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Study of the impact of the work of Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia: building civil society

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Glossary and List of Abbreviations

ABECS	Alternative Basic Education for Children out of School
ANPPCAN	African Network for Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
balabbat	Tribal leader answerable to central government
CBO	Community Based Organisation
Dergue	Ethiopia's military, later Marxist government 1974–1991
DOLSA	Department of Labour and Social Affairs
DPPC	Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission
ESDF	Education Sector Development Plan
ESRDF	Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund
equb	traditional revolving credit association
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
debo	communal work party
gebere mehabir	peasant association
GoNGO	Government-oriented non-governmental organisation
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
iddir	traditional burial association
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
kebele	originally Urban Dwellers Association, later used for smallest unit of government administration also in rural areas
kifleketema	newly introduced administrative subdivision of Addis Ababa, above the *wereda*
mehabir	religious societies to celebrate particular saints in monthly cycle
mengistawi budin	lit. "government team", neighbourhood organisations within *kebele* structure, composed of 3 squads of 12 household heads each
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MONGO	"My Own NGO" – used about bogus non-governmental organisations
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
POMOA	Provisional Office of Mass Organisational Affairs (of the Dergue government)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
senbeté	parish-level devotional groups meeting after Sunday service
REWA	Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association
REYA	Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Organisation
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
teskar	memorial services and memorial feast for the deceased
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
wereda	administrative district
yehager shemagilé	community elders
Currency	1 Ethiopian *birr* (ETB) equals approx. 0.85 Norwegian *krone* (NOK) in 2004

Executive Summary

This report is part of a series of four reports resulting from a study commissioned by the Evaluation Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1] in December 2002. The study examines how Norwegian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contribute to strengthening civil society in developing countries and assesses the wider impact and the "value added" of their work, in particular with regard to poverty reduction, expansion of democracy and increased respect for human rights. Two Norwegian NGOs and two countries have been selected for the study: Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) in Ethiopia and FORUT in Sri Lanka.

The first report examines methodological issues related to impact assessment. The second report discusses the findings from the Sri Lanka country study. The Ethiopia report is the third report and it focuses on the findings from the Ethiopia country study. The final report, to be published in December 2004, is a synthesis report drawing on the inception report and the findings from the two country studies. The reports are available on www.norad.no (Evaluation).

This report focuses on how the current activities of Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) contribute to strengthening civil society in Ethiopia. On the basis of project documentation, interviews with key personnel in the partner organisations, field visits and focus-group discussions with intended beneficiaries as well as community leaders and members of various community based organisations (CBOs), including school committees, traditional burial societies (*iddir*), child rights clubs, this study maps outcomes and effects of the SC Norway programme and discusses possible impacts arising from them. Fieldwork was carried out in February and October 2003, as well as March 2004.

Civil society is a notoriously imprecise concept that has entered development assistance terminology without careful thought. It is still being used to refer to a range of things, from good governance and respect for human rights to privatisation, decentralisation and public sector reform. In Ethiopia the practical interpretation of the concept is non-government organisations, with an emphasis on their delivery of social services to fill gaps in the capacity of government to meet needs. In the public debate, however, many Ethiopian intellectuals would prefer to reserve the term for organisations that articulate public interest and seek to influence public policy. Few Ethiopian NGOs are involved in this kind of advocacy work.

The NGO sector in Ethiopia is young and still limited in numbers. A handful of NGOs were established during imperial times and a number of international NGOs took up work in the context of famine relief and drought rehabilitation during the Dergue years. Most local NGOs in Ethiopia, however, have come into being since the change of government in 1991. Even so, relations with the government have been uneasy. Both the Dergue and the current government have favoured organisations more directly controlled by themselves, such as the official mass organisations of the Dergue and the current regional development associations. NGOs have been treated with mistrust by the government and their work has been circumscribed by a detailed and cumbersome regulatory framework. This framework seems to effectively prevent Ethiopian NGOs from becoming membership organisations, which could evolve into civics movements, and inhibits NGOs from engaging in commercial activities under the guise of charity. Local NGOs primarily see their role as encompassing service delivery. They tend to shy away from advocacy work that might entail criticism of or confrontation with the government. Advocacy is thus largely restricted to non-controversial issues like the rights of children and the situation of women.

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1   The Evaluation Section was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in February 2004.

Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) operates on the basis of a programme and strategy that emphasises a rights-based approach to improve the situation of children and to promote greater acceptance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). SC Norway has formulated six global objectives for its work and additionally allows for the inclusion of various country-specific objectives to accommodate issues of particular importance in the countries where SC Norway works.

Hence, SC Norway's Ethiopia programme pursues the following six policy objectives:

• acceptance and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
• access to appropriate basic education, especially for girls
• attitudinal change regarding child labour
• efforts to provide support for child victims of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation
• reintegration and rehabilitation of children displaced by armed conflicts
• improved living conditions for children in difficult circumstances (AIDS orphans, AIDS victims, disabled children, children living in areas with low food security).

These objectives are pursued in a number of partnership projects with both Ethiopian NGOs and government agencies. SC Norway has recently made a policy decision not to implement projects directly. This is a significant change from SC Norway's previous strategy of implementing child-centred development through broad-based community development projects. SC Norway used to be one of the largest development organisations in Ethiopia, with over 600 employees. Concurrent with scaling down its organisation, SC Norway has clarified its conceptual foundations and put child rights at the forefront.

In practical terms this means that SC Norway has organised the larger part of its country programme in Ethiopia into a number of *partnerships with government agencies*, with an emphasis on primary education, work to counter violence and sexual abuse of children and improving the situation of children in the legal system. There are also a number of partnerships with local NGO's. These are usually smaller and more clearly circumscribed projects, involving the NGOs in projects to prevent the economic exploitation of children, to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and to provide assistance to handicapped children. Only a small part of the SC Norway project portfolio in Ethiopia is directed at increasing income and reducing poverty in these terms.

SC Norway spends some 65% of its non-emergency budget in Ethiopia on primary education. By all accounts this seems to have been a successful undertaking. SC Norway has developed and field tested an alternative model for the first cycle of primary school, - Alternative Basic Education for Children out of School (ABECS) that is cheaper, more flexible and more compatible with local conditions than the formal schools. At the same time it maintains high quality and ensures that children have the opportunity to continue their education in the regular education system. ABECS was developed in close collaboration with the education authorities in Amhara Regional State and after a pilot phase the ABECS model will now be made available in all 114 districts of the state. SC Norway will continue to support the ABECS programme, concentrating it efforts on maintaining the quality of the ABECS education in the scaling-up exercise. Thus far, the outcome of the ABECS programme seems promising, and its potential impact seems to exceed the comparatively modest funding that ABECS has received.

SC Norway has also been involved in another innovative project with a government agency in the North Gonder Zone to curb Harmful Traditional Practices, with an emphasis on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriages. The project is based on weekly radio programmes and follow-up of organised radio listening groups by field workers. The reported outcome of these activities is a dramatic reduction in the number of FGM practitioners and incidences of child marriage, but so far the validity of these reports has not been independently tested.

The third broad area of SC Norway partnership with government agencies concerns child protection in the legal system. Child protection units have been set up by the Police Commission in Addis Ababa and at a number of police stations in the Southern Peoples Regional State to shelter children from the

regular legal system and to provide community-based rehabilitation services. The project has been implemented with technical assistance from an Ethiopian NGO. In parallel with this, SC Norway has provided support to a project at the Federal Supreme Court to review the legal provisions for juvenile justice.

SC Norway partnerships with Ethiopian NGOs are usually organised into projects with smaller budgets and of shorter duration than the partnerships with government agencies, even though a partnership may involve several consecutive projects. Currently the focus of the NGO partnerships is on HIV/AIDS prevention. Some activities relate to other SC Norway strategic objectives, including reducing poverty, providing succour to handicapped children and preventing the economic exploitation of children. These are all relatively small projects. Although they clearly relate to SC Norway policy objectives and are valuable in their own right, it is not obvious how they contribute to synergies and the direction of the overall programme.

SC Norway in Ethiopia pursues its policy objectives in a set of partnerships that have been pragmatically entered into with the aim of reaching the largest possible number of children. Given the rights-based approach that SC Norway has adopted it clearly makes sense to primarily work with the duty holders in Ethiopia, those whose obligation and responsibility it is to fulfil the rights of children. Partly because of its history in Ethiopia and partly because of internal policy clarifications, SC Norway has been able to develop viable and effective partnerships with government agencies, especially in the areas of education and justice. Outcomes seem to justify these strategic choices; the potential impact of the ABECS model, in particular, could be extensive.

SC Norway partnerships with Ethiopian NGOs cannot be explained with reference to explicit policy to develop civil society institutions for their own sake. There are probably specific historical explanations for the relationship between SC Norway and Ethiopian NGOs, including the staff retrenchment programme engendered by changes in SC Norway's operational policy in Ethiopia. Several Ethiopian NGOs were founded by former SC Norway staff members. SC Norway has recently started a process of assessing the capacity of their partners, with a view to strengthening capacities. Given SC Norway's insistence on a rights-based approach, and the consequent emphasis on child rights advocacy, the pronounced bias within Ethiopian NGOs in favour of service delivery projects may create new dilemmas. Up to now the NGO partners have struggled to find their place and to safeguard their sustainability, mostly by expanding their network of potential donors. Ethiopian NGOs are not membership organisations and have up to now been prohibited by official regulations from engaging in income-generating activities. For various historical reasons they have also suffered from a poor reputation in the eyes of a large part of the public in Ethiopia. Many Ethiopian NGOs are now consolidating their operations through networking and active alliances with local authorities, working actively with various community-based organisations to find new approaches to solve the concerns that engage various sectors of the community. They have gained a new respectability and legitimacy, and are actively using the opportunities offered by the decentralisation of Ethiopia's public administration to demonstrate their capacity and commitment to serving public development-related causes.

Hence, SC Norway's partnership and support of Ethiopian NGOs has contributed to the evolution of a vibrant civil society in Ethiopia, albeit in indirect ways. These processes take place at the grass-roots and community level, and SC Norway as an organisation can only play an oblique supportive role in fostering civil society organisations. The interplay between Ethiopian NGOs and the evolving forms of community-based organisation, particularly in the urban contexts of Addis Ababa and the other large cities can be seen as the clearest expressions of the genesis of civil society in Ethiopia. Particular mention must also be made of efforts to involve traditional burial associations, *iddir*s, in meeting the new challenges of contemporary society, like the plight of HIV/AIDS orphans. These burial associations are well-established and robust membership organisations established for the specific purpose of providing mutual assistance in funerals; the extent to which they have the financial and administrative capacity to take on additional welfare functions in local communities is not yet clear.

Throughout its comparatively long history in Ethiopia, SC Norway has been a factor and a proponent of children's rights in the country. Under the current regime the UNCRC has offered itself as a new

platform for child rights advocacy, which SC Norway has engaged in both through its partnership with Ethiopian agencies and organisations as well as through the Save the Children Alliance in Ethiopia (an alliance of foreign NGOs). The Ethiopian government has ratified the UNCRC and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been charged with developing action plans for its implementation. There is a certain mobilisation effect through the network of Ethiopian NGOs, many of which include the UNCRC in their mission statements, perhaps because many of them were founded and/or are staffed by former employees of the Save the Children organisations. Ethiopian NGOs are not, however, eager to confront or criticise the government, and therefore shape their advocacy work into technical advice and practical cooperation in the implementation of public policies. The Alliance is seemingly better placed to engage in policy debate, including (constructive) criticism of government policies and government efforts in this field. From a civil society perspective the active involvement of the Alliance must be seen as a short-term and temporary solution that should be replaced by the active participation of Ethiopian organisations in the democratic process of promoting child rights in Ethiopia. The active participation of the Alliance will sooner or later become a liability in this process.

Finally, the overarching purpose of Norwegian development assistance to Ethiopia, including assistance provided to SC Norway through the *NGO channel*, is the reduction of poverty, as indicated in the Millennium Development Goals. The analysis of poverty reflected in the MDG is far more sophisticated than the simple measurements of income and distribution commonly used previously, pointing out for instance how lack of education and poor health are symptoms as well as causes of poverty. SC Norway's country programme for Ethiopia has concentrated the bulk of its resources in activities to promote primary education, which is directly related to the MDG (*Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education*). As pointed out above SC Norway's primary achievement, and the area in which the country programme is likely to have the greatest and most widespread impact, is precisely within primary education. Hence, SC Norway's country programme does impact on poverty. One must realise however, that investments in primary education take considerable time to mature, and the effects on poverty are likely to be difficult to measure.

Universal primary education is, of course, not a sufficient condition for the eradication of poverty. In terms of MDG (*Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*) Ethiopia represents an enormous challenge. SC Norway has allocated modest resources (approximately 5% of its non-emergency budget) to improving incomes and food security. These are individual projects that in and by themselves have demonstrated positive outcomes (eg in urban micro-credit projects) but given the scale of the problem in Ethiopia, these limited inputs can only make a minor impact.

1 Introduction

This report is one in a series of four reports[2] resulting from a study commissioned by the Evaluation Section of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs[3] in December 2002 to assess the impact of the work of Norwegian non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The study focuses on the work of two Norwegian NGOs in two selected countries; FORUT in Sri Lanka and Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) in Ethiopia. The inception report examines methodological issues related to the Terms of Reference for the study (appendix 1). The second report, published in October 2004, discusses the findings from the Sri Lanka study. The third report discusses the findings from the Ethiopia country study. The final report, to be published by the end of 2004, is a synthesis report based on the findings from the two country reports and the inception report. The findings and lessons will discuss the contributions of Norwegian NGOs to strengthening civil society and achieving the general goals of Norwegian development cooperation policy, such as poverty reduction, democratisation and human rights. The Ethiopian and Sri Lankan country studies, however, approach these issues from the more specific and restricted perspective of how Norwegian NGOs contribute to strengthening civil society in developing countries.

