperation with NPAs could undermine its reputation as an independent, rights based NGO. This also impedes fundraising as donors are increasingly critical of the GoL's human rights records and governance issues and are seeking to promote civil society.
- This links to SC's risk adverseness in its programming and partnerships. In the current climate, this is warranted but a longer term strategy should look at ways to be more of the "change organisation" that SCI stands for.
- It is not clear whether a plan to mitigate risks is in place. This does not have to be prescriptive but could facilitate processing some of the questions SC will have to ask itself about its modus operandi and the changing context in Lao PDR.

Competiveness of SC in Laos

It is difficult to assess this in detail because of the limited timeframe of this assignment. However, it is clear that SC's reputation was damaged by the shaky transition period which did result in loss of expertise, poor quality reports, proposals and less input in programmes as reported by government partners and donors. However, all of SC's partners, be-it INGOs, government or donors, have commented on SC coming out of this period.

SCI continues to be *the* children's NGO, with highly regarded expertise in all the sectors it works in. Its close access to government gives it increasing operating space and also opportunity to influence government policies, which it does, especially in CRG, CP and DRR.

Its cost-effectiveness is not dissimilar from other organisations, most of which work through the government as well and pay similar per diems. SC in cooperation with other INGOs and the wider development community should continue to press for more effective outcomes of paying high

government per-diems. With more donors moving out of hardware, SC needs to think about its capacity at sub-national levels to contribute to local child focussed development, in education, child rights and child protection. SC currently stands out for its limited experience in working with civil society, which might negatively impact its competitiveness versus organisations that are more geared up for this.

Consequences of a continued reduction in funding opportunities and support

Consequences ultimately might be that donor support for INGOs in Lao PDR dries out because of Lao PDR becoming a lower mid-income country and because of decreased support for ODA in traditional donor countries. This is a long way out though and it is in SC's own interest to demonstrate the continued need for development aid targeting the most vulnerable communities that have been further impoverished because of the changes in land allocation.

The ToR included the question *"If support is not sustained and/or increased, how can sustainability be achieved?"* This is a question SCI will need to ask itself as part of the Country Strategic Planning Processes.

- SC needs to step up its advocacy to the GoL to increase its budget support health, education, DRR and child protection / CRC implementation.
- This needs to be part of a broader exit strategy for each programme and within a realistic timeframe.
- SC's budget is mostly hardware, which is more expensive. Focussing more on quality of services, will decrease SC's overall budget and might increase the chances of continued support. However, this will probably also result in decreased funding for staffing, which would hamper SC's ability to focus on software.
- A question SC will need to ask itself is whether SCI needs to be sustainable or the role of NPAs/NGOs advocating on behalf of children and assisting children in advocating for themselves needs to be sustainable. Working closely with NPAs to foster national voices for children is a sustainable choice in the long run.

Future funding opportunities

- The VAC study: UNICEF has already collected a large amount of the funding and SC should reach out to its Member Offices to raise the remaining funds. A VAC Study often results in future funding opportunities as it could potentially indicate the need for more investment.
- The donor community is increasingly interested in budget transparency in Lao PDR. SC's planned work on budget allocation to children could be a starting point for potential other donors, including the World Bank.
- To gear up for EU funding if the EU member states cut off EU funding to the Lao government. This will increase EU funding for NGOs and the UN. However, SC will need to make sure its proposals are of higher quality than the most recent ones it has submitted to the EU.
- With the new structure, SCI can reach out to all SC National Offices for support. It has already started reaching out to SCUS, SC Denmark and Sweden, with positive initial results.
- Research whether any of the Asian businesses investing in Lao PDR has a good CSR record and policies and whether SC could potentially align with them.
- Improved documentation of best practices and impact (for instance concerning the pre-school model) could be widely shared with private foundations.
- Joint INGO campaigns, following the successful Breast Milk Substitute Campaign.

Conclusion

SC's progress against the SCN CSP 2010-14 is impressive, especially given its rough unification process. It has been able to implement most of its forecasted activities and has achieved the majority of its intended results. It has been able to achieve results at scale in all its programmes, mostly through its close collaboration with the government and SC's effective use of this close relationship to influence policy making. Key examples are the official establishment of the Child Protection Committees at provincial and district level, which is informing the national Child Protection Committee development; the inclusion of child rights in national teacher training modules, the inclusion of children in the national monitoring of the implementation of the CRC for the CRC reporting obligations, the inclusion of DRR in provincial socio-economic development plans, the inclusion of DRR in national education policy development and the support of the NCMC for a Violence against Children's study, which is led by UNICEF but SC has participated. In addition, the development of the first social work curriculum over the past four years is still work in progress but lies a strong foundation for the further development of the social work curriculum, which is now also supported by UNICEF

However, SC has been unable to realise its intended stakeholders (including identifying new potential partners) assessment and the intended integrated Country Programme Monitoring System. The need for both of these still exists.

SC in Lao PDR has gone through a difficult transition; it would benefit SC to document lessons learned, to avoid repeating the mistakes that were made. SC has come a long way in the last six months recovering from this transition and has now got most policies in place to ensure checks and balances in its finance and logistics systems are in place. Filling the current vacancies of Donor Relations Director, Human Resource Manager, and Education Manager in Bolixamsey will increase SC's effectiveness and efficiency.

Cross-sectoral cooperation and synergies are in its early stages but on a central level, there is the intention to increase this. This should go hand in hand with training of staff in the wider mandate of the organisation beyond their own sectors.

SC has effectively raised the voice of children through its work with child led agencies and child radio stations. It is unclear to which extent children are systematically included in program design, monitoring and evaluation. More can be done to increase children's central role in informing programming and in monitoring effectiveness of teacher training and CPNs.

SC's partnerships with the government are strong and give SC increased access to policy makers. Save the Children could increasingly use this access to influence policy and to have more control over its programmes' locations, quality and effectiveness. SC is highly regarded as a lead agency in all the sectors it works in and is a partner of choice for other INGOs. Donors acknowledged SC had been very weak in the last 18 months but see quality in financial and narrative reporting pick up again recently.

SC has some bigger decisions to make in terms of its partnerships with NPAs and its stance versus forced resettlement. It should consider its mandate as a child rights agency, whilst weighing the risks of engaging with NPAs, carefully and strategically.