The Ethiopia country study focuses on how the current activities of SC Norway contribute to strengthening civil society in Ethiopia. Both the country and the NGO in question were selected by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before it invited proposals to examine the activities of Norwegian NGOs in developing countries in this regard.

Aims of the study

The new guidelines for Norwegian public support to NGOs involved in development work, issued in November 2001, are the direct motivation for this study[4]. These guidelines are formulated to organise public funding and support for a wide range of development-related interventions undertaken by an equally wide range of Norwegian NGOs. The proportion of Norwegian Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided through NGO's has grown significantly over the past few years and now surpasses the proportion of ODA provided in direct bilateral assistance programmes. Some support is provided directly to (local) NGOs in developing countries, but such direct funding is usually seen as administratively costly and a strategy that easily leads to unintended outcomes[5]. As yet, this channel for support is poorly explored. The preferred mode of funding is support to the activities of Norwegian NGOs that in turn may enter into various partnership arrangements with NGOs in developing countries. Although Norway does provide funding to regional and international NGO's, more than 2/3 of Norwegian support is channelled through approximately 100 Norwegian organisations. Some 30 of the larger organisations have entered into long-term (multi-year) co-operative agreements with the Norwegian development assistance authorities. All in all, Norwegian ODA through NGOs amounts to approximately NOK 3 billion annually. Norway is more active than any other OECD country in using this channel for development assistance[6].

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2   The reports are available on www.norad.no (Evaluation).
3   The Evaluation Section was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in February 2004.
4   NORAD: *Grant Schemes for Humanitarian Assistance and Development Cooperation by Norwegian and International Voluntary Actors*, Oslo, November 2001.
5   see Bebbington, A & R. Ridell: "*The Direct Funding of Southern NGOs by Donors*" Journal of International Development, Vol.7 (1995) No.6.
6   see St.meld. (White Paper) nr. 35 (2003–2004): *Felles kamp mot fattigdom; En helhetlig utviklingspolitikk.*

The 2001 guidelines are new in the sense that they underscore the linkage of NGO support to a set of policy objectives that have recently been set (or reaffirmed) for Norwegian development cooperation as a whole. One should keep in mind, however, that these guidelines also represent continuity in terms of providing financial support from the public purse to Norwegian NGOs involved in development work. The diversity of views, interests and approaches, as well as the diversity of organisations involved in the "*NGO channel*" have long been recognised in public policy as well-established and valuable aspects of Norwegian co-operation with developing countries. The guidelines clearly recognise the value of maintaining this diversity in the future, in terms of the diversity of approaches represented by the NGOs, but also in the sense that the diversity of interests represented by the Norwegian NGOs are significant expressions of Norwegian civil society.

The guidelines point to the evolution of civil society in developing countries as a major concern in Norwegian development cooperation policy. An active and strong civil society is seen as a valuable goal in its own right, particularly in terms of allowing more vigorous democratic participation, but also as a means of strengthening respect for human rights and achieving a range of national development objectives. Norwegian NGOs are thus expected, as a major policy goal, to engage in activities that in various ways lend support to the evolution of a strong civil society. This is obviously something that cannot be done in isolation from the various substantive fields of interest articulated by the NGOs, but a concern that must cut across the particular interests and interventions of NGOs receiving public support for development work. The guidelines do not, on the other hand, offer any particular prescriptions regarding how Norwegian NGOs should approach the issue of strengthening civil society.

In addition to the positive qualities expected from a dynamic civil society in terms of participation, democracy and good governance, the prominent attention given to civil society in the guidelines also points to the changing role of Norwegian (or Northern) NGOs. The context of NGO activities and the expectations that various NGO have had with regard to how activities initiated in different projects are to be adopted, taken over and carried forward (by local communities, local organisations, local governments or local interest groups) have been major concerns for the NGOs themselves and for their donors for a long time. The strong emphasis on the importance of strengthening civil society may thus be interpreted as shorthand for yet another prescription for solving the ubiquitous problem of sustainability of services and facilities put in place by development projects. Strong civil society organisations in developing countries are assumed to increasingly take over responsibility and owner-ship of projects; eventually these organisations will bring to bear their own views and opinions on the concerns and issues that drive the international NGOs and incorporate them in their own policies and activities. Norwegian NGOs are thus expected to gradually divest themselves of the operational responsibilities involved in running projects in developing countries. They will gradually assume new roles and provide new forms of added value to the resources provided through the *NGO channel*.

Although the new guidelines point to strengthened civil society in developing countries as the overarching goal of Norwegian development assistance provided through the *NGO channel*, they also invite proposals and encourage contributions from the NGOs in terms of meeting a range of other, perhaps more familiar and well-established goals. These goals, which have been given formal expression in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, are set out in various public policy documents (including the Norwegian Government's action plan for fighting poverty in developing countries of March 2002)[7]. The Millennium Development Goals also subsume a number of objectives that Norwegian NGOs, collectively and individually, aspire to attain.

The Norwegian NGOs generally agree with the directions pointed out in official development policy documents (partly because they have been allowed to influence the formulation of policy), but they also insist on maintaining their autonomy and their individual sense of purpose and direction within this landscape, generating a highly diversified NGO sector, representing a wide spectrum of interests and strategies. At first glance the new guidelines come across as rather monolithic in their insistence that the primary aim of Norwegian public support to the NGO sector is the promotion and strengthening of civil society in developing countries, but they also recognise the value and importance of preserving the highly diversified voluntary sector in Norway. This diversity is an obvious source of strength and the guidelines make a clear effort to compromise between an insistence

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7   Utenriksdepartementet (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs): *Kamp mot fattigdom! Regjeringens handlingsplan for bekjempelse av fattigdom i sør mot 2015*, Oslo, March 2002.

on the importance of promoting civil society in its own right, and recognition of the value of supporting NGOs in the pursuit of their respective goals and visions.

Methodology

It should be emphasised that this report is not an impact evaluation of Save the Children Norway's work in Ethiopia (see appendix 1 for the Terms of Reference for the study). SC Norway has been active in Ethiopia for close to 40 years and has been involved in a diversity of projects and programmes, under highly different circumstances. During this period the organisation has undergone great changes in terms of field methods, models and approaches but also in terms of staffing and professional capacity, in Norway as well as in Ethiopia. No attempt will be made to account fully for this history and how the various changes have come about. Nor will any attempt be made to trace the effects, outcomes and impact of the diversity of approaches implied in SC Norway's work in Ethiopia over this period of time. The scope of this report is more modest; it presents a brief contemporary account of the activities of a Norwegian NGO in a complex and foreign society. The focus will necessarily be on the current programming period (2002–2005) and on SC Norway's outlook on what it intends to achieve in this period with regard to the specific concerns of this study, viz. a more viable civil society.

SC Norway's intentions with regard to what it wants to achieve are set out in its global strategy documents[8] as well as in the country programme for Ethiopia[9]. These intentions are the main frame of reference for this report as well as for SC Norway's practical work in Ethiopia. The main methodological device underlying this report is then to place these intentions and the activities that derive from them in the context of contemporary Ethiopian society, and to trace the effects and outputs of these activities, in order to discuss intended as well as unintended outcomes, particularly with respect to the civil society issues set out above. Another way of putting this is that the transition from intention to activity is usually based on a theory on how a particular activity will contribute to the realisation of the intention. Hence, project implementation may be seen as a way of testing theories about the relationship between intentions, activities and results, with or without a clearly expressed assumption that all other factors must remain the same. In real life this stable and unchanging context is of course never found. In fact, contexts change all the time, sometimes even due to the mere fact that a project is implemented. However, important considerations arise from the context in which activities are implemented. There are few activities that are insensitive to the context in which they are implemented, in that they will always produce the intended result irrespective of context or how it changes. Many elements of this context are known and accounted for in project design, but there are also a number of unknown issues that easily jeopardise outcomes. Successful implementation of activities often depends on how well these unknown issues are handled, but is important to keep in mind that circumstances sometimes change so much and so quickly that even if an activity is implemented exactly as intended, the intended result may remain elusive, or even directly counterproductive in terms of the original intentions.

The context that SC Norway has operated in has undergone dramatic changes over the period that SC Norway has been active in Ethiopia. These changes have partly been brought about by natural calamities, which have had a profound impact on society, like the great famines that Ethiopia has experienced in the last few decades. Other important components of this context involve the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, the all-pervasive effects of the radical land reform of 1975, the subsequent Marxist regime, the civil war, the change of government of 1991, the secession of Eritrea and the 1998–2000 war with Eritrea. The evolution of SC Norway into a professional development organisation over this period as well as decisions internal to SC Norway, with regard to strategies, approaches and other operational matters have also engendered significant changes in the operations of SC Norway in Ethiopia.

It is necessary to emphasise one particular point in a discussion of the effects of the wider societal context on SC Norway operations in Ethiopia. SC Norway has throughout its presence in Ethiopia been registered as a foreign NGO. This has had a number of operational advantages, and at one stage, this status was an essential prerequisite for doing any work at all. However, this status also means that

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8   Save the Children Norway's Strategy 2002–2005 (Adopted by the National Assembly 2001).
9   Country Programme Strategy for 2002–2005, Save the Children Norway – Ethiopia (January 2002).

SC Norway has operated in Ethiopia in accordance with rules and regulations created for the specific purpose of providing government control over non-government organisations. Changes in the regulatory environment have therefore quickly translated into a new operational context for project implementation. NGOs are sometimes characterised as working "outside" politics, partly in the sense that they strive to be seen as politically neutral, but also in the sense that their activities are perceived as apolitical or outside the political process. In the case of Ethiopia, it is difficult to maintain this position. NGOs have been important development actors and the government has taken a keen interest in what national as well as international NGOs do. The regulation of NGOs is an important item on the political agenda.

Hence, it is important to account for both programme theories as well as contextual factors in a study of the outcome and impact of a set of NGO activities. In the case of SC Norway in Ethiopia, an attempt has been made to examine various sub-sets of the SC Norway country programme for Ethiopia, to gain an understanding of the intentions underlying the specific project activities, to appraise the contexts for project implementation and to trace the outcome of project implementation in terms of benefits for the intended target groups. The sources of information in this process range from project documentation (proposals, plans, progress reports, assessments and evaluations as well as interviews with project staff) to published analyses of various aspects of Ethiopian society (in particular the on-going debate on Ethiopian civil society), which have provided the context for project implementation. Interviews and focus group discussions with the intended beneficiaries were organised partly to cross-check project documentation on the results achieved by the projects, but also to engage in open-ended discussions about project activities, the context of implementation and outcomes, both intended and unintended.

It is important to note that the impact chain (between SC Norway's programmatic intentions at one end and impact in terms of benefits to poor people in Ethiopia at the other) is long. There are many agents operating at various levels and many steps involved. The different organisations involved in this chain have only partly overlapping interests and each link in the impact chain is open to numerous influences, so that the outcome may be shaped in quite unexpected ways. Again it is important to note that while SC Norway's Ethiopian partner organisations from time to time may be described as sub-contractors in terms of promoting policies and views that emanate from SC Norway (or the international Save the Children Alliance), the partner organisations are also autonomous organisations with agendas that often extend beyond SC Norway policies. Part of the partnership process indeed encourages partner organisations to develop an independent outlook, rooted in a different reality. This loss of agency in structures for the delegation of authority is well known and can be expressed in different ways, from simple anecdotes to calculations of statistical probability. In the case of the structure in place to implement SC Norway's intentions in Ethiopa, this study will limit its observations to state that long implementation chains render causal analysis difficult, and that it becomes very hard to attribute success or failure to any particular agent in the chain.

2   Civil society

The prominence given to civil society in the guidelines referred to above and the notion that Norwegian NGOs primarily should support the evolution and growth of civil society organisations in developing countries are not fortuitous. The 1990s saw revived interest in the concept of civil society in research as well as in public discourse. Concepts of civil society have a long intellectual history and there were a number of reasons for its revival at this point in time. An important impetus was the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe that revealed the importance of social formations that were able to maintain their independence from an authoritarian state. In the West there was also growing disenchantment with established economic models for social development. State-driven central planning models as well as the neo-liberal fascination with free markets were seen as failures; civil society re-emerged as a driving force in a possible "third sector".

However, "civil society" is a notoriously imprecise and slippery concept, used in very different ways by different people. It seems to have entered development assistance terminology without careful thought and has over the past decade or so been used as short-hand for a range of ideas including human rights, good governance, democracy, participation, privatisation and public sector reform. Precise definitions of civil society and what constitutes civil society have been difficult, particularly when concepts and definitions developed in a Western context are applied in non-Western settings. It is sometimes argued, for instance, that the notion of civil society refers to a specific stage in the history of the nation-state and industrial capitalism, and as such is delimited in time and space (Western Europe in the late eighteenth century) and irrelevant to non-Western society. This lack of relevance clarifies the limited explanatory powers of the notion of civil society for the complexities of African associational life, which is often seen as interposed between a predatory, authoritarian state and informal, weakly integrated forms of organisation, often depending on ascribed membership.

The guidelines for support to the development work of Norwegian NGOs define civil society as the "*formal and informal networks that are active in the public sphere between the state and the family*". Other definitions refer to civil society as "*groups formed for collective action outside the State and the marketplace*" (van Rooy, 1998:30)[10], while a wider and more general definition points to civil society as "*the arena in which people come together to pursue interests they hold in common*" (Edwards, 1998:2)[11]

NORAD's guidelines, in a brief discussion of civil society, indicate that there are at least two aspects that should be considered. This same duality has been pointed out on many occasions in the debate about civil society that took place in the 1990s. Civil society, in English as well as in Norwegian usage, may be a noun, ie a civil society is something concrete, usually an institution or an organisation (which needs to be specified), or it may refer to specific qualities, ie civil society is a quality of society. In line with the former understanding of civil society, the term "*civil society organisations*" has been created, pointing to various kinds of social groups displaying some kind of cohesion, inner structure and organisation on the basis of some public concern ("*interests they hold in common*"). Numerous NGOs meet these criteria. Many observers would indeed reserve the term "*civil society*" for these kinds of structures. On the other hand, civil society is also often seen as an aspect of participation, democracy and good governance, providing a voice for the poor and an arena for strengthening their influence in the political process.