Recommendations

- To invest in quality and in growth, SC needs to fill the current vacancies and create M&E and communication/advocacy positions and to ensure that staff salary and benefits are market value. The M&E needs more attention and the intended Country Program Monitoring System should be designed following the integrated Country Strategic Plan is completed. SC should consider hiring an M&E specialist for at least six months to facilitate this, to roll out this system through trainings and the establishment of an integrated data base. This will increase SC's evidence for good practices.
- Systematically monitoring the GoL's implementation of the CRC.
- Ensure child participation, child protection and best interests principles are firmly rooted in all programmes and systems.
- SC needs to develop a partnership strategy. This partnership strategy should also outline how they identify new partners, how they build their capacities and how they monitor partners' progress. It should reflect carefully on the long relationship between state, civil society and private sector as articulated in General Comment 5 as part of this process, developing a long term vision as well as immediate adjustments.
- SC should look at developing an advocacy and communication strategy, possibly through the CSP process; a strategy that outlines the issues it wants to raise and how it wants to raise this. The recent BMS campaign could serve as a successful example.
- The VAC study needs to be a priority. NCMC wanted to push this through, there is a momentum and part of the funding is there.
- SCI is becoming increasingly visible again in the INGO network. Continuing this involvement and cooperation is important, especially with the recent misunderstandings between INGOs and donors and the perceived decreasing operating space for INGOs.

Annexes

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Annex B: Terms of Reference

Country Strategic Review of the SC in Laos PDR programme

SAVE THE CHILDREN is the world's leading independent organisation for children.

OUR VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

BACKGROUND

Save the Children (SC) has been working in Laos for more than 22 years, at village, district, provincial and central level and implement its programmes together with partners from the Government, Mass Organisations (Lao Youth Union and Lao Women's Union), INGO's and International Organisations. The Laos country office transitioned (SC Norway and SC Australia) to Save the Children International (SCI) on 1 September 2011.

At present, SC is working in three key provinces; Sayaboury, Luang Prabang and Bolikhamxay, with the aim to expand its reach in the future. Priority themes and programmes are: Education (pre and primary), Child Protection, Child Rights Governance, Health and Emergency / Disaster Risk Reduction. Working through partnerships and child participation are important principles in the implementation of the Lao programme.

SC in Laos is preparing a new strategy, taking into account the changing context in Laos and in the SCI country office now consolidating itself after a period of transition with the organisational and staff changes implied. Changes in Lao society have accelerated in recent years due to economic development driving up inequalities (between urban and rural areas, across ethnicities etc.). Further changes are expected when Lao joins WTO and the ASEAN free market. It has become legally possible in recent year for the people of Laos to establish Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and address issues of interest to them. However, actual take-off has been slow as Non Profit Associations still face a number of constraints.

In order to ensure relevance and maximize SCs contribution to children's rights in Laos, we are commissioning a strategic review to help inform and direct us into this future.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The main purpose of this review is to inform and provide directions to the next SCI Lao PDR Country Strategy. Adding to the input from on-going sector-based evaluations, this review should contribute to the next country strategy being built on a thorough understanding of:

1. previous results and the documented and potential added value of Save the Children in Laos

2. the relevance of Save the Children's programme in the changing context in the country and potential direction towards the post MDG agenda

3. strengths and limitations in SC in Laos' delivery mechanisms and partnerships, including child and youth organisations, which might influence the ability to successfully implement the next country strategy now being planned.

The review should primarily be seen as a learning exercise for SC and partners, and the findings and recommendations will be used by the country office management, staff and stakeholders in preparing the next CSP. Save the Children Norway (commissioning the review and being one of the major members supporting the Lao PDR programme) will also use the review report to support the Lao PDR CSP process. Secondary use will be considered, if appropriate, in attracting future supporters, partners and donors to the Lao PDR programme; informing SCN strategic decision-making, reporting to and dialogue with back donors and potential future donors, as well as sharing the learning within SCI and with other SC country programmes that could benefit from it.

OBJECTIVES AND KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Objective 1:

Provide evidence of overall achievement against the objectives set in SCN 2010-2014 Laos Country Strategy and a realistic understanding of the added value of Save the Children in Lao PDR.

Evaluation questions will be developed together with the evaluation team, SC staff in the country and stakeholders. Key issues to be addressed (not exhaustive list):

- Achievements of overall objectives in the current country strategy plan - outcomes and if possible impact, intended as well as unintended, positive and negative.
- SC's overall added value in Laos in contributing to positive change for children. Specific projects and/or programmes standing out as particularly successful and adding value in the Lao context?
- Sustainability
- Scalability
- Cross-sector synergies
- Examples of good practices/lessons learnt that could be incorporated into next strategy.

Objective 2:

Assess the relevance of the current programme priorities in light of a changing context in Lao PDR and suggest change/adjustments preparing for a post MDG agenda.

Again, evaluation questions should be elaborated in a participatory process around issues like:

- Relevance: Are priorities identified in the 2010-2014 strategy still the *right* ones (i.e. the most pressing in lights of SC's mandate, capacity, children's situation and the general development in society)? Emerging issues concerning children in Laos which SC should address?
- Implementation of SC's Theory of Change, its relevance and contribution to change for children
- Does SC's programming still prepare Lao children to face challenges/mitigate negative impact of change
- New partnership opportunities?

Objective 3:

Identify strengths and limitations in delivery mechanisms and partnerships which might influence the ability to successfully implement the next SCI Lao PDR country strategy now being planned.

Evaluation questions should be developed on issues like (not exhaustive list):

- Changing context in Laos and implications for relevant staff capacities, modus operandi, partnerships etc
- The role that Non Profit Associations –CBOs – should/could play in future programmes and analysis of current partnership.
- SWOT analysis of on-going partnerships/ opportunities for diversification of delivery mechanism /relation with partners, including child and youth groups and other NPA, in the future in order to maximize positive change for and with children
- Competiveness of SC in Laos relative to similar organizations in this setting (Cost-effectiveness (financial, human resources), scalability, operating model)
- Consequences of a continued reduction in funding opportunities and support. Future funding opportunities
- If support is not sustained and/or increased, how can sustainability be achieved?

3. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team is expected to develop the evaluation design and methodology and present it for approval in an Inception Report/plan for the evaluation. However, due reference is made to SC's Evaluation Handbook and some basic principles which should be integrated in the design and methodology:

1. A state of the art assessment methodology is required, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The question of added value and attribution should be explicitly addressed, clearly showing on what basis conclusions will be drawn, and explaining methodological limitations.