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10   Alison van Rooy (ed.): Civil Society and the Aid Industry, Earthscan Publications, London 1998.
11   Michael Edwards: Nailing the Jelly to the Wall: NGOs, Civil Society and International Development, Edwards Associates, London, 1998.

These qualitative aspects of the concept of "*civil society*" have generated a lot of optimistic interest with regard to the role that civil society is expected to play in the good governance-agendas of various donor agencies. This role seems to become even more important in situations where government administration is decentralised and where government is open to non-state groups. It has been proposed that civil society in this qualitative sense by implication involves a notion of self-reinforcing "virtuous circles" incorporating the state, the market economy and civil society that could balance growth, equity and stability. Much of the interest in civil society throughout the 1990s, particularly in the development discourse, was generated by the rapid rise of neo-liberal ideology that envisaged a reduced role for the state, and new forms of service delivery to the public through various flexible combinations of governmental, non-governmental and private institutional actors. Civil society was here envisaged as some kind of regulatory mechanism, keeping at bay the inefficiencies of a stifling bureaucracy as well as the inequities of a rapacious market.

There is a danger that international development assistance donors will refine the neo-liberal view of civil society in an instrumentalist direction, so that civil society organisations, even in the form of formal democratic membership associations, will be limited to deliver predetermined services according to an agenda agreed upon between government and donor. It is important to keep in mind that civil society, also in developing countries, encompasses a range of qualitatively different organisations. While they all represent the particular interests of various segments of society, their approaches vary significantly. A major distinction should be drawn between membership and non-membership organisations. From a Norwegian point of view, membership organisations, promoting the interests of their members, are well-established and legitimate structures. Yet there are many NGOs that are involved in various forms of service delivery that are not membership organisations, promoting interests that do not originate in a membership, but that may none the less be perfectly legitimate. Conversely, membership organisations, such as professional unions, women's groups and so on, which primarily represent the interests of their members, may also be involved in a range of other activities, such as development, charity, self-help or other forms of service delivery beyond their membership. Most civil service organisations mix representational and operational functions, or what in current discourse may be referred to as advocacy and service delivery functions.

The neo-liberal view of civil society as an alternative agent in public service delivery is important because it drives donor interest and efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in this regard. Equally important, however, is the capacity of civil society organisations to promote particular interests and priorities that are rooted in more general values and beliefs than the direct needs of its membership. Civil society organisations must be encouraged to set their own agenda. One cannot expect them to be captured by the development discourse in vogue.

Civil Society in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a highly complex society. Although it is far beyond the scope of this report to make even a cursory attempt to account for this complexity, a few points will be raised that are of particular importance to the discussion of civil society. A dominant feature of social life in Ethiopia is the hierarchically organised, highly centralised and authoritarian nature of the Ethiopian state. While it is difficult to directly compare the structures of the imperial state prior to the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 with the structures in place since then, the direction of movement in Ethiopian state formation over the past couple of centuries can basically be described as a consolidation of state power and an elaboration of structures to exercise state authority. Where the imperial state depended on various forms of indirect rule, which in many of the outlying regions amounted to a form of power-sharing with local political structures, the two subsequent regimes have in various ways increased and intensified state penetration and greatly increased the presence of the state, particularly in the rural areas.

In some parts of Ethiopia today (particularly in the North) the structures of the state, put in place to exert control and command support, extend to the level of the *mengistawi budin*, which are sub-units of the more well-known *kebele*s originally created to administer the all-pervasive Land Reform in 1975. The *mengistawi budin*, which may be translated as "government teams", represent the lowest level of state presence and the lowest level of state administration. These teams are internally
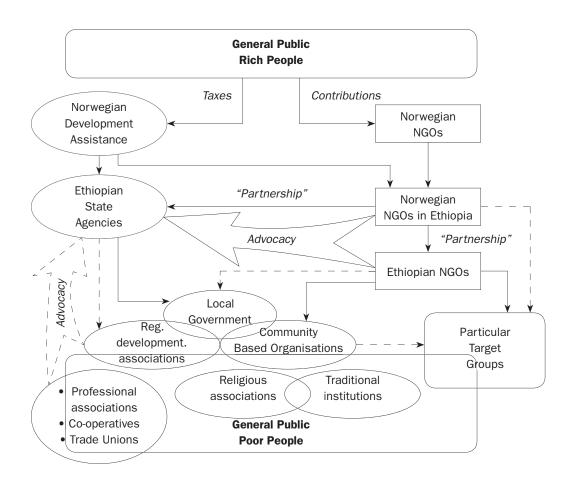
differentiated into 3 squads of 12 households each, under an elected leadership that is primarily responsible to the higher levels in the state structure (*kebele* and *wereda*) rather than to the team itself. The *menistawi budin* is a multi-purpose unit charged with all local matters where the state has an interest, from maintaining local security and law and order to implementing instructions received from above, including the mobilisation of free labour and organising voluntary contributions and participation in development projects. As far as the Ethiopian government is concerned, the *mengistawi budin* is the smallest unit in a coherent system for local administration and representation, as well as a structure for local participation that is flexible enough to accommodate all public interests down to the lowest level in the system. In addition to being functional units in the administrative apparatus of the state, these units also occupy virtually all democratic space at the local level. There is in principle no issue in the public domain that is not of interest to the *mengistawi budin*.

However, in many parts of Ethiopia (particularly in the South) the state structure at best operates in parallel with other well-established social structures. These structures, which may be described as the traditional social organisation of the many ethnic groups that have been incorporated into the Ethiopian state over the past century or two, are not recognised by the state except in the sense conveyed by the generic term *yehager shemagilé*, or community elders. Traditional social organisation, however, is often involved in the daily lives of the people concerned and relates to local issues, concerns and problems in ways that the formal administrative system of *wereda* and *kebele* cannot aspire to achieve. Traditional social organisation, including various forms of political and religious leadership, may be seen as the vestiges of the imperial *balabbat* system of indirect rule. This system is on the one hand functionally more effective in organising individuals for various purposes, particularly because traditional leadership has enjoyed a more widespread legitimacy than the state structures. On the other hand traditional leadership must not be perceived to challenge the hegemonic authority of the state and its local representatives at the *wereda* and *kebele* levels. In many Ethiopian communities, particularly in those societies where the state has had limited economic or political interests, these traditional social structures of authority and leadership may still be more important than the ones put in place by the state. They are particularly important within fields that do not challenge the state, such as civil law (marriage, inheritance), resolution of non-violent conflicts, management and protection of natural resources, mutual assistance and self-help groups etc. Some of them arrange large public events (for instance, ceremonies and rites involving a large number of people), or organise large public works projects (like traditional irrigation channels, well structures, protective walls, fences etc.) that are significant expressions of local interest or of vital importance to the local economy. These structures of traditional social organisation are clearly outside both the state and the market; whether they should be thought of as civil society is a moot point.

Many observers are reluctant to categorise traditional political organisations as civil society, mainly because membership is ascriptive and participation is more or less mandatory. As far as the government is concerned they are irrelevant, at least as long as they are not involved in open competition with the local structures of the state. Young aspiring members of the communities in which they are important often find them backward, reactionary and an impediment to progress and development. NGOs working in these areas rarely recognise traditional social organisation as a suitable platform for popular participation in development projects, partly because this is frowned upon by the authorities and partly because NGO staff find it easier to relate to government structures or create their own. The instances of NGOs ignoring or bypassing local traditional leadership and preferring to put their own facilitators in charge of participatory development are many. In fact, many observers believed that the Dergue regime had driven traditional social organisation out of existence, replacing it with the *kebele* structure and the officially sanctioned mass organisations. But as the *kebele* became increasingly discredited and as the Dergue crumbled, traditional social organisation re-emerged and re-asserted its authority over the communities.

The current reorganisation and decentralisation of state structures is of course highly relevant in this context, as it basically aims at harnessing local interest and local leadership. In the course of time, state structures at the *wereda* and *kebele* levels will probably, to an increasing extent, occupy the space that has been the domain of traditional social organisation, but how quickly this will happen is difficult to predict. There are likely to be significant regional differences as well, as is already evident.

The following diagram is offered to provide an overview of the units that are relevant to a discussion of civil society in Ethiopia. The diagram also tries to depict the units that a Norwegian NGO like SC Norway must relate to in its efforts to make a positive contribution to the strengthening of civil society:

In a recent discussion of civil society organisations in Ethiopia, Dessalegn Rahmato[12] sees civil society in terms of "*a variety of autonomous, voluntary institutions which provide services to individuals and which articulate public interests*" (p.104). Dessalegn is furthermore sympathetic to yet another definition provide by Blair[13] who sees *civil society as organisations whose objective it is to influence public policy* and is on this basis prepared to exclude institutions that are solely engaged in service delivery. Dessalegn uses the first set of criteria to describe civil society institutions in Ethiopia as consisting of

- NGOs
- advocacy organisations
- professional organisations
- co-operatives, trade unions
- religious organisations, and
- the independent free press.

Interestingly, Dessalegn excludes informal (or traditional) organisations as well as ethnic self-help or development associations from his definition of civil society. Although these may represent autonomous and voluntary associations, Dessalegn excludes them from consideration on the grounds that

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12 Dessalegn Rahmato: *Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia* in Bahru Zewde & Siegfried Pausewang: Ethiopia; The challenge of democracy from below, Uppsala 2002.

13 Harry Blair: *Donors, Democratisation and Civil Society* in Hume & Edwards (eds): NGO, States and Donors. Too close for Comfort? Macmillan Press, London 1997.

there is little evidence that they are able to transcend the particular interests specific to them, i.e. they are often based on interests that are outside the domain of public policy.

Both van Beurden[14] and Jeffrey Clark[15] start their surveys of Ethiopian civil society, however, with a reference to these traditional institutions. These institutions (see box below) are prime expressions of "*horizontal solidaristic groups which cross-cut vertical ties of kinship and patronage*", to use Robert Putnam's definition of civil society[16]. Dessalegn points out, however, that there is still considerable doubt about the ability of these traditional institutions to articulate wider public concerns, beyond the immediate interests of their members, even if their functional capacity in terms of meeting specific and strictly circumscribed demands from their membership is indubitable.

Traditional organisations, in particular the *iddirs* (or burial societies), have attracted a lot of interest and attention among local and international NGOs as viable and often well-organised community-based organisations. They clearly deliver essential services and are of high value to members. There is great variation among the *iddirs* with regard to how prosperous they are, which depends mostly on the income levels of their memberships. A number of them have developed into virtual savings societies, with investments in small businesses. Prosperous *iddirs* have also contributed to the construction of schools, clinics, water facilities and roads, as well as other social amenities (e.g. communal baths, toilets etc).

A number of both international and local NGO see the *iddirs* as community-based organisations through which a number of service delivery projects may be organised. Experience to date has been mixed. A recent survey[17] indicates that to the extent iddirs have been successful in such ventures the projects have been initiated locally and entirely funded by membership contributions. Collaboration with outside funding institutions or the incorporation of external concerns into the activities of the *iddirs* seems to have few successes to report thus far. Several of SC Norway's partner organisations, however, still have high hopes with regard to involving the *iddirs* in for instance HIV/AIDS campaigns, in providing home-based care for AIDS patients or in incorporating support of AIDS orphans. Some rich *iddirs* may be able to take on such new tasks, but there are also many poor *iddirs* that are reportedly on the verge of collapsing due to increased mortality rates caused by the AIDS pandemic.

IDDIRS

Probably the most widely spread traditional association in Ethiopia are the famous *iddir*s. Their origin is not clear but seems to be associated with the growth of urban centres at the beginning of the 20th century, as an alternative to tightly integrated social networks in the rural areas. Basically the *iddir*s are associations established by members who agreed to contribute a fixed amount of money on a monthly basis which is used to help defray burial costs when a spouse, a child or immediate relatives of a family passes away. The membership may be recruited on the basis of family, friends, neighbourhood, place of work, occupation etc.

The *iddir* members are expected to take care of all practical matters relating to burial, including announcing the death of one of its members, pitching the *iddir* tent in the courtyard of the house of the deceased, where the bereaved family will receive the

14   van Beurden, Joos: *Ethiopia; NGO Country Profile*, 1998. Gemeenschappelijk Overleg Medefinanciering – GOM, Oegstgeest, 1998.
15   Clark, Jeffrey: *Civil Society, NGOs and Development in Ethiopia; A Snapshot View*, The World Bank, Washington, 2000.
16   Quoted in David Lewis: *Civil Society in African Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept*, Development and Change, Vol. 33 (2002) No. 4.
17   Shiferaw Tesfaye Mengesha: *The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Development and Change: The case of iddirs in Akaki, Nazreth and Addis Ababa*, M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies, June 2002.

respects and condolences of relatives and friends. The *iddir* also lends out its (communally owned) cooking and service utensils during the three days of mourning after the funeral. The *iddir* members (especially the women) prepare simple meals and serve drink (often coffee) for the neighbourhood and visitors that come to the wake. Recently, the *iddir*s have also started to donate a fixed amount of cash to the family of the deceased to cover miscellaneous expenses related to the funeral and the mourning rituals.

*Iddir*s have written rules and regulations and are organised with a certain leadership structure that is known to both its membership, the general public and to the authorities. Usually there is a well-known and respected *iddir* chairman (called the *iddir dagna* or the *iddir judge*) who presides over *iddir* meetings. Monthly contributions are paid to a person elected as the cashier or treasurer and there is a secretary that keeps the roster of members. The monthly contribution that people pay varies from one *iddir* to the other. *Iddir* management is transparent, accountable and cheap.

Although *iddir*s usually are thought of as an urban occurrence, there are also rural *iddir*s that often formalise former neighbourhood or kinship-based obligations to render service at funerals.

But even if individual *iddir*s were able to assume new responsibilities and present themselves as new arenas for public participation, Dessalegn would not attach much importance to them in terms of their contributions to civil society. Similarly, other traditional expressions of associationalism, such as the *senbeté* (parish devotional groups) *mehabir* (religious societies to celebrate particular saints), *equb* (saving's associations) or *debo* (communal work parties) are outside the public domain in the sense that they are irrelevant to public policy. The interests that they represent are not contested in the public domain. Associationalism and service delivery, and even active advocacy are in Dessalegn's point of view not sufficient conditions for his conception of civil society, which is distinctly Gramscian in its emphasis that civil society must involve the contestation of the ideological hegemony of the state and roll back the overwhelming power and presence of the state in Ethiopia. Dessalegn outlines the weaknesses of civil society organisations in Ethiopia in these terms, pointing to their inability to protect individuals from the overwhelming presence and influence of the state. In fact, state domination of all aspects of Ethiopian society seems to be the main challenge. Without the deliberate disengagement by the State from many sectors of social and economic life, civil society will remain stifled.

NGOs in Ethiopia

In practical terms, the NGO sector in Ethiopia is taken to be the main expression of civil society in Ethiopia, whether in terms of representing civil society organisations or qualitative aspects associated with civil society. Notwithstanding the academic debates referred to above, the NGO sector is often seen to be synonymous with civil society. Prior to the 1973/74 famine, the number of NGOs established in Ethiopia was restricted. They mainly addressed social welfare issues, including the situation of vulnerable groups like the disabled and orphans. Kassahun Berhanu[18] has pointed out how these "*first-generation*" NGOs (primarily various church organisations, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, a few charitable organisations as well as Save the Children from the UK and Sweden/Norway) mostly restricted their work to Addis Ababa. They worked in close co-operation with relevant government departments, were often housed in government institutions and often included government officials in their various governing bodies.

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18   Kassahun Berhanu: *The Role of NGOs in Promoting Democratic Values* in Bahru Zewde & Siegfried Pausewang (eds): Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below, Uppsala, 2002 (pp.120–129).

This picture changed dramatically with the drought of 1973/74 and the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974. The famine relief effort caused a number of NGOs from the North (sometimes also referred to as international NGOs – INGOs) to take up emergency work in Ethiopia. Many remained in the post-famine period to take part in various rehabilitation and development efforts. The number of NGOs present in Ethiopia grew, even though Ethiopia's radical Dergue regime was generally distrustful of the NGOs, only reluctantly accepting their presence. Another famine in 1984/85 provided new impetus for famine relief work and a subsequent influx of NGOs. The number of NGOs in Ethiopia grew from less than 30 prior to the 1973/74 drought, to just over 100 in 1990. Most of these were Northern or international NGOs. Hardly any Ethiopian NGOs, except for the few "*first-generation*" organisations, existed in Ethiopia during the Dergue. It has only been since the change of government in 1991 that the number of local NGOs has grown significantly:

Growth of Local and International NGOs in Ethiopia (1994–2000):

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2003
Local NGOs	24	96	160	246	291
International NGOs	46	96	119	122	128
Total	70	192	270	368	419

From: Dessalegn Rahmato: *Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia* in Bahru Zewde & Siegfried Pausewang (eds): Ethiopia; The Challenge of Democracy from Below, Uppsala, 2002 (pp.103–119) and CRDA Members' Profile (CRDA, May 2003)

The last decade has seen the growth of a large number of local NGOs in Ethiopia. While some of the "*first-generation*" NGO's referred to above were well established as national Ethiopian organisations at an early stage, the NGO sector in the Dergue period was dominated by international NGOs attached to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Most of these took up work in Ethiopia in the context of famine relief and humanitarian emergency operations, and continued working in the post-emergency period with a broad range of development issues.

The NGOs were tolerated by the government but operated under strict controls. Many Western donors were reluctant to enter into regular bilateral development cooperation with the Dergue regime, which had a poor human rights record and at the same time was firmly aligned with the Soviet Union. The international NGOs were often used as a conduit for development assistance funds to various post-famine recovery and rehabilitation projects. These were mostly small-scale projects, strictly circumscribed by government policy and government regulations. Still, the development assistance provided by the NGOs was important, since little non-military development assistance was forthcoming from Ethiopia's East Block partners. Although the current Ethiopian government is much more acceptable to aid donors, the proportion of total development assistance to Ethiopia channelled through NGO projects has remained high. As late as 1999 an estimated USD 120 million, or some 20% of all non-emergency development assistance to Ethiopia from all sources, totalling approximately USD 660 million, came through the NGOs. A significant proportion of these funds are provided by the public purse in various donor countries.

During the Dergue period international NGOs were tolerated as a means of securing international resources. The government was intent on presenting the activities of the NGOs as public welfare provided by the government. The NGOs accepted this gap-filling role assigned to them by the government, and many developed into large development organisations with a considerable capacity to undertake development work. The NGOs had little choice but to work with the government, and on terms that precluded any advocacy work. Still, it has been noted, the costs of cooperation between the government and the NGOs were high. The government was intent on achieving a top-down transition to socialism, while the NGOs emphasised participatory bottom-up approaches. NGOs did cooperate with government departments, providing resources and training to government staff, but not in a mode that by any stretch of the imagination could be described as a partnership. The institutional arrangements emphasised control over NGO operations and often led to encroachment on NGO

autonomy. NGOs that wished to remain in Ethiopia[19] organised themselves into the Christian Relief and Development Association, an umbrella organisation that primarily promoted inter-NGO cooperation, but which also to some extent managed to secure the institutional autonomy of the member NGOs.

There were very few Ethiopian non-governmental organisations active during the Dergue. Beyond the few "*first-generation*" NGOs, a number of church organisations were tolerated by the government, which had its own ideas and strategies for public membership organisations. Through its Provisional Office of Mass Organisational Affairs (POMOA) the Dergue created 5 officially sanctioned Mass Organisations:

• The Peasant Associations (or *gebere mehabir*) later known as *kebele*.
• The Urban Dwellers Associations (or *kebele*).
• The Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA).
• The Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association (REYA).
• The Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

Although these mass organisations were presented as independent, interest-based membership organisations, they were in fact part of the Stalinist state apparatus that was dismantled with the fall of the Mengistu regime in 1991. REWA and REYA are completely gone, while the Red Cross has reverted to its former status as a regular NGO. The *kebele*s, on the other hand, have been maintained, although they have been re-organised and given new functions. In the current decentralisation exercise, in which the *wereda* will be established as the primary unit for administration and development, the lowest unit of representative government will be the *kebele*s (that now encompass 3–5 of the original *kebele*s created in 1975). The creation of the *mengistawi budin* must be seen as a measure to maintain functional control at the lowest level as the *kebele*s became larger.

The number of Ethiopian NGOs has proliferated since the 1991 change of government. The new regime has promoted a more liberal economic and political environment than its predecessor and its development philosophy is in tune with various NGO approaches, including grassroots participation. The current regime is, of course, not a liberal democracy, however, and at least up to the Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998–2000, the government was generally seen as unsympathetic to independent institutions. In the word of two observers "*the government has not viewed the existence of the NGO/voluntary sector as a good thing per se*"[20] and is not committed to pluralism for its own sake. After a brief period in which the Dergue state was dismantled and political space expanded significantly, tensions between the government and the NGOs increased. As early as 1993, all NGOs in Ethiopia were instructed to e-register with the Government, an exercise used by the government to deny registration to NGOs that were considered bogus (so-called briefcase NGOs or MONGOs – "My Own NGO") as well as NGOs that were considered politically unreliable or hostile to government policies. In 1994 the government conducted a survey that showed that the large majority of NGOs were involved in "*simplistic welfare activities*" that the government considered unproductive.

The government imposed stricter regulations on the NGOs, partly to coordinate their activities with developments instigated by the government, and partly to ensure that their activities did not threaten the legitimacy of the state. The international NGOs, in particular, many of which had operated various cross-border humanitarian and famine projects in areas controlled by the anti-Dergue coalition, were uncertain about the direction of the political transition that took place and were disappointed by the lack of government support. The government on its part saw the international NGOs as unregulated and powerful actors that often deployed resources in activities that were either contradictory or irrelevant to its own policies. Furthermore, the government also seemed to believe that the international NGOs were capturing development assistance funds that otherwise might have been provided directly to the government.

The new controls introduced through a set of guidelines issued in 1995 were seen by many international NGOs as threatening their autonomy. The guidelines provided detailed instructions on NGO operations (over 41 pages of text), attempting to strap the NGOs to various government programmes and structures,

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19   Only one NGO was in fact expelled (MSF-France in 1985, for criticising government resettlement policies and the war situation in the north).
20   Vaughan, S & K. Tronvoll: *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life*, Sida *studies* no. 10, Stockholm, 2004.

including provisions for assigning NGOs to work in particular areas. Additionally, two main concerns seem to inspire the guidelines. One is the fear that the local NGOs could develop into civics movements through a membership base that could prove politically hostile. Hence, Ethiopian NGOs are with very few exceptions not membership organisations. The second consideration is that NGOs could use their NGO status for covert commercial purposes. Hence the economic status of the NGOs is very closely supervised by the oversight authority.

Yet another re-registration exercise in 1995, which moved registration from the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission (DPPC), the successor to Dergue's RRC, to the Ministry of Justice, ended up denying registration to another 46 NGOs. Yearly licence renewals[21] are still used as a means of controlling NGOs. In addition to registering with the Ministry of Justice, development NGO's are supervised by the DPPC, which must approve all projects as well as annual plans and budgets, all quarterly accounts and reports. Technical supervision is provided by the concerned line ministry.

In spite of the generally tense relations between the NGOs, in particular the international NGOs, and the government, the number of Ethiopian NGOs has continued to grow.

Cumbersome registration procedures, frequent and detailed reporting and differences in outlook on crucial issues like grassroots participation and the legitimacy of the various regional Development Associations still separate government and the NGO community. In the view of the government the *kebele*s are community based development organisations that are crucial to the government's version of a participatory democracy. The NGOs on the contrary, see the *kebele*s as part of a top-down government structure.

The government tends to see the ethnically based Regional Development Associations in the various Regional States as nearly ideal NGOs:

> *The local origins of these associations, their membership orientation, their reliance on membership and community contributions, their compliance with local development priorities and goals, and their working with/through local organisations are some of their strong features which make them ideal NGOs* (Negasso, quoted in van Beurden, 1998:50).

In contrast, the NGOs view the Regional Development Associations as being too close to the government, characterised by political patronage and aggressive fund-raising. The Development Associations are therefore often referred to as "government-oriented NGOs" or GoNGOs. To many observers these Development Associations hark back to the officially sanctioned mass organisations of the Dergue.

Even if the difficult regulatory environment remains, the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Justice continues to grow. Johan Graham[22] points out that compared to many other African countries the number of NGOs in Ethiopia is relatively small. Kenya, for instance, has over 5,000 NGOs, and in South Africa there are over 30,000. However, given the difficult regulatory environment and remaining hostility from both the federal and the regional governments in Ethiopia, the prospects for the NGO sector are not good. John Graham estimates that only 1 local NGO in 4 will actually survive a natural weeding out process. At present it is too difficult to start and register a NGO, particularly in the rural areas where the hostile attention of officials tends to be far more pervasive than in the urban areas. The large majority of existing NGOs are urban based, with restricted geographical operations.

One outcome of the tense relations between the governments and the NGOs has been the creation of a *Code of Conduct* for NGOs, formally adopted in March 1999. The Code was the end result of a long process of networking and coalition-building among the various NGOs in Ethiopia, set in motion partly

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21   Recent changes now require licence renewals every three years.
22   John Graham: *Whither NGOs in Ethiopia? Local NGOs and the Future of NGOs in Ethiopia (Part III).* <u>Addis Tribune</u> 25 April 2003.

to protect the autonomy and integrity of the NGOs, partly to demonstrate to the government that the NGOs were capable of self-regulation and transparency. The formulation and adoption of the Code of Conduct is considered a major event in the relationship between the current government and the NGOs.

The next crucial point in this relationship, however, will come with the promulgation of new NGO legislation, which has been promised for a long time. Thus far, the legislative process has not been characterised by transparency. Although relations between the NGOs and the government received a boost during the extensive consultations that took place in Ethiopia in connection with the formulation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2002, the NGOs are uneasy. There has been minimal consultation on the legislation under preparation, and with the recent experiences of the draft press legislation in Ethiopia fresh in mind, the NGOs are concerned that the NGO legislation will also be an expression of government hostility. The draft press law clearly signals that government intends to retain the right to define what is good and acceptable quality in press matters. The main worry now is that the government, in a similar vein, will set standards for good and acceptable NGOs, and apply its own models and criteria to screen out the NGOs it finds unacceptable. Regulation along such lines would run counter to the ideal of diversity and pluralism as a guiding principle for the evolution of a strong civil society tradition in Ethiopia.

John Clark[23] has suggested the following matrix for NGO-government relations and Will Campbell[24] has used this model to show how government hostility to NGO activity in Ethiopia increased as NGOs shifted their work from service delivery to include advocacy for particular causes and the promotion of human rights. Ethiopia is for all practical purposes a single-party state, and although the current government is far less hostile to NGOs than during the Dergue period, there is ample evidence that the regulatory environment is an impediment to vigorous growth in the NGO sector. These impediments are likely to increase the further NGOs move from welfare projects and gap-filling social service provision towards an advocacy role and the promotion of human rights.