2. It is beyond the scope of this review to conduct rigorous impact assessment across the entire country programme deliveries. Existing monitoring data, evaluations, studies, supplemented with input from stakeholders and staff will be the basis for assessment of achievements (or lack of such) and added value. Evidence should also be collected during field visits, interacting with children, partners and other stakeholders.
3. The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability) would address most of the suggested issues. In addition, the methodology should also enable the team to identify and explore to what extent and how SC's ToC is implied in the different programmes or not.
4. In addition to staff and traditional stakeholders giving input, a more critical external audience should be able to input to the evaluation (experts on children's development, advocates, INGOs and others)
5. Stakeholder participation and especially the meaningful participation of children and youth is key to any SC evaluation process, and a process to ensure this should be outlined in the Inception report. Evaluation activities as well as any involvement of children and youth must comply to SC Practice Standards for Child Participation (<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/practice-standards-children%E2%80%99s-participation>), as well as SC's Child Safeguarding framework and Ethical Standards for M&E.

ORGANISATION, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The evaluation should be led by external consultant(s)/researcher(s) with extensive evaluation experience and good knowledge of the Child Rights Convention.

The evaluation team will be responsible for developing the research methodology, planning and conducting participatory processes and managing data collection, as well as writing up the reports and presenting the findings and recommendations. The external evaluator(s) is ultimately responsible for conclusions and recommendations, and the quality of the evaluation reports.

Within SC, the Country Director will be Evaluation Manager, managing the evaluation with support from program staff and SCN Head Office in Oslo. The Evaluation Manager and SCN HO will approve the Inception Report and final report. A Reference Group will be established to input to the review of reports. The team can also establish an advisory group involving children and youth, representatives from child and youth clubs.

SC staff will support the evaluation team as appropriate, i.e. in facilitating the involvement of partners, children and government in the evaluation process, both in the design phase and in the feedback of findings and recommendations.

SC will make archives with related documents available for the evaluation team, and SC staff will be available for interviews both at CO, Regional Office and SCN head office level. 4

DELIVERABLES

- ☒ Startup workshop in Vientiane, sharing and specifying the ToR, refining and agreeing research questions and draft evaluation design. Make the necessary preparations to include children/youth
- ☒ Inception report / detailed work plan for the evaluation to be approved by evaluation manager before data collection
- ☒ Feedback to involved children and stakeholders, giving opportunity to validate findings
- ☒ Draft and final report in English, of maximum 30 pages, including executive summary. The content of the report will be discussed and agreed in due time before producing the report
- ☒ Presentation at a workshops in Vientiane

TIMELINE Aiming to conduct the review in time to inform the Country Strategy Plan, data should be collected, analyzed and draft reports available by end of April 2013. The review should involve:

1 week desk review

1 day workshop with children and youth in Vientiane informing the design and research questions

1 day's inception workshop with staff and other stakeholders in Vientiane (tentatively mid-March)

1 week in Vientiane, finalizing Inception Report, conducting interviews with VTE based staff and stakeholders

2 weeks in the field, including feedback sessions

2 weeks analyzing data and writing up draft report

SC approval process should take no more than 10 days

2 days to produce final report and presentations

1 day workshop presenting the findings, conclusions and recommendations in Laos

A detailed timeline for deliverables will be developed together with the evaluation team.

BUDGET/RESOURCES

Save the Children Norway will fund the review by covering for consultancy fees, travelling, accommodation and per diem during field visits for the evaluation team. SC in Lao will be reimbursed for costs incurred to organize workshops, provide vehicles during field trips, translators if necessary and other costs strictly related to the facilitation of data collection and participation of children and other stakeholders.

PLAN FOR DISSEMINATION AND LEARNING: The Evaluation Team is expected to input to a plan for dissemination and learning from the review. The main responsibility for dissemination, use and learning of the review rests with the Country Director.

Annex C: Schedules

| | Monday 8 april | Tuesday 9 april | Wednesday 10 april | to be included: |
|---------|----------------|--|---|---------------------|
| 9-10 u | | NuOL (EH) | UNICEF education Emanuelle (EH, KM) | Vilasack |
| 10-11 u | PADTEC (EH KM) | | | Francis |
| 11-12 u | NDMO (KM) | LYU (KM, EH) | EU Stefan (KM) | Tick |
| 12-13 u | | | | SC Lao staff member |
| 13-14 | | | | Ingunn |
| 14-15 | MOLSW (EH KM) | Child Fund CD Chris Dong Savath (EH, KM) | INGO network, Catherine (EH) | SCN regional dir |
| 15-16 | Oxfam (EH KM) | | | Olivier |
| 16-17 u | | UNICEF CP Verity and kirsten (EH, KM) | presentation John MTR Education (EH, KM) | consultant |
| 17-18 u | Ausaid (EH KM) | Plan Mona CD (EH, KM) | De-briefing on next steps - Olivier, Ingunn, EH, KM | |

| Date | Time | Activity | Remarks and person responsible |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 24 th April (Wed) | Evening | Arrive Vientiane | Airport pickup arranged by Somsanouk |
| 25 th April (Thur) | 08.00-10.00 10.00-11.00 11.0-11.30 11.30-16.30 | Travel to Bolikhamxay province – meet with SC education person and SC head of province Meet with Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS) Travel to Khamkerd district and stay overnight at the district | Team members: Kunera-TA Local consultant MOES/PESS representative Sengsouly-CRG officer FLAMES |
| 26 th April (Fri) | 08.30-9.00 9.00-10.00 10.00-18.00 18.00-19.00 | Meet with District Education and Sports Services (BESB) Team preparation for visit to schools Visit schools and talk to school principals, teachers, Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) and Children Back to district town and stay overnight in the district | Note: talk to children after school hours. To visit school, DESB official will be accompanied the team. |
| 27 th April (Sat) | 08:30-11.00 12:00-13:00 13:00-18:30 | Travel to villages and meet with child-led groups and other children who wish to participate Lunch Travel back to Vientiane | Meeting coordinated by Vanhbouasy |
| 28 th April (Sun) | 08:00-18:00 | Travel to Sayaboury by car | Car is arranged by Somsanouk Team members: Kunera-TA Local consultant LSWS representative Sisouphanh/Soulivong-SC based on SYB |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 29 th April (Mon) | 08:30-9:00 9.00-14.00 14.00-16.00 16.00-17.30 | Meet with Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department Travel to Xienghoun district and stay overnight in the district Meet with District Labor and Social Welfares Meet with District Child Protection Network network committee | Meeting coordinated by Soukmalay/Sisouphanh |
| 30 th April (Tues) | 8.30-9.30 9.30-12.00 13.00-16.00 | Meet with CPN at VILLAGE LEVEL Meet with youth and children in village Meet with Child Led Group (CLG) and talk to children in school in other village | Note: talk to children after school hours. To visit CLG, district official will be accompanied the team. |
| 1 st May (Wed) | 08:00-18:00 | Travel back to Sayaboury and Luang Prabang | Depending on the team |
| 2 nd May (Thur) | 08.00-18.00 | Kunera flies to Cambodia Local consultant and team travel back to Vientiane | Arranged by Somsanouk |

Annex D: List of stakeholders commissioned

| Stakeholder | Stake in CSR | Issues/Constraints in involvement in CSR | When/how involved? |
|---|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| SCN | Donor | | Throughout |
| SCI | Target of CSR | | Throughout |
| Ministry of Education and Sport (national, provincial and district level) | Key informant, partner of SC | | In workshops, KIIs on all levels |
| Lao Youth Union | Idem | | In workshop, KIIs |
| NCMC | Idem | | Idem |
| NuOL | Idem | | Idem |
| NDMO | Idem | | Idem |
| MoLSW (national, prov, district level) | Idem | | Idem |
| Representatives of child focused NPAs | Idem | | Idem |
| UNICEF education | Key informant | | KIIs |
| UNICEF CP | Key informant | | KIIs |
| Plan International, Child Fund, Oxfam, INGO network | Key informant | | KIIs |
| FLAMES, Mass Youth organisation, Ban Akad | Key informant, partner | | In workshop |
| AusAid, EU | Donors | | KIIs |
| civil society groups (Padtec-Dondoy) | Key informant | | KIIs |
| Children and youth in target communities | Key informants, beneficiaries | | Consultations, FGDs |
| Parents | Key informants | | FGDs |
| Child protection committees, schools, VEDCs | Key informants, beneficiaries | | Consultations, FGDs |

Annex E: Results framework versus monitoring practices

| Sector/ Theme Area | Planned Objective | Expected results including quantifiable indicators/targets | Baseline | M&E data available? | Progress against objectives / expected results |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Education Fulfil children's right to basic education | Objective 1: More out of-school children, especially girls, have access to education ⁴⁰ . | Primary Result 1: 100% primary school net intake rate (NIR ⁴¹) in the target areas: 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces (BOL, LBP, SAY) by 2014 Result 2: 50% of newly enrolled Grade 1 children had undergone pre-primary classes in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014 Result 3: 100% net enrolment rate in primary schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014 Result 4: 98% survival rates for primary level in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014 Result 5: 90% transition rate from primary to lower secondary in 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014 | Net Intake Rate in Grade 1: - National 75% - Luang Prabang 77% - Sayaboury 87% - Bolikhamxay 80% Percentage of Grade 1 children who had undergone pre-primary classes - National 21% - Luang Prabang 21% - Sayaboury 34% - Bolikhamxay 13.3% Primary school NER - National 91.6% - Luang Prabang 94.1% - Sayaboury 98.4% - Bolikhamxay 95.2% Primary school Survival Rate - National 64.2% - Luang Prabang 65% - Sayaboury 89% - Bolikhamxay 91% Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary - National 88% - Luang Prabang 84% - Syaboury 77% - Bolikhamxay 86.7% | Result 1: Yes – through MoES Result 2: Yes - idem Result 3: Yes Result 4: Yes Result 5: Unclear if monitored | There is no focus on girls in programme design nor monitoring <i>Enrolment and retention figures disaggregated by gender but exam data aren't, nor are pre-primary data (at least not in reports)</i> Result 1: 98.98% Result 2: see result 1 ECE (48% enrolment in target areas of 5 year olds in pre-schools) Result 3: 95.5% Result 4: 80.93% - changed schools to poorer district Result 5: no data reported Result 6: Now according to MoES and SC; no more fees collected, According |

⁴⁰Out of school children includes children who have never been to school and children who drop out of school.

⁴¹Net Intake Rate (NIR): Number of children enrolled in Grade 1 at official age divided by the total number of children of official Grade 1 age (6 years old).