NGO-State relations

NGO function		Regime Type		
		Liberal democracy	Single-party state	Military dictatorship
	Welfare provision	Encouraged	Tolerated	Neutral
	Grassroots development	Tolerated	Neutral	Hostile
	Advocacy and human rights	Neutral	Hostile	Very hostile

With reference to this matrix, it may be useful to refine the view that the government in general is hostile to NGO involvement in advocacy work and the promotion of human rights. There seems to be a difference between local and international NGOs in this regard. At times international NGOs have come under strong criticism for failing to take up advocacy work in Ethiopia. Kasshun Berhanu, for instance, concludes that "*the contribution of NGOs in Ethiopia towards the emergence and consolidation of democratic values has been insignificant*" (2002:129), while Dessalegn Rahmato observes that:

> *Few of them* (NGOs in Ethiopia) *consider policy advocacy as one of their main responsibilities. Where NGOs have ventured into advocacy, it has often been over safe issues such as, for example, promoting the rights of the child, and campaigning against*

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23   Clark, John: *Democratising development: NGOs and the State*. Development in Practice, Vol. 2 (1992) no. 3.
24   Campbell, Will: *The Potential for Donor Mediation in NGO-State Relations: An Ethiopian Case Study*, IDS Working Paper 33, Brighton 1996.

cultural practices harmful to women. The organisations are not keen to challenge the state on any issue or even to draw attention to the need for alternative approaches or for reforms in public policy. They are a cautious lot, and while they may be privately critical of policy decisions, they are content to work within the policy framework and through state structures. The government is particularly hostile to NGOs taking up policy advocacy, and this has been one of the reasons why most of them have shunned it. It is perhaps fair to add here that the responsibility for taking a lead in policy advocacy rests on local NGOs; the international NGOs can only play a supportive role. (Dessalegn Rahmato, 2002:109)

The NGO sector in Ethiopia remains small and totally dominated by the state, which has put in place a regulatory environment that emphasises control and oversight. This is at least partly due to the generally poor reputation of Ethiopian NGOs sustained within government, within the academic community and in the public at large. It may also be explained by the rapid growth of the NGO sector (since 1991) and an associated missing "*organic evolution and indigenous consolidation of civil society. Lacking roots in community development, some emerged in the early 1990s with a clearer sense of their rights to special privileges (for duty free import of equipment, for instance) than of their responsibilities to their "constituents*""[25] Part of the problem, of course, is that very few Ethiopian NGOs are membership organisations (so that their constituency remains unclear). There have also been examples of NGOs established more or less for the express purpose of enriching a few individuals, providing the government with a public rationale for the elaborate and cumbersome regulatory framework now in place.

A second main characteristic of the sector is that most Ethiopian NGOs involve themselves in the provision of various public services, filling the gaps in the state's provision of services. Few Ethiopian NGOs see a role for themselves in policy-related advocacy, which may again be related to the lack of a clear constituency.[26] NGOs are seen by many, particularly in the government, as part of a (vaguely defined) political opposition; it is unclear on whose behalf they speak and to whom they are accountable. Although this argument underlies the detailed and burdensome NGO guidelines, most development NGOs do in fact make an effort to be as transparent as possible and to open up their operations and their objectives to inspection from the public. This tendency has no doubt received a vigorous impetus from the official anti-corruption campaigns of recent years. NGO participation in the recent PRSP process and in public debates on the national food security strategy, however, seems to have given the NGOs an added measure of legitimacy, but political timidity has, at least until recently, been a major characteristic of the sector[27]. The inclusion of NGO representatives in public policy processes may signal new opportunities for the NGOs, as some observers claim. None the less, the enabling environment remains difficult and there are no clear prescriptions for change. NGOs are constantly encouraged by the international community to exploit opportunities whenever they present themselves, but thus far the NGOs seem content to fill the space reluctantly granted to them by government.

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25   Vaughan, S & K.Tronvoll: *The Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life.*
      Sida studies no. 10, Stockholm, 2004 (p.63).
26   see HORN Consult: *Constituency Building: Diagnostic survey on Ethiopian NGOs.* Prepared for CRDA and
      OXFAM GB, Addis Ababa, December 2003.
27   PACT Ethiopia: *Report on the Enabling Environment for the Ethiopian NGO Sector,*
      Addis Ababa , February 2002.

3 Save the Children Norway (SC Norway)

SC Norway presents itself[28] as an organisation that is primarily concerned with the situation of children (in Norway as well as internationally) which has organised itself with a view to engaging in two basic tasks:

- practical work to improve the situation of children
- advocacy work at all levels to promote the rights of children, with particular reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Outlook

In line with these overarching goals, SC Norway has formulated the following *six global objectives* for its activities:

- contribute to general understanding, acceptance and support of the CRC
- contribute to general understanding of and active intervention to combat causes of poverty and economic exploitation, and thus create an environment conducive to the welfare of children
- contribute to the provision of good and relevant basic education for more children, especially girls
- contribute to sheltering children from economic exploitation
- contribute to protecting children against violence, sexual abuse and exploitation
- contribute to the provision of protection, development and social integration of children affected by armed conflict and other disasters.

Cutting across these six global objectives, SC Norway has in addition committed itself to working for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and to provide succour to the rapidly growing number of AIDS orphans.

These global objectives govern the activities of SC Norway wherever the organisation is active. In addition, SC Norway programming incorporates a number of country-specific objectives into the individual country programmes in order to address particular issues of relevance to the situation of children in specific countries. In the case of Ethiopia, SC Norway has included the following country-specific objectives:

- poverty reduction, with an emphasis on agricultural food production and the provision of credit services
- assistance to children with disabilities
- in view of the high levels of AIDS in Ethiopia, the global and cross-cutting objective of combating HIV/AIDS has been promoted to a country-specific objective for Ethiopia.

SC Norway has set out the following principles for its work in a Strategy Document:

- children's participation, which includes the facilitation of "*meaningful participation in matters that concern them in different contexts and at different levels in society*"
- strengthen local capacity, which primarily involves capacity to promote children's rights and provide support to local partners, which will have the primary operational responsibility for implementing activities
- coordination with International Save the Children Alliance, which involves the active promotion of collaborative efforts at all levels

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28   *Save the Children Norway's Strategy 2002–2005 (Adopted by the National Assembly 2001).*

- influencing causes, which involves specific strategies aimed at root causes that violate children's rights
- counteract discrimination, which involves efforts to counter all forms of discrimination.

This thumbnail sketch of SC Norway's strategic outlook is elaborated in SC Norway *Ethiopia Country Programme Strategy 2002–2005*.[29] Taking its guidelines from the policy documents referred to above, the Country Strategy sets out six specific objectives for SC Norway activities in Ethiopia, including:

- acceptance and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- access to appropriate basic education, especially for girls
- attitudinal change regarding child labour
- efforts to provide support for child victims of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation
- reintegration and rehabilitation of children displaced by armed conflicts
- improved living conditions for children in difficult circumstances (AIDS orphans, AIDS victims, disabled children, children living in areas with low food security).

The Country Programme Strategy states that SC Norway has brought to an end its direct involvement in a number of large child-centred development projects in Ethiopia, and that the Programme Strategy henceforth will primarily guide SC Norway support to a number of national partners that will pursue the same objectives as SC Norway. These partners include both government agencies and non-government institutions.

SC Norway in Ethiopia

SC Norway has been working in Ethiopia since 1969. During this period the organisation has gone through several transformations with regard to both outlook and operational strategies.[30] SC Norway operated a rather modest programme (in close cooperation with the Swedish Save the Children) with a primary focus on health in the first few years after it established a presence in Ethiopia. A major project at the time involved the establishment of the Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI) on leprosy. SC Norway's work in Ethiopia has since gone through several phases. Some of the changes have come about in response to developments and changes in the general political environment in Ethiopia, while others have been generated by concerns internal to SC Norway as an organisation that has gone through great changes over the past couple of decades.

SC Norway has followed more or less the same trajectory as a number of other international NGOs in Ethiopia, even though it was established in Ethiopia well before the influx of the majority of Northern NGOs. The work of international NGOs in Ethiopia has been closely associated with famine relief and humanitarian assistance. This was also the case for SC Norway during the Dergue regime. In the Dergue period the NGOs were supervised by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), which was specifically created in 1973 to coordinate the country's famine relief efforts. The distribution of famine relief and the provision of other forms of emergency humanitarian assistance was RRC's primary concern, but it also became the official Ethiopian oversight and regulatory agency as far as the international NGOs were concerned. NGOs that took up rehabilitation and general development work after the famine situation had been contained were often required to work with other government departments as well, depending on the kind of projects that were implemented, but there was never any doubt about the primacy of RRC's supervisory role.

SC Norway became hesitantly involved in the initial famine relief work in 1973/74 but soon built up a significant capacity to handle food security issues, including the transport and distribution of famine relief throughout the 1970s and 1980s. It also became increasingly involved in a number of broadly formulated community development programmes at several locations in Ethiopia in the post-famine rehabilitation phase. The underlying outlook at that time was that the welfare of children could best be safeguarded in healthy families living in viable local communities. Hence, the best way to provide

29   *Country Programme Strategy for 2002–2005. Save the Children Norway – Ethiopia, Addis Ababa , January 2002.*

30   Redd Barna Ethiopia: *Norwegian Save the Children 25 Years Jubilee Report 1969–1994*, Addis Ababa, June 1994.

assistance to children would be through broad-based community development programmes. These community development programmes, some of which were located in the rural areas at the periphery of the Ethiopian state, were implemented directly by SC Norway, which in this period burgeoned to become one of the largest development organisations in Ethiopia, with a local staff exceeding 600 people. This was not an unusual strategy at the time, and it was clearly governed by specific needs arising out of the distrustful and tense relationship between Western-based and Western-funded NGOs and Ethiopia's Marxist military government. The NGOs were set on keeping the radical and at times violent policies of the Dergue government at an arm's length, claiming for themselves an apolitical humanitarian assistance agenda, while the government was clearly struggling with the dilemma posed by the need for famine relief and development resources controlled by the NGOs on the one hand, and its ambition to promote the hegemony of the Marxist state on the other. As the government became increasingly occupied by security issues and the civil war, the NGO sector in Ethiopia came to be seen as the custodians of development concerns (particularly within "soft" sectors like health, education, other social services, small-scale agriculture and community development) working on an agenda often set by itself and supported by extensive privileges from the government.

The political movements behind the new government that established itself in 1991 had in fact enjoyed extensive humanitarian assistance provided by the INGO's, first to the large population of refugees displaced by the civil war, and later directly in the areas controlled by the liberation fronts within Ethiopia. These so-called "*cross-border operations*" were a constant issue of contention between the Dergue government and the INGOs. The apolitical and humanitarian agenda of the INGOs prevailed, however, and humanitarian cross-border operations continued. The new government was thus well aware of the capacity of the INGOs to provide alternatives to official government policy and to implement projects on the basis of agendas not set by the government. The newly installed government quickly set out to curb the independence of the INGOs and to control the freedom that they had come to enjoy. This process was set in motion in 1993 with a number of directives being issued to tie NGO activities to government policy at all levels, followed by the creation of an increasingly detailed regulatory environment throughout the 1990s.

SC Norway worked to narrow and sharpen the focus of its programmes throughout the 1990s. This must partly be seen in the light of the increasing importance of a rights-based approach in the international development discourse of the 1990s and a sharper child focus in SC Norways own programming. Although the situation and welfare of children has always been the ultimate justification for SC Norway interventions and activities, the broadly formulated community-based approaches of the 1980s were gradually narrowed down to a more clearly formulated child-centred focus and approach, as set out in the Country Programme Strategy mentioned above. However, a number of organisational changes that affected SC Norway as well as other INGOs in Ethiopia through the 1990s can only be understood in relation to the increasingly harsh regulatory environment in Ethiopia. From the middle of the decade SC Norway scaled down its own capacity to implement projects and has attached increasing importance to influencing child welfare issues through advocacy campaigns and by supporting the work of other organisations. By the end of the decade, SC Norway stopped the direct implementation of project activities in Ethiopia and now relies on partnerships with government agencies as well as a number of local NGOs for operational capacity.

SC Norway is not alone among the INGOs in Ethiopia in pursuing a strategy of building partnerships with local NGOs and in providing support to efforts to increase the institutional capacity of these new organisations to pick up the issues and interests that drive the INGOs themselves.

The current SC Norway programme in Ethiopia

Attempts to understand the current SC Norway portfolio in Ethiopia must take into account the historical aspects alluded to above. Furthermore, the current portfolio is clearly an expression of a transitory stage within SC Norway itself. SC Norway has taken the policy decision to move away from a programming strategy that has sought to meet the needs of children through massive service delivery efforts (typically organised as broad-based community development programmes) towards what the organisations refer to as a more rigorous rights-based approach. In practical terms, the move has been

away from self-implemented projects towards an emphasis on building partnerships, while conceptually the move has been away from substantial sectors like food security, social services and economic development towards an emphasis on child participation and child rights. This new focus demands an approach that allows SC Norway to address issues involving the situation of children at many different levels and in many different contexts. The country programme portfolio hence contains a comparatively large number of relatively small projects.

Still, SC Norway's presence in Ethiopia can be described in terms of its involvement in a limited number of specific sectors, corresponding to the strategic objectives set out in the current strategic plan. The latest available figures indicate that SC Norway's budget in Ethiopia in 2003 amounted to approximately USD 3.5 million[31], with 85% of the budget allocated to various kinds of project support. Approximately 15% of the budget is spent on running the SC Norway representation in Ethiopia. SC Norway has reserved 25% of its operational budget for emergency relief activities.