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | <p>Result 6: Registration and instructional fees abolished in all primary schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Result 1: Increased admissions of 5-year olds into pre-primary classes and play groups to 50% in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 2: Introduction of school grants for community-based play groups, pre-primary classes in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 3: Appropriate management and pedagogy used in ECE ensuring that 50% of community-based play groups, pre-primary classes meet the minimum standard in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 4: 200 new classrooms constructed and equipped in SCN target primary schools for pre-primary school children in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> <p>Result 5: 200 new pre-school teachers recruited and deployed to teach in pre-primary school classes by PES in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All primary schools collect registration fees. <p>Enrolment of 5 year olds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 32% - Luangprabang 40% - Xayaboury 36.4% - Bolikhamxay 20.7% <p>Non existent</p> <p>No assessment as yet.</p> <p>Pre-primary school classes and enrolment (Total/Female):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luang Prabang 53 classes (1573/791) - Xayaboury 18 classes (274/140) - Bolikhamxay 16 classes (513/250) - Total 87 classes in 585 schools (2360/1181) | <p>Result 6: No evidence of M&E ECE</p> <p>Result 1: Yes?</p> <p>Result 2: No evidence of monitoring (except for MTR)</p> <p>Result 3: No evidence of monitoring (except for MTR)</p> <p>Result 4: Yes</p> <p>Result 5: Yes</p> | <p><i>to MoES only contribution through VEDC, but exception for very poor families</i></p> <p>Result 1: 48.72%</p> <p>Result 2: <i>Might be introduced through FTI/WB? John Howe??</i></p> <p>Result 3: not reported on</p> <p>Result 3: <i>unsure? John Howe</i></p> <p>Result 4: <i>On track, 171 constructed, 16 more constructed in 2013</i></p> <p>Result 5: <i>On track, 171 trained and currently 16 in training</i></p> |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| | <p>Objective 2: School going children benefit from improved quality in education</p> | <p>Result 1: All SCN target schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces meet the standards of "Schools of Quality" as defined by MoE By 2014</p> <p>Result 2: All SCN target schools in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces adopted code of conduct for school teachers and students and are free from corporal and humiliating punishment by incorporating PD in all Schools of Quality by 2014.</p> <p>Result 3: EFA Action Plans formulated and implemented in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014.</p> <p>Result 4: EMIS and baseline data set up and implemented for target PES and DEBs with the support from SCN and MoE by 2014.</p> <p>Result 5: VEDC members adopt "School Improvement Planning and School Governance" approaches in SCN target areas in the 3 districts of each of the 3 province by 2014.</p> <p>Result 6: Knowledge of Lao language in grade 5 (including reading skills) increased. Number of children who passed the exam increased by at least 50% in the 3 districts of each of the 3 provinces by 2014.</p> | <p>EFA Provincial Action Plans have been formulated and approved by the provincial governor in 3 SCN target provinces, but District Action Plans need to be formulated.</p> <p>EMIS is in place and function at SCN target district and province but need to be designed and updated specifically for SCN programme.</p> <p>Ministerial decree for the establishment of VEDCs has been issued but it still needs to be checked whether VEDCs have been established in all target areas.</p> <p>Currently MoE has a final exam at grade 5 for Lao language which includes reading and writing. We can get baseline data from PES or MoE.</p> | <p>Result 1& Result 2: Reportedly, SC plus PESS and DESB conduct outcome monitoring 2 x per year. Although according to staff, in 2012, half schools were visited in Sayabouri; only 1 monitoring mission because of budget cuts.</p> <p>Result 3: no monitoring evidence</p> <p>Result 4: no monitoring evidence</p> <p>Result 5: No monitoring evidence</p> <p>Result 6: yes through MoES annual tests</p> | <p>Result 1: Currently not all schools are SoQ, according to SC monitoring 52 % -</p> <p>Result 2: 76.44% of schools adopted code of conduct for school teachers and students are free from corporal and humiliating punishment (reportedly) Field research – evidence for this: children reported decrease in humiliating and physical punishment by teachers but still some physical punishment reported by children</p> <p>Result 3: not reported on in annual reports</p> <p>Result 4: idem</p> <p>Result 5: Some of VEDCs function very well, others not – difficult to know if they all have SIPSG</p> <p>Result 6: Too early to tell</p> |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Child Protection Fulfil the rights of children to protection against violence and abuse</p> | <p>Objective 1: Stronger systems for the protection of children</p> | <p>Result 1: By 2012 a specific social work curriculum (with focus on children) has been developed by the FSS at NUoL and approved by the MoE</p> <p>Result 2: By 2012 child rights, child development, child protection, and social work are taught by quality trainers at FSS</p> <p>Result 3: By 2012 the GoL will integrate social work graduates within government structures</p> <p>Result 4: By 2010-2011 SCN has formed partnership with the MoLSW and LWU for working on child protection mechanisms at local levels</p> <p>Result 5: By 2013 child protection focal persons have been selected and trained at MoE, PES and DEB and in all SCN target schools</p> <p>Result 6: Child Protection mechanism established and functioning in one target province.</p> | <p>There is no specific social work curriculum in place at present Two lecturers from FSS are being supported to do their Masters degrees in social work in Thailand</p> <p>Child rights has been included as a compulsory subject under the FSS, NuoL for the academic year 2008-2009</p> <p>Social workers have been recognised for the first time under the LPRC, however they do not yet have properly defined roles within government structures</p> <p>SCN has not yet formalised its cooperation with the LWU and MoLSW</p> <p>There are not yet coordinators for CRC and child protection in all SC target locations and schools</p> <p>Child protection mechanisms have not yet been officially established The CPWG (a network of 11 international organisations working on child protection related issues) was initiated by SCN in September 2009</p> | <p>Result 1 & 2: Very limited monitoring during programme (see final evaluation)</p> <p>Result 3: Yes is being monitored</p> <p>Result 4: yes on national and provincial level</p> <p>Result 5: not yet implemented, not monitored</p> <p>Result 6: not existing yet so no monitoring yet</p> | <p>Result 1 & 2: Partly achieved; some courses now exist but not a full curriculum that covers all aspects of social work with children; also questionable whether what exists is geared towards social work at community level. Result 3: only partially achieved but in process</p> <p>Result 4: delayed – started in 2012 and now in process</p> <p>Result 5: Not yet achieved – the current VAC training might result in achieving this result?</p> <p>Result 6: not yet achieved. CPWG still functioning well, not officially recognised by Lao Government</p> |
| | <p>Objective 2: More children are protected against, and get support after violence and sexual abuse</p> | <p>Result 1: Information on positive discipline is disseminated and applied in selected schools and villages in one of SCN target provinces</p> <p>Result 2: Teachers, parents and local authorities in 50 selected villages will be trained on the children’s law, and violence against children</p> <p>Result 3: By 2014 children in 50 schools are through child-to-child activities informed about child protection issues and have basic skills for</p> | <p>Almost 100 trainers and over 90 preschool teachers have received training from SCN staff on violence against children and positive discipline.</p> <p>Community awareness and trainings have not been carried out in all target communities</p> <p>SCN is working with the LYU on dissemination of CRC and child protection</p> | <p>Result 1: annual reports to SCN</p> <p>Result 2: annual reports to SCN</p> <p>Result 3: annual reports to SCN</p> | <p>Result 1: The Save the Children Positive Discipline Manual and Factsheets were translated from English to Lao and now officially used by NCMC; 2nd batch of training took place May 2013 Result 2: 2nd batch of</p> |