As for the remaining non-emergency programme budget, in 2003 it was distributed among the following sectors :

Education	64%
UN Convention of the Rights of the Child	9%
Economic exploitation of children	1%
Violence and sexual abuse of children	6%
Disabled children	3%
Poverty	5%
HIV/AIDS prevention	11%

The SC Norway country programme for Ethiopia is composed of 28 different projects involving a total of 22 different partners. It is important to note that SC Norway does not see its role in Ethiopia as limited to supporting partner NGOs. On the contrary, SC Norway is explicit that it will pursue the main objectives of its strategy (child welfare on the basis of the UNCRC) through pragmatic partnerships with organisations and institutions that share the same concerns. Hence, SC Norway is prepared to collaborate with government agencies at all levels as long as the collaboration can be seen to benefit children and promote the rights of children.

There is a clear tendency that partnership projects with government agencies are significantly larger than partnership projects with NGOs. The largest project in budget terms in 2003 concerns a food emergency project, followed by four primary education projects and a food security project. These six largest projects, all with a budget of over one million Ethiopian *birr*, are all implemented in partnership with government agencies. Most NGO partnerships are supported by much smaller projects, typically in the range of 200 000 – 300 000 *birr*. Only two NGO projects have budgets exceeding half a million birr, the largest of which is in primary education. According to SC Norway's internal guidelines[32] the Resident Representative may approve projects with a budget of up to NOK 750 000 over 3 years, with a maximum annual budget of NOK 300 000. Projects that go beyond these limits must be approved at SC Norway headquarters in Oslo.

The partnership between SC Norway and individual local partners may be long-lasting. Some of them have been operational since the new partnership strategy was introduced. None the less, these long-term partnerships rest on relatively short-term partnership agreements, typically covering 2–3 years. SC Norway's internal guidelines limit each individual project agreement to a maximum of 4 years, but few of the agreements extend this long. There are provisions in the guidelines for extending projects in the case of unavoidable delays. Furthermore, it is possible for a partner to enter into more than one agreement with SC Norway. Once an agreement has been completed the partner may propose a new project.

Even if a partnership agreement is expected to cover several years, SC Norway only commits itself to supporting the partnership financially for one year at a time. The guidelines are replete with

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31   MacDonald, N: *Ethiopia Strategic Plan 2002–2005, Mid-term Evaluation,* Addis Ababa, December 2003.
32   Save the Children Norway: Partnership Guidelines (Revised August 2002), Addis Ababa.

requirements demanded of the partner organisation, both for acceptance as a partner and for the implementation of partnership agreements. Partners must be lawfully registered, be well managed in terms of internal governance and public image and must share SC Norway's vision and mission statements, which are based on the strategic documents referred to above, ie they must ultimately be related to the UNCRC and SC Norway's programming and working principles.

SC Norway – Ethiopia Project Portfolio

The basic structure of the SC Norway country programme for Ethiopia[33] is portrayed in the following table:

	Mostly Service delivery	Mostly Advocacy
Primary Education	**Amhara Regional State:** • ABECS in 3 *weredas* in North Gondar • Scaling-up of ABECS to 114 *weredas* **Gondar College of Teacher Education:** • ABECS Instructors **RATSON (NGO):** • Basic education in Bishoftu	**Amhara Regional State:** • Increase school enrolment • Safeguard quality of education in ABECS programme
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child		**Federal Supreme Court:** • Juvenile Justice Project **Police Commission, SNNPRS:** • Child protection unit **Addis Ababa Police Commission:** • Road Safety Project **Forum for Street Children** • Child Protection Programme **African Network for Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN):** • CRC promotion **Mary Joy Aid through Development:** • Child & Youth Centre
Economic exploitation of children		**Multi-purpose Community Development Project:** • Child labour
Violence and sexual abuse	**Addis Ababa Health Bureau (Yekatit 12 Hospital):** • Sexually Abused Children **Forum for Street Children:** • Child prostitutes	**Amhara Regional State:** • Government Media Campaign against Harmful Traditional Practices **Norwegian Volunteer Service:** • Prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices
Disabled children	**Handicap National** • Support of disabled children	**Joy Centre for Autistic Children:** • Awareness training
Poverty	**Amhara Regional State:** • Dabat Food Security Project **Specialised Financial and Promotional Institution:** • Savings & Credit, microfinance project	

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33   Save the Children Norway: Ethiopia Programme Annual Report 2003.

	Mostly Service delivery	Mostly Advocacy
HIV/AIDS prevention		**Gondar Education Media Centre** • Government Media HIV/AIDS prevention campaign **Gondar Medical College:** • HIV/AIDS prevention **Multi-purpose Community Development Project:** • HIV/AIDS Prevention **Women and Children Tracer:** • HIV/AIDS prevention **Hiwot AIDS Prevention and Children Support Organisation:** • HIV/AIDS prevention • Home-based care for HIV/AIDS patients **Love for Children:** • HIV/AIDS project for street children
Other	**Queen of Peace:** • Orphanage and shelter	

Comments on the project portfolio

While this project portfolio seems reasonably well balanced with regard to the global objectives set out in the SC Norway strategy document referred to above, as well as with reference to the country-specific goals for Ethiopia incorporated into the strategic plan (disabled children, poverty and HIV/AIDS are specific sectors in the Ethiopia strategic plan rather than cross-cutting issues), it is difficult to discern any programme-level logic or specific principles that guide the selection of projects or the composition of the programme. Although the projects listed in the table above obviously fall within SC Norway's strategic goals and meet the criteria set in the organisation's guidelines, this does not adequately explain the make-up of the country programme in terms of synergies or clearly understandable complementarities.

Although there is a general lack of coherence between programme categories, it is possible to see strategic linkages between some of the projects and sectors. This is most noticeable with regard to projects in the primary education sector, as well as child justice projects in the UNCRC sector. Child justice projects, especially, involve several different partnerships, including both NGOs and government agencies, approaching the issue of child justice from different vantage points and providing services that to some extent complement each other. These include joint efforts by the Save the Children Alliance to lobby various sub-committees of the Ethiopian Parliament on various matters relating to the UNCRC in Ethiopian legislation, as well as a project at the Federal Supreme Court that aims to review the legal environment and study how the rights of children are protected in the penal code, criminal procedures and family law. The Federal Supreme Court is also working to establish a separate Children's Court.

At a more practical level, SC Norway supports projects within the police (in Addis Ababa and in the Southern Nationalities, Nations and Peoples Regional State) to establish child protection units and keep young offenders out of the regular criminal procedures of the courts. Child protection units are staffed by police officers that have received special training and are charged with looking after children (under the age of 15) arrested for whatever reason by the police.

SNC also supports a partnership with the local NGO Forum for Street Children that works with the police to strengthen the operation of child protection units established at various *wereda* police stations in various ways (training, exchange of information, simple infrastructure) as well as work with community rehabilitation centres for the rehabilitation of young offenders. The community rehabilitation centres were established as support structures for the child protection units and accept

children that are classified as petty or first-time offenders or who for other reasons need protection and care (abuse, neglect, exploitation). They are operated by volunteers supervised by the Forum for Street Children and run programmes for young offenders that last from 6 to 18 months, with an emphasis on educational programmes and tutorials (to prepare children for regular school) as well as guidance and counselling activities, sports and recreation The community rehabilitation centres are also the basis for children's clubs that are active in awareness-raising on various topics, including the UNCRC. Finally, as a safety net underlying some of this work, the Queen of Peace orphanage accepts young abandoned children from the child protection unit. The vital services offered by the Queen of Peace Children's Home (operated by Sister Theresa's Sisters of Charity) have been sponsored by SC Norway since 1976. Support is on-going, making this the longest-running project supported by SC Norway in Ethiopia.

Hence, it is possible to see linkages and synergies between parts of the programme portfolio. However, it is unclear if this is the result of chance events or a clearly thought out strategy for improving the situation of children that come in contact with the law.

The most likely explanation for the specific composition of the country programme is probably found in the history of SC Norway in Ethiopia. The evident emphasis on the Amhara Regional State in several of the programme categories, for instance, must be related to the history of SC Norway's presence in the region. After the government and the DPPC set out to assert its authority over the NGO sector in 1992–93, SC Norway was requested to establish a multi-sectoral rural development programme in the Alefa Tekusa *wereda* on the western shores of Lake Tana. The areas to the north and west of the lake had suffered severe security problems during the Dergue regime and were only nominally controlled by the government. There had been no development activities in this area and there was clearly a great need for virtually any kind of intervention. Programme activities were started in 1995 and included infrastructure (water and roads) as well as social services (health services and education). The following description of SC Norway's approach at the time helps illustrate the contrast to today's mode of operation:

> Redd Barna Ethiopia typically sets up a project centre with office, store and staff quarters in the rural project area, and employs a Project Manager and 20–30 professional support staff including health professionals, agriculturalists, building staff, economists and social workers, of whom as many as possible are recruited from the local project area and the target population, and none are expatriates.
> (….)
> Staff largely operate in integrated mini-teams from the village camps in the project areas. The camps are often located in development centres where services such as health clinic, primary school, water point, veterinary service and/or grain mill may be located together to serve a certain area. This facilitates follow-up of the functioning of services through training and institution-building[34]

All of these activities required close cooperation with the regional authorities. SC Norway has gained familiarity with the region and with the government and has remained in the region since then. One should note that there are few Ethiopian NGOs operating outside Addis Ababa. At the time that SC Norway was restructuring its operations from direct implementation to partnership, government agencies were the only feasible partners. The transition from a broad community development approach to more carefully defined efforts within education and issues related to the promotion of the UNCRC was probably facilitated by the requirement that specific line ministries should supervise activities under the community development programme. Starting with a broad multi-sector programme in Alefa Tekusa, SC Norway has extended its education activities to neighbouring *wereda*s at the expense of shedding other sectors such as health and rural water. The agencies of the regional government that previously supervised SC Norway activities thus presented themselves as the best (or only) available partners.

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34   Redd Barna Ethiopia (Norwegian Save the Children) Annual Report 1994 (p.7).

Another clearly noticeable aspect of the programme portfolio is that many of the NGOs with which SC Norway has entered into partnership agreements are headed by people who formerly worked for SC Norway. The reorientation from direct implementation to partnership support implied a massive staff retrenchment exercise in the late 1990s. Staff who had worked for SC Norway for years were made redundant and had to leave the organisation. These professionals had gained lengthy experience with NGO operations while working for SC Norway, and have continued to nourish a fruitful relationship with SC Norway after their period of formal employment. Today these people are central to SC Norway's partnership strategy. There are probably many advantages to the kind of familiarity that this entails, both in terms of shared outlook and smooth working relationships. The NGOs formed by these ex-employees have clearly benefited from the experiences of their founders in terms of orderly planning, implementation and reporting. Many of the methods and techniques in common use, such as participatory planning and the emphasis on rooting development interventions in community concerns have clearly been inspired by the experiences and the training staff have undergone while working for SC Norway. Hence, the NGOs that have been founded by these former staff members are usually well-managed and orderly. The staff retrenchment exercise that SC Norway has gone through has thus had a remarkable capacity-building effect in the partner NGOs.

One of the criteria that SC Norway uses in its assessment of potential partners is the congruence between its own outlook and the goals of the organisation in question. The NGOs founded by former staff members have all adopted the general principles underlying SC Norway child programming, such as child rights and child participation. This is not to say that SC Norway has generated replicas of itself, but rather that SC Norway by its very existence and mode of operation has been able to extend a powerful UNCRC advocacy message in Ethiopia.

Another important issue in the relationship between SC Norway and its partners concerns financial dependency and sustainability. NGO leaders are clearly conscious of the need to diversify sources of income and secure the sustainability of the new organisations. The 1995 government guidelines for NGOs[35] put severe restrictions on the ability of NGOs to generate any income (except grants and donations) and up to recently these guidelines have been restrictively interpreted by the DPPC, precluding even cost recovery. Although new regulations have yet to be issued formally, the interpretations underlying DPPC approval of NGO work plans now seem to have been relaxed. None the less, the issue of financial sustainability is high on the agenda in all Ethiopian NGOs. So far the diversification of income has meant signing up new donors from the international aid community in Ethiopia. As mentioned above, SC Norway's partnerships with NGOs are typically modestly funded; SC Norway often only provides support to one specific activity (e.g. HIV/AIDS prevention) within the gamut of the work programmes of the partners in question. Modest funding and short periods of commitment probably stimulate the process of income diversification and help secure long-term sustainability. It is interesting to note that various issues related to fund-raising are becoming increasingly frequent in the training schedules of various NGOs[36] in Ethiopia.

It is important to realise that the current project portfolio of SC Norway in Ethiopia reflects its history and carries with it the legacy of the transition process that SC Norway has gone through. At the level of SC Norway's outlook and country programme strategy, all projects relate to strategic objectives and programming goals. Assuming that these strategic goals are closely interrelated, one may characterise the portfolio as coherent. At the practical level it is at present possible to characterise the SC Norway country programme as moderately coherent in terms of synergies and complementarities to achieve specific goals in SC Norways global strategy. Although programme components are not in conflict with each other, there are efforts within some sectors that are isolated and unlikely to make much of an impact on their own. Since the partnership guidelines thus far have directed support towards many partnerships with small budgets and restricted time frames there seems to be ample flexibility in the programming principles. If this is judged to be of practical advantage there is sufficient scope to create a more coherent portfolio over the course of the next few years.

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35   Relief and Rehabilitation Commission: *Guidelines for NGOs Operation in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, July 1995, see para 6.14.
36   see for instance PACT-Ethiopia: *Resources Mobilization by Indigenous NGOs in Ethiopia: A Training Manual*, Addis Ababa, May 2003.

4   SC Norway Partnerships

SC Norway no longer implements projects directly but must rely on a diversity of partnerships to reach the strategic goals that it has set for itself. In Ethiopia the largest part of the budget is allocated to partnerships with various government institutions, primarily within basic education. There are also partnerships with government institutions relating to child justice and child protection, violence and sexual abuse of children HIV/AIDS prevention and poverty, as indicated in the following table:

Programme category	Government Partner	Non-Government Partner
Emergency relief	Drought Preparedness and Prevention Commission: • Famine relief in West Belessa	
Primary education	7 projects with Amhara Regional State Bureau of Education: • Increase school enrolment • ABECS programme in Chilga • ABECS programme in Lay Armacho • Basic Education Teachers Training • Scaling-up of ABECS programmes • Quality Assurance in ABECS • Conference on Quality in Education	Project with • RATSON (1)
Promotion of UNCRC	Projects with • Federal Supreme Court (1) • Addis Ababa Police Commission (1) • SNNPRS Police Commission (1)	Projects with • ANPPCAN (1) • Forum for Street Children (1) • Mary Joy (1)
Economic Exploitation of children		Projects with • Multi-purpose Community Development Project
Violence & Sexual Abuse	Projects with • Addis Ababa City Government (1) • Amhara Regional State Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (1) • Norwegian Volunteer Service (1)	Projects with • Forum for Street Children
HIV/AIDS prevention	Projects with • Gondar Medical College • Gondar Education Media Centre	Projects with • Multi-purpose Community Development Project • Women and Children Tracer • Hiwot AIDS Prevention and Children Support Organisation: • Love for Children:
Disability in children		Project with Handicap National (1) Joy Centre for Autistic Children
Poverty	Project with • ESRDF in Dabat	Project with • Specialised Financial and Promotional Institution (1)

Education projects

Access to basic education, particularly for girls, is a high priority in SC Norway's global strategy and in the Ethiopia Country Programme Strategic Plan. Furthermore, increased school enrolment is a prominent goal of the Ethiopian Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) as well as the *UN Millennium Development Goals*, which Norwegian development cooperation policy has committed itself to supporting. In a country like Ethiopia, with low school enrolment levels as a point of departure (22% in 1991–92) it is clear that the goal of *Education for All by 2015* is exceptionally ambitious and that a massive effort is required. The government has accepted a main responsibility for education through the formulation of the 20-year Education Sector Development Plan, but has also provided ample opportunity for other actors to provide support. By the end of the first phase of the ESDP (1997–2002) enrolment had increased dramatically, but there were still large parts of the country where primary education was not available. In 2003 over 38% of all school age children remained out of school.

The ESDP envisaged an extension of basic education to all parts of the country through an expansion of the formal school system in place, ie through building more schools, training more teachers, increasing the supply of textbooks and instructional materials, supported by reform measures such as allowing the use of local languages as a medium of instruction, revised curricula and removing school fees below Grade 10. Although the action plan concedes that *non-formal education is a cost-effective way to reach those who have not benefited from formal education*[37] it made little room for non-formal education in the first phase. By the time the ESDP moved into its second phase (2002–2005) it was evident that the Education for All goals could not be reached through formal education alone. Still, only 1.1% of the government education budget is used on non-formal education.[38]

Non-formal education in the form of adult literacy classes have been common in Ethiopia for a long time, but actually have little to do with primary education. Literacy training could hardly be seen as an alternative to education offered by the formal school system. Still, the only education many children in rural Ethiopia have received has been restricted to literacy classes. Although literacy training is valuable in its own right, there has been no formal link to the formal school system, so literacy training has not opened doors into the formal school system or offered children the opportunity to continue their education.

The direct background to SC Norway's current substantial involvement in basic education in Ethiopia was experience from a broad-based community development programme that SC Norway started in 1995 in North Gonder. This programme included an education component, including a literacy programme. School enrolment rates were very low and it was soon realised that a traditional school-building project would not bring about great change. There were some attempts to make the adult literacy programme more attractive to children, but it soon became apparent that the problem had to be approached in a much broader manner.

SC Norway invested a lot of effort in a pilot project within primary education which is commonly referred to as ABECS.[39] ABECS is the acronym for Alternative Basic Education for Children out of School, which is one of several alternative education models developed by NGOs in Ethiopia. ABECS is still referred to as non-formal education, in contrast to the primary education offered by the Ministry of Education.

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37   Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: *Education Sector Development Program – Action Plan*, Addis Ababa, June 1999 (p.10).

38   Save the Children Alliance: Proceedings from the Alternative Basic Education Conference: The Experience of Save the Children Alliance members in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa 2003 (p.13).

39   More complete accounts of ABECS can be found in
      – Mosko, Sophie Joy: *Village Learning through Children's Schooling*, Save the Children Norway – Ethiopia Programme, Addis Ababa, 2003.
      – Hestad, Ingvild & Margarita Focas Licht: *Lessons; Basic Education in Rural Africa*, Save the Children Norway, Oslo, 2002.
      – Save the Children Alliance: *Learning for Life: Save the Children's Experience with Alternative basic Education in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, September 2002.

The ABECS model, however, was formulated as a low-cost and flexible alternative for the first cycle of primary education (ie the first 4 years). The ABECS curriculum and teaching methods cover the syllabus of the first cycle in three periods of nine months each. Children who complete the ABECS programme are accepted into the second cycle of the formal schools and have the option of continuing their education.

The main elements of the ABECS model involve:

- A local school committee (usually appointed by the *kebele*) in charge of the school.
- A low-cost ABECS centre, a school built with local materials by the local community. The *kebele* allocates a plot for the school which often includes extra land that can be used to generate income for the school, eg by renting out the land on share-cropping contracts. ABECS centres typically contain three classrooms for 40–60 children each and a small office/store. In the pilot phase SC Norway provided some building materials, such as corrugated iron sheets for roofing.
- ABECS instructors, usually local out-of-work school leavers. Instructors are selected in close cooperation with the school committee. Instructors stay at home or in accommodation provided by the school committee.
- Training of ABECS instructors prior to starting work, in formal courses during school breaks and through in-service training. After a 2-year training period the ABECS instructors may qualify as formally certified primary school teachers.
- Supervision of ABECS instructors by the *wereda* school authorities (and the school committee).
- The provision of school books and teaching materials developed by the SC Norway ABECS project. A lot of effort has gone into the preparation of a high-quality syllabus that is relevant to the situation of rural children but that will allow them to qualify for further education in the formal school system.
- A school schedule that allows the school committee to adjust the schedule to local needs, eg the local agricultural calendar, when for instance children are required to help with the harvest.
- A school that is owned and managed by the local community for the benefit of the children of the community.

In the pilot phase SC Norway helped establish 37 ABECS centres in three *wereda*s in North Gonder in Amhara Regional State. The results in terms of increased enrolment and retention rates, as well as gender equity, have been excellent. SC Norway has in the process developed good relations with the education authorities at both regional and *wereda* levels, partly by providing some support to the formal schools (in the form of libraries or laboratories) and to the administration itself. It is reported that 60% of ABECS students continue into 5th grade in the formal school system, engendering potential bottleneck problems.

The pilot phase has proved the ABECS model to be a viable and efficient approach to expanding primary education. At the community level it has proved itself an affordable and manageable way for local communities to obtain schools for their children that are close enough to allow the children to live at home. The issue of distance is particularly important with regard to girls, as there has been a general reluctance to send girls away to school. Hence, closer distances have contributed to increases in both overall enrolment as well as gender equity in enrolment. The ABECS model has also made school more accessible to children who have to help with various tasks in their families, e.g. herding livestock. Finally, the ABECS model also gives the local school committee a measure of disciplinary control over the instructors.

All in all, the ABECS pilot projects seem to have been a resounding success. Since the ABECS model was developed in close cooperation with the regional education authorities it has also been accepted as the preferred model for non-formal education by the other NGOs working in Amhara Regional State. By early 2003 the 9 NGOs working within primary education in Amhara Region had set up 151 centres in 17 *wereda*s. The regional authorities are now encouraging the expansion of ABECS to all 114 *wereda*s of the region. Over 1000 ABECS centres were established throughout the region in the second half of 2003, with a potential enrolment of over 120 000 children. SC Norway scaling-up projects have been initiated recently to support the reprinting of ABECS books and teaching materials, and training of ABECS instructors in a stratified system. The reputation and achievements of the

ABECS model could quickly be affected, however, if the quality of the education provided at the ABECS centres deteriorates due to quick expansion. SC Norway has put in place a project to follow the situation and provide back-up to the staff supervising ABECS instructors.

The success of the ABECS model is partly due to on-going decentralisation efforts in Ethiopia, making the *wereda*s the focal point for all development efforts. The *wereda*s have been given the authority as well as the responsibility to extend primary education to the children under their jurisdiction. However, even though the *wereda*s are operationally responsible for primary education the field is circumscribed by government policy, legislation and the Education Sector Development Programme. ESDP will continue to expand the formal school system, but in the meanwhile the *wereda*s can exploit the favourable ESDP policy with regard to non-formal education, and use the ABECS model to offer primary education that is cheap, of high quality and relevant to the rural context.

Sooner or later it will be necessary for the authorities to formulate clearer policies on a range of issues concerning non-formal education, primarily relating to the linkages between the formal and the non-formal streams in the first cycle of primary education, as well as the sustainability of the non-formal schools. At present these are schools established with the help of NGOs but owned by the community. It seems unlikely that the communities will be able to fully cover costs when the NGOs withdraw, despite attempts by the communities to contribute to various cost-sharing schemes. Teachers' salaries are already a major issue at *wereda* level, consuming 90% or more of *wereda* education budgets[40] and even if ABECS instructors are salaried at lower rates than formal teachers, the number of additional instructors needed will create serious problems. Furthermore, one of the driving forces of the success of the pilot phase was the clear expectation by ABECS instructors that they would be hired as formally qualified primary school teachers once they had successfully completed their training. The first compromise reached on this issue is that qualified ABECS instructors will be favourably treated when new positions in the formal schools become available, but that they will be paid at the former rates for as long as they remain ABECS instructors.

It is important to remember, however, that even though the ABECS model has been developed by an NGO, it is offered at the kebele level as a cheap and manageable short-cut to a highly sought-after service. Education is in high demand in North Gondar and an issue that occupies many kebele meetings. Although the ABECS schools are known as non-formal education in relation to the formal schools, this distinction quickly becomes irrelevant at the local level. Community contributions and cost-sharing are equally common in the formal and the non-formal schools. It may be argued that the ABECs centres are more fully owned by the local community, but this ownership is in the custody of the kebele. The ABECS centres are not private schools but fully integrated into the wereda education establishment, even if the wereda at present cannot guarantee their sustainability.

Violence and Sexual Abuse

SC Norway supports two projects in partnership with government agencies to counter violence and sexual abuse against children. The smallest of these involves a partnership with the health authorities in Addis Ababa to operate a special unit at one of the city hospitals to care for sexually violated children. The second project involves the Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLSA) in Gondar. In addition to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in urban settings, there are a number of traditional practices in various parts of Ethiopia that are harmful to children. With some regional variation, these include abduction of young girls, child marriage, female genital mutilation, uvulectomy and the excision of milk teeth. In some cases tattooing and scarification are also included in the Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) list.

The DOLSA programme in Gondar is particularly interesting. It involves the preparation and transmission of a series of weekly radio programmes (locally produced by the Gondar Educational Media Centre) on various Harmful Traditional Practices. DOLSA field workers organise women radio listening groups in selected *kebele*s, distribute radio sets and encourage the women to discuss the issues raised in the programmes. After a 6-month cycle of radio transmissions and follow-up the

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40   Save the Children Ethiopia: *Partners Capacity Assessment, Alefa Takusa, Chilga and Lay Armachiho Weredas,* Addis Ababa, April 2003.

women of the DOLSA listening group "graduate". They are each given a radio set and encouraged to form "Hobby Listening Groups" in their respective neighbourhoods and involve other women in discussions on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP). The multiplier effect expected from distributing radio sets to the participants of the original listening groups seems to have suffered from the expenses involved in purchasing batteries. These nominally small expenses appear very large in household budgets that depend on subsistence farming and use as little cash as possible.

The topics discussed in the radio programmes include early marriage/child marriage, female genital mutilation, uvulectomy, the excision of milk teeth in infants, extravagant celebration of *teskar* (memorial services and memorial feast for the deceased) and various violations of children's rights. HIV/AIDS is presented in various contexts as a cross-cutting issue.

The popular DOLSA radio programmes include songs, poetry, drama presentations, quiz programmes, letters from the public and local news. They are thus strongly rooted in the local contexts. The programmes have been used by other donors and agencies to extend messages on development issues like health and agricultural practices. An earlier SC Norway project funded short weekly programmes on the UNCRC, while other donors have sponsored series on, for instance, women issues.

The radio programmes are transmitted 1½ hours every Sunday, with 20 minutes dedicated to HTP. There can be no doubt about the efficiency of this method of information dissemination in a society where oral traditions are strong. Messages on the radio additionally carry a lot of authority because the radio is primarily known as a government communication channel. All official announcements, public proclamations and news from the government are announced on the radio. Radio programmes can thus be seen as the government talking to the people. These effects are obviously reinforced when DOLSA field workers organise discussion sessions with groups specifically put together for the purpose of listening to the radio. It should be remembered that government authority is well established, particularly in Northern Ethiopia, and that clearly articulated messages from the government are treated by respect in the local communities.

In addition to the radio listening groups, local CRC clubs in the schools also use the messages against HTP in their work. The issue of child marriage is particularly relevant to the CRC clubs and it has been reported that children have organised demonstrations and involved public authorities to prevent child marriages.

Additional activities supporting this field involve the placement of Norwegian volunteers (social workers from the reconstituted Norwegian Peace Corps, now known as Fredskorpset) at DOLSA to take part in the various campaigns against HTP and HIV/AIDS, and to continue promoting the UNCRC.