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| | | protecting themselves from violence | information through children and youth radio programme, with national coverage | | training took place 2013 Result 3: 6 groups have been established – 3 school based, 3 youth groups not implemented yet |
| | Objective 3: More children are heard and participate in the prevention against violence and abuse | Result 1: Children are included into and participating in at least 50 Child Protection Network (CPN) committees in SCN target areas Result 2: By 2014, 27 child led groups (3 in each SCN target district and 4 at provincial and central level) are developing and promoting advocacy campaigns aimed at the prevention and response to violence against children Result 3: By 2014, 80% of all established CPN will receive reports of child abuse from children Result 4: Serious cases of child abuse are being referred by CPN to responsible local government authorities and action taken in the best interest of the child | There are currently few existing children's groups for child to child activities in schools in the target districts in the 3 provinces There are children and youth awareness raising activities on child protection issues in some communities | Result 1: trainings of district CPNs and some village CPNs monitored but no follow up monitoring/guiding Result 2: no evidence of monitoring activities Result 3: activities of village/district CPNs not regularly monitored Result 4: no case has come forward yet | Result 1: 24 village CPNs have been established but children don't participate in these nor were they informed in the village we visited Result 2: some CP groups have started in 2012, more will in 2013; they conduct awareness on national holidays/rights days Result 3 and 4: none of the CPNs currently reporting – very low level of understanding of their function |
| Child Rights Governance Strengthen child rights governance | Objective 1: Strengthened international mechanisms, national systems and institutions for monitoring the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child | Result 1: By 2013, 110 staff from member agencies under NCMC at national, province and district level have received capacity building to conduct monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the UN CRC. Result 2: NCMC Secretariat, with support from SCN, have prepared 3 rd CRC report and the 2 Optional protocols reports and timely submitted to Geneva by 2013. | The 2 nd national report on CRC implementation was submitted to Geneva in May 2008 To some extent, there has been integration of the UNCRC committee concluding observations to different Govt. agencies, but there was insufficient follow up | Result 1: yes, SC monitored training, also assisted in the prov and district monitoring Result 2: yes regular meetings and monitored | Result 1: on track, children involved in monitoring took place Result 2: delayed until 2014? (Sarah?) Result 3: to certain extent but unclear whether budgets |

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| | | Result 3: Concluding observations from the UNCRC committee are incorporated into sectoral plans. | | Result 3: yes through NCMC not directly with ministries | have been allocated |
| | Objective 2: Improved capacity of governing bodies to realise the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child | <p>Result 1: Child friendly National Plan of Action for Children formulated and endorsed by the Government by 2014.</p> <p>Results 2: Evidence based advocacy and recommendations from the concluding observations from UNCRC committee are incorporated as amends to the LPRC through a law reform process by 2014</p> <p>Result 3: NCMC and LYU capacity enhanced, (financially and technically), to promote children’s rights through various advocacy initiatives reaching at least 150,000 children</p> <p>Result 4: CRC modules developed by MoE providing teachers with a skills based approach are incorporated as an integrated part of the national teacher training curriculum by 2014</p> <p>Result 5: Throughout the strategy period 30 staff of PCMC and DCMC in each of the 3 SC target provinces are trained and supported to implement high quality child rights, child protection and child participation project activities</p> | <p>No child friendly National Plan of Action for Children in existence</p> <p>The LPRC was issued in December 2006</p> <p>SCN and the LYU are currently cooperating on radio programmes on CRC advocacy for children and youth</p> <p>While teachers in SCN’s target area have been trained in CRC, trainers at the TTC have not received CRC training</p> <p>PCMC and DCMC of the 3 SC new target provinces, have very basic knowledge on CRC, and have not been trained on CRP and child protection</p> | <p>Result 1: yes</p> <p>Result 2: no action yet</p> <p>Result 3: partly monitored but no thorough analysis of their skills and training needs</p> <p>Result 4: yes</p> <p>Result 5: not yet</p> | <p>Result 1: the NCMC refers to the concluding obsvs from the CRC committee as the action plan – no actual NPA for children; but very detailed plan so SC works with this.</p> <p>Result 2: no activities reported</p> <p>Result 3: LYU and NCMC trained and through radio and leaflets dissemination, many children have been reached –</p> <p>Result 4: achieved – CR incorporated in TT</p> <p>Result 5: planned not implemented yet. Given the low capacity of the PCMC and DCMC it is questionable whether this result (high quality child rights, CP and CPart project activities) is achievable.</p> |
| | Objective 3: | Result 1: At least 5 new child rights focused | The new Decree on Association ⁴² was issued | Result 1: little | Result 1: in annual |

• ⁴²Association refers to a non-profit civil society organisation

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| | <p>Strengthened capacity of civil society, including child led groups, to promote children's rights</p> | <p>Associations/NGOs are identified and supported by SCN to promote children's rights</p> <p>Result 2: At least 4 children and youth led groups established in SCN target areas with the aim of giving children a voice, valuing them as responsible citizens and promoting child rights through various activities, events and campaigns</p> | <p>in April 2009</p> <p>There are some self organised youth groups in Vientiane Capital but none in SCN target provinces</p> | <p>evidence of monitoring the sector</p> <p>Result 2: the children's groups outcomes aren't monitored, the training events are</p> | <p>plans, focus on child led groups, not on child rights focussed NGOs</p> <p>Result 2: 3 CLGs – with EU funding or SCN funding?</p> |
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Annex F: Research tools

- I. Evaluation Matrix – please refer to excel document Evaluation matrix
- II. Tools to be used with youth, children and the Child Protection Networks:
 - A. Timeline
 - B. Brainstorming
 - C. Stories of Most Significant Change and Challenge
 - D. H-assessment
 - E. Body Mapping
 - F. Venn Diagram (with Child Protection Networks)
 - G. Circle Analysis

A) Time Line and Focus Group Discussions

Time line of your work is a useful tool to gain an overview of the work you do with SC's support. It can provide a simple illustration of the history of the work, capturing key training, different phases of work, how children's concerns are responded to by your organisation, successes and challenges over time

1. Identifying the history and main activities of your group:
 - Draw a horizontal line along the length of flipcharts (2-3 stuck together)
 - Using time as a reference point we will start with 2010, as this review looks at SC's programmes from 2010 onwards.
 - On the time line record key activities undertaken by your group
2. Purposes, Roles and Responsibilities:
 - What is the purpose of your group? Has the purpose been clear from the beginning or has it changed over time? If so, why?
 - Do you feel you need to change your purpose or role because of current changes in Laos?
3. Capacity building and support:
 - On the time line, please identify any training and/or other key support that you have received on child rights or child protection (or other capacity training) from SC since 2010
 - How relevant, timely and effective was the training/support?
 - What kind of supervision and monitoring do you think would help ensure effective implementation of trainings?
 - Where on the timeline would you have needed more support from SC and why? Did you discuss this with SC? What was the outcome?

4. Training / awareness raising to other children/youth:
 - Can you describe what kind of training/awareness-raising on child rights and /or child protection (including existing national laws) your organisation has undertaken?
 - Which target groups have been reached and how?
 - Which target groups are more difficult to reach and how could that be overcome?

5. Outcomes on children:
 - What changes are there in girls' and boys' lives as a result of the FLAMES, Child and Youth Radio, Village Child Rights Group? Please describe some of the most significant changes resulting from your work.

6. Sustainability and scalability:
 - How do you see your group developing or evolving in the future?
 - As and when SC would phase out support to your group, what are your plans for the future? Is your group prepared to be sustainable beyond SC's support?
 - What have been your main lessons learned on your work on child rights/CP?
 - What are the things that your group needs to continue its work in the future? Are there organisations who are interested in working with or supporting you as well as SC? If so, which?

B) Brainstorming

to identify changing context in Lao PDR and its positive and negative impact on children's lives and what FLAMES, Lao Youth Union should do to counter the negative impact and what support they need from SC to implement.

In a plenary session, guiding questions were asked to all the children about the changing context. Children wrote down their thoughts on index cards. These index cards were placed on the Flipchart (negative/positive current and future), sorted and ranked in order of prevalence. Children then took time to come up with programmes to target the most prevalent mentioned challenges and the support they would need from SC to implement those solutions.

Questions that were asked:

1. What changes have taken place in Lao PDR since 2010 and how have they affected children, both negatively and positively?
2. What changes do you think will take place in the next 5 years or so in Lao PDR and how will they affect children, both positively and negatively?

C) Stories of most significant change and challenge

to identify impact /change as a result of the groups' works and to identify challenges in implementing their mandate.

Children were given index cards to write down the most significant change they have seen as a result of their work and also the most significant challenge they have noticed. Some children wrote stories down, others just shared them openly. Finally, all children around the table shared their stories.

Introduction: Generally the **'Most Significant Change' method involves collecting "stories" about significant changes and/or significant challenges at regular intervals and interpreting / discussing them in a participatory way.** Stories can be an effective approach for reflection and learning, and can be a valuable part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes. Stories allow individual or collective experiences to be communicated and documented in an interesting and revealing way. New information about the process or outcomes of child and youth groups' work may be illustrated in powerful ways through the use of stories. Staff, as well as children and adults from communities that Save the Children works in may be involved in reflecting on, sharing and documenting 'stories of most significant change', as well as 'stories of most significant challenge'.

For the purpose of this review, we may not have the opportunity to collect stories on regular intervals. However, we would like to collect stories of most significant change and stories of most significant challenge from your organisation, community members, and from children and young people themselves to inform learning on Save the Children's programmes in Laos.

Key Steps:

- Encourage child and youth groups and others to think about stories / examples which illustrate:
 - a) the **most significant change** achieved through their work in the past 3 - 6 months.
 - b) the **most significant challenges** faced while trying to implement their work in the past 3 - 6 months.
- *A safe space needs to be created to enable staff to share stories in a safe way. The best interests of the child and the principle of 'do no harm' should always be considered. While sharing stories anonymity and confidentiality should be maintained.*
- **Story of most significant change:** People can either verbally share, write or draw a picture to illustrate the most significant change that has taken place as a result of the work in the past 3 - 6 months. It could be a change in an individual child, or a change for a group of children, a change in adults, or a change in policy. **One member should record key details of the story – what happened, where, who was involved⁴³, what kind of change was brought about – enough details so that the story can be confirmed.** They should also share and record a brief explanation as to why they chose this story, why it is most significant to them.
- People can share their stories and decide on which story is most significant – and why.
- **Story of most significant challenge:** Adults could either write or draw a picture to illustrate the most significant challenge faced while trying to undertake their work in the past 3 - 6 months. The challenge could relate to any aspect of their work. The staff member should record key details of

⁴³ While ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of the child and family.




the story – what happened, where, who was involved⁴⁴, how – enough details so that the story can be confirmed). They should also share and record a brief explanation as to why they chose this story, why it is most significant challenge to them.

- People can share their stories and decide on which story describes the most significant challenge – and why.
- After sharing the stories, we can analyse what was learnt from these stories, to discuss and identify what they can do to strengthen their work.

D) H-assessment

'H' Assessment with all children/community members (30 minutes)

- In this part of the evaluation, a 'H' assessment on flipchart paper will be used to explore the overall strengths and successes of your work; the challenges and constraints faced by your organisation; and suggestions to improve the organisation and efforts to protect children.
- *Children and young people's representatives, as well as other community representatives (parents/ caregivers, religious elders) may be involved in this part of the assessment to gain wider perspectives. It is possible that the 'H' Assessments can be undertaken simultaneously in different stakeholder groups within one community to see similarities, as well as differences in perspectives. Also to draw upon a wide range of stakeholders to give suggestions on how to strengthen and improve the community based child protection work.*
- *Like in the diagram a 'H' shape on large flipchart paper. At the top of the left hand column draw a happy face. At the top of the right hand column a sad face. Below the middle "H" bar draw a light-bulb to represent 'bright ideas'.*

| | | |
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|  | <p>Child/Youth Group</p> <p>(name, location)</p> <p><i>Add Date of assessment & the number of people involved in this H assessment</i></p> |  |
| |  | |

- *The 'H' assessment will be used by the child/youth groups to explore and for them to record:*

⁴⁴ While ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of children and families involved

- In the top middle part of the 'H' record: 1) the location of your group/ committee (village, district, province; 2) the date you completed the 'H' Assessment; and 3) the number of people, *gender and background of people involved in this 'H' assessment (e.g. 3 women, 3 men, 2 girls and 2 boys).*
- In the left hand column (*happy face*) discuss and record the strengths and successes of your organisation.
- In the right hand column (*sad face*) discuss and record the weaknesses, challenges or constraints faced by your organisation. *Remember to be open and honest in sharing weaknesses or challenges faced as it will help to inform program improvements.*
- *Under the light-bulb (middle lower part)* Please discuss and record your suggestions to improve or strengthen work by your organisation to increase child protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. *Think about and include what training or support is most needed to increase the confidence and skills of your organisations.*

E) Body Mapping

Body Mapping (introduction) (5 minutes)

Materials needed: Flipchart paper, tape, non permanent markers, coloured crayons, post it notes (two colours), 3 colour stickers.

Introduction: We appreciate the time given by you today. Save the Children is supporting us to visit different communities to learn more from children and adults about how children can be better protected. Save the Children wants to learn more about how communities can protect children from different forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. We are here to learn more about how child protection concerns are identified and responded to in your community. We will use a 'body mapping exercise' to better understand your views about the things you need protecting from, and to better understand what changes Save the Children Programmes (**use what is appropriate: the CRGs / Child Protection Network (CPN)**) is making to the lives of children in your community. The findings of the learning will be used to improve efforts to strengthen communities' efforts to protect children.

It is your choice to participate. You are encouraged to participate IF you are interested in the discussions. All views will be respected during these discussions and will remain anonymous. Only in cases where a child may be at risk, we will inform others to ensure a sensitive response in the child's best interests. We encourage each of you to be open and honest so that we may collectively identify the protection issues most affecting girls and boys in your communities, the ways in which Save the Children's programmes are improving the lives of children, as well as any suggestions to improve the activities. All your suggestions will help us to identify ways to improve this programme in the future.

We would also like to ask permission to take photos. We will only use positive image photos in the report. Do you agree to photos being taken? We will show them to you so you have a choice to agree or disagree with us using the photo.

Circle icebreaker introductions of girls and boys in the group: name, age and an action of your favourite hobby.

Body Mapping (90minutes)

Introductions and identifying issues affecting girls or boys:

Purpose to be communicated to the children: - learn about the needs, what they are concerned about in their communities


- Stick 3 large flipcharts together and ask for a volunteer to lie on the charts to have their body shape drawn around.
- Explain that this 'body' represents all girls and boys in their village/ ward.
- First of all we want to consider all the things that girls and boys need and what they need protecting from in their communities, homes, schools, workplace or in wider society. In small gender groups discuss with your friends what girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds need. Place each of these concerns on a post it.
- Ask the girls and boys groups to present their post its and to place them inside the body.
- Discuss whether each of these risks affects all children in the community and/or whether some children are more vulnerable or at risk to certain issues. *Make a note which children (girls/ boys, ages, background factors) are more vulnerable to certain protection concerns and why.*



Exploring the existence of *Child Protection Networks/CYs* addressing children's concerns and pathway responses:

Purpose to be communicated to the children: - to understand how they raise their concerns and how they are responded to in their communities – before the CPN and after

- If children face any of these concerns what do they do? Who do they tell? What happens next?
 - Is it easy or difficult to share your concerns? What happens if girls or boys do share their concerns? What happens next?
 - Let's identify 3 common child protection issues faced by girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds in your community to explore the '**response pathway**'? Let's explore each one – *one at a time on post-its on a separate flipchart to show who children tell, what happens next, and what is the likely outcome?*
 - *Are these protection issues different for boys and girls? And do the responses differ for boys and girls?*
 - Can you tell us more about the **CPN (or other group)** in your community? When did it start? Who is in it? What do they do?
 - Do children also have their own Child Clubs/Group? If so, when did it start? Who is in it? What do they do? Are out of school children, children from different caste/ethnic groups, economic backgrounds also included? Are children with disabilities also included?
 - Are children able to participate in community based child protection activities? If so, who? And how?
 - Are children included in any community meetings or training on child rights or child protection? If so, what?
 - What happened before the **CPN (or other group)** was here? Who did children tell when they faced a protection issue? Was the response (solution offered, if any) different to the response following the establishment of the **CPN (or other group)**?

Exploring which protection issues are addressed by *Child Protection Networks (or others)*:

- If we look at the different post-its you made about the different protection concerns faced by girls and boys which protection issues do they think **CPNs** address most/ least?
 - Place a 'green'  sticker by protection issues that **CPNs** often address

- Place a 'yellow'  sticker by protection issues that CPNs sometimes address
- Place a 'red'  sticker by protection issues that CPNs rarely address
- Which protection issues would they most like CPNs to give more attention to? Why?

*OUTCOMES: Now let us use the body shape to explore the outcomes on children of the **Child Protection Networks**. We will draw a line down the middle of the body. The left hand side is children in their community BEFORE the formation of the CPNs, and the right hand side represents children AFTER the formation of the CPNs. Where-ever relevant children may also want to comment on before and after changes from their own participation in community based child protection initiatives.*

- Encourage the children to think about any changes in girls and boys in their community as a result of CPNs activities. We can use the body parts to facilitate discussion and to record different changes BEFORE /AFTER in relation to:
 - the *head*: any changes in what girls and boys think about/ worry about/ feel happy about? Any changes in children's knowledge? Any changes in the way adults think about girls and boys?
 - the *eyes*: any changes in the way children see themselves/ their families/ their communities? Any changes in the way adults see girls and boys? Any changes in the way vulnerable children are seen by their peers, their families/ their communities?
 - the *ears*: any changes in what children hear? Any changes in how adults listen to girls and boys? Any changes in the way children listen to adults?
 - The *mouth*: any changes in the way children communicate or speak? Any changes in the way adults communicate or speak to children? Any changes in opportunities for children to express their views or concerns? Any changes in opportunities for children to participate in issues affecting them in their homes, schools, community or work place?
 - The *heart*: any changes in the way girls and boys feel? Any changes in the way adults feel about or care for girls and boys? Any changes in the way girls or boys from different backgrounds experience discrimination in the community?
 - The *stomach*: any changes in what children eat? Or families eat?
 - the *hands and arms*: any changes in what activities girls and boys do? What kinds of work they do? Any changes in the way adults treat them? Any changes in the way children are beaten by adults?
 - the *feet and legs where do they go*: Any changes in where children go? In what they do? In where they feel safe?
 - The *clothes*: Any changes in what children wear?
- Discuss the changes achieved, and give examples. Identify whether this is a change for a only a few children (*), some children (**), or a lot of children (***). Can they share concrete examples.
- Discuss which girls and boys have most benefitted from CPN activities? Which children have least benefitted? Why?
- Have there been any negative outcomes on children or their families from CPN activities? Please describe:
- Can they describe any local beliefs, customs and traditional practices that help protect children (especially the most vulnerable)? Is the CPN supporting these practices?
- Can they describe any local customs and practices that are harmful to children? Is the CPN helping to change these practices?

- What are children's suggestions/ recommendations to improve **Child Protection Networks** so that they are more effective in preventing and responding to abuse, violence and exploitation. *Can divide back into the girls and boys groups and give them post-its to record their recommendations .. how would they like to see it for their own children .. 20 years from now. What practical tips would they give children in other villages about what they can do to increase prevention and protection of girls and boys from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation?*
- **Can they share the most significant changes for children in their community as a result of the CPN? And what are the most significant challenges still present?**

Note: IF TIME and INTEREST CAN ALSO DO:

- **Drawings by children** to show changes in girls/ boys lives in their community since the formation of the **Child Protection Networks**. Alternatively children may prefer to develop **poems, songs or dramas** about the impact of **Child Protection Networks** or recommendations to strengthen them. They will be encouraged to participate in the medium of their choice.