SC Norway and DOLSA report that the HTP programme has had a large impact, quoting for instance figures to the effect that 1050 out of 1291 known practitioners (of FGM, uvulectomy and teeth excision) have voluntarily stopped their practices as a result of the programme. Additionally, a number of child marriages have been stopped, in particular by CRC clubs. These spectacular results obviously generate a lot of scepticism[41] because as is evident from many other fields, linkages between new information, attitudinal changes and behavioural changes are not obvious. Even if the project has been highly effective in spreading new information, the final impact in terms of behavioural changes needs careful and independent verification. One important issue that needs particular attention is the linkage to legal regulations. If it is made clear that these practices are illegal, behavioural changes could, to a certain extent, be seen as a measure of government authority. People in Northern Ethiopia have lived in a centralised and authoritarian state for centuries and are generally law-abiding, however, in order to be effective legal regulations must also be followed up with legal sanctions.

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41   MacDonald, N.: *Ethiopia Strategic Plan 2002–2005 Mid-term Evaluation,* Save the Children Norway, Addis Ababa December 2003 (p.15).

Children's Rights

The third main programme category where SC Norway has organised its work in partnerships with government agencies is in the field of children's rights. SC Norway has the UNCRC as a major plank in its platform and is committed to promoting respect for children's rights as a matter of course. In Ethiopia this work uses Ethiopia's ratification of the convention as an important point of departure, working at several levels and with several partners to promote the CRC.

SC Norway takes an active part in work organised by the Save the Children Alliance in Ethiopia to monitor the situation of children in Ethiopia and to lobby for interventions in favour of children. The most tangible expression of these monitoring efforts is an alternative NGO-produced periodic report on the implementation of the UNCRC in Ethiopia. The Alliance has created four specialised working groups on the situation of children in the areas of education, HIV/AIDS, emergencies and child participation. The Alliance uses their good relations with the national assembly, the Federal Supreme Court, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as well as the Prime Minister's law advisor to lobby for changes in the enabling environment for the implementation of the CRC in Ethiopia, including legal reforms, the formulation of a national Plan of Action for children and the creation of an ombudsman function. These campaigns have no doubt increased awareness in the government and have resulted in concrete achievements including: the creation of an inter-ministerial committee on CRC; the revision of legislation proposed to the national assembly (related to family law and the penal code); the ratification of the ILO convention against child labour; and the appointment of an officer responsible for children's affairs in the Addis Ababa municipal government.

The Save the Children's Alliance has been able to engage in active advocacy and lobbying on the basis of the UNCRC. Improving the situation of children is somewhat uncontroversial, particularly so after Ethiopia ratified the convention. The Alliance's preferred mode of operation is through information campaigns and awareness raising (often through the local media). Even so, active interest from the Alliance may from time to time involve criticism of the government efforts in this area. Ethiopian NGOs, which are obviously much more exposed to government sanctions than the INGOs, have been reluctant to take part in activities that imply criticism of government policy and (in)action. This partly reflects the stringent enabling environment for local NGOs in Ethiopia, but perhaps also their preference for a non-confrontational style of advocacy. None the less, the result is the somewhat curious situation that foreign NGOs are better placed than local organisations to promote domestic issues.

SC Norway on its part has partnership agreements with three NGOs and three government agencies in the area of children's rights. Two of the NGOs are actively involved in advocacy work but rely on close cooperation with government agencies to be effective, for instance by taking part in the steering group of a project to study reforms in the juvenile justice system, or more importantly, by providing professional training and supervision in connection with the establishment of child protection units within the Addis Ababa Police Commission. These triangular relationships, even if they are not translated into formal agreements, are interesting examples of SC Norway supporting initiatives that engender the local capacity to promote issues that fall within the ambit of its own strategic interests.

Comments on partnerships with government agencies

It was pointed out above that SC Norway partnership projects with government agencies are usually much larger than the NGO partnerships. They are most likely qualitatively different as well. Perhaps the main difference is that an NGO like SC Norway must relate to a government agency on terms laid down by the agency rather than by the organisation itself. The government agencies have a legitimate mandate to operate within a given sector and can potentially draw on a number of bilateral donors and multi-lateral programmes for funds and ideas to carry development interventions forwards. Hence, a government agency has the power to set the agenda and the basic terms of cooperation with an NGO. An NGO like SC Norway must, on its part, therefore put extra effort into demonstrating the added value that the government agency can expect from collaborating with it. This seems to be clearly borne out in accounts of the education sector projects in the Amhara Region. The financial contributions of SC Norway to the ABECS programme have no doubt been very important, but the key factor behind

the success has probably been the extensive and flexible effort put into curriculum development and teacher training. The efforts described in several SC Norway reports relied on the balance between close relations to professionals within the ministry and independence from the ministry in terms of testing out the alternative model. Obviously the acceptance of the ABECS alternative depended on an amenable policy environment within the ministry. SC Norway was fortunate to find well-placed allies in the system who had an interest in testing and promoting the models proposed by SC Norway.

It is important to emphasise that funding from SC Norway has been secondary to the other inputs in the ABECS programme. Although the ABECS projects are large in the context of the SC Norway country programme, there is not a lot of money involved in relation to the overall education budgets of the Amhara Regional State. SC Norway is by no means a major donor but must instead rely on the quality and relevance of the other inputs that it has provided.

5   Partnerships with NGOs

In its 2003 Annual Report on Ethiopia, SC Norway reports that it has 10 non-government partners, the same number as for government agencies. As pointed out above the budgets involved in partnerships with government agencies are typically much larger than for the NGOs. The question of the qualitative differences between SC Norway's partnerships with the NGOs and its partnerships with the government are probably as interesting.

The SC Norway guidelines emphasise that partnerships must be built on common interests, that projects must be directed towards one or more of the global objectives of SC Norway strategy. There seem to be obvious differences between a partnership with a GO, where SC Norway has to map its own priorities and goals onto established public policies, or attempt to change these policies through advocacy and lobbying work, and a partnership with a local NGO that may be far less specific with regard to what it wants to do. Partnerships with NGOs are therefore shaped by the interests and concerns of SC Norway in ways that are different from negotiated agreements with government agencies. Although the partnerships are nominally equivalent, there can be no doubt that SC Norway exerts a greater influence over NGO partners than over government agencies. The 2003 evaluation of SC Norway's cooperation with partners in Ethiopia[42] stresses that local NGOs enter into the partnerships on terms set by SC Norway, and that the partnership is limited to formal cooperation on clearly specified projects. The tenor of the reactions from the NGO partners in this report is that they miss a more long-term networking/information sharing type of partnership that would allow them to approach SC Norway with a range of issues that grow out of their own situation rather than by priorities set by SC Norway strategies. The kind of support that the local NGOs are looking for obviously includes material support for concrete projects, but also training, capacity building, sharing experiences and information. Specific examples in the evaluation refer to partners who are uncertain about whether their partnership with SC Norway still exists, if the goals of the partnership have been met, if the partnership will be prolonged and how the partners can gain acceptance for expanding the scope of the partnership, for instance moving from working with children's rights to engaging more directly with issues of poverty. Some partners in fact express the opinion that SC Norway partnerships are donor driven in the sense that they promote the strategic objectives of the donor at the expense of objectives pursued by local NGOs', such as poverty, food security and health.

The criticism that is voiced with regard to the restrictive scope of the kinds of projects that SC Norway supports is balanced by the appreciation expressed by the NGOs for the general capacity-building support that they have received, in terms of logistics, training, information sharing, exchange visits and joint planning exercises. These contributions are often not reflected in the project budget but play a vital role in enabling the NGO to function. With regard to the scope of the partnerships it seems clear that SC Norway can only provide value within its own areas of competence, ie primarily within children's rights (UNCRC) and primary education. On the other hand, there are a number of areas that particularly the local NGOs must relate to in their quest for development in the broadest sense where SC Norway is not a well-placed partner.

The mid-term evaluation[43] of SC Norway Ethiopia, initiated by SC Norway and undertaken with external consultants, recommends that SC Norway revitalise its partnership strategy in the following ways:

• by providing technical capacity to enhance the capacity of partners with regard to planning, impact monitoring and evaluation

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42   WIBD Consult: *Evaluation of Save the Children Norway's Cooperation with partners in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, January 2003.

43   MacDonald,N: *Ethiopia Strategic Plan 2002–2005 Mid-term Evaluation*, December 2003, SC Norway Addis Ababa.

- by co-ordinating and networking with other partners that can provide competent inputs in relevant areas like poverty reduction, food security, health care and so on
- by improving clarity on mutual obligations in a partnership, setting clear benchmarks for progress and milestones that mark the unfolding of a project, including an exit phase
- by creating long-term partnerships based on knowledge and commonality of interests rather than on functional cooperation based on the implementation of projects.

Although SC Norway's partnerships with NGOs are financially less significant than its agreements with government agencies, close collaboration with Ethiopian NGOs will continue to be important, partly to maintain a capacity to intervene in relation to the many small problems that constitute the bulk of non-government gap filling and service delivery activities, but perhaps more importantly to foster the capacity of Ethiopian NGOs to engage in rights-based advocacy. There are limits to how effectively children can demand their rights for a secure environment and a secure future, particularly in an environment like Ethiopia. They need spokespersons and organisations that can demand the rights children have under the CRC from the duty holders. The primary duty holder for the situation of children is the government, both in a regulatory and functional capacity. Although the Save the Children Alliance has become a forceful advocate in its own right, it is vital to maintain relationships and partnerships with local NGOs. Truly legitimate advocacy efforts can only be maintained by organisations rooted in the reality of Ethiopian society.

6   Partnership and Participation

One implication of SC Norway's strategy of withdrawing from direct implementation and concentrating on supporting partnerships has been that it has distanced itself from the communities that it intends to reach. SC Norway can no longer intervene directly in a particular situation, but must do so through a partner. Another implication is that SC Norway increasingly has come to depend on its partners for achieving the goals that it has set for itself in its strategic work. Furthermore, because of the situation in Ethiopia, the impact chain between SC Norway strategies and funds on the one hand, and project outcomes and impacts in local communities on the other, is very long. SC Norway has little control over what happens in these long chains of delegation. None the less, unless its partners perform, SC Norway will fail.

As pointed out above Ethiopian NGOs operate in a difficult enabling environment. NGOs have often been presented as self-serving and untrustworthy by the authorities, academics and the media alike, resulting in a set of official guidelines for Ethiopian NGOs that are highly restrictive. Ethiopian NGOs are few in number, often heavily dependent on foreign sources of funding and timid in confronting a government that has had little compunction about driving unruly organisations out of existence. As indicated above, most Ethiopian NGOs work with small-scale service delivery projects.

The outcomes and impacts of the interventions set in motion by SC Norway strategies and funding must eventually become tangible at the local level, in the way Ethiopian communities care for their children. It is therefore crucially important to understand how service delivery projects for the benefit of children in fact are organised and sustained. In general terms, all NGOs involved in service delivery projects aim at establishing or strengthening various Community Based Organisations (CBO) that on a permanent basis provide services required by the local community. This clearly involves one way of understanding civil society, viz organising and mobilising local community resources in participatory structures for the purpose of solving local problems. Although the government of Ethiopia has established its own structure for participatory democracy (the *kebele*s), many Ethiopian NGOs find these structures inadequate for the task at hand and look for alternative and more well-suited ways of approaching the community. Derese Getachew of Addis Ababa University, discusses two different approaches to this problem in the section below.

The efforts by SC Norway's local partner NGOs to strengthen (or even create) functional CBOs are important initiatives to develop at least one important dimension of civil society in Ethiopia. Although the two approaches discussed below are instructive and interesting in their own right, it is necessary to keep in mind that most Ethiopian NGOs are still urban based (or even Addis Ababa based), an environment that is fundamentally different from the rural setting in which most poor Ethiopians live. Organisational models developed in an Addis Ababa setting may not be applicable to the rural *kebele*s, – and may not, in fact, be applicable to other urban settings in Ethiopia. However, the discussion below brings out some very interesting issues that may be instructive with regard to how civil society is constituted in the poor areas of Addis Ababa.

Structures for Community Participation

Prepared by Derese Getachew, Addis Ababa University

This report outlines some issues related to community participation as it has been experienced by two Ethiopian NGOs The interview sessions I had with the two Ethiopian local NGOs tried to zoom into various issues related to the initiation, development and maintenance of variant community participation structures in their respective target communities. The interviews attempted to view the extent and nature of community participation in the entire project cycle ranging from the genesis of the project activity itself all the way to its day to day activities plus in future phase out strategies.

Mary Joy Aid through Development (MJ)

This local NGO was established by an Ethiopian nurse, Sister Zebider, in 1994 to honour a vow she had made to St. Mary (hence the name). Sr. Zebider used to run a private health clinic in *Wereda* 25 *kebele* 16 near to her place of domicile in Addis Ababa. The small clinic used to provide first aid medication and contained one outpatient treatment post and one maternity ward. The patient charges were very reasonable by Addis Ababa standards but many people could not afford to pay even these reduced fees and started to ask for free medical service. Some free medical treatment was offered to the most needy and destitute people. People started to bring letters of support from the neighbouring *kebele*s requesting free medication. The number of applicants increased alarmingly, beyond the financial and administrative capacity of that small clinic.

Sr. Zebider came to realise that the nature and the magnitude of the health problems in the area were intertwined with a number of other socioeconomic problems like malnutrition, poor hygiene, and lack of proper sanitation facilities, which in turn were related to factors like poor coverage of primary education, unemployment, and low household income. Her observations on the extent and intricacy of the problem itself then led Sr Zebider to transform the small health clinic into an integrated community development project in that same *wereda*. She feels that the activities undertaken this far therefore have been driven by community demand. Upon getting the legal recognition/ registration from the Ministry of Justice, MJ launched a socioeconomic survey in 3 *kebele*s of *wereda* 25 which was later used as baseline information to develop projects.

Structures for Participation

Right after the transformation of the organisation into a full-fledged NGO a general assembly was held with community elders and *kebele* officials as to how the community could participate and contribute to various upcoming project initiatives on the part of MJ. It was this general meeting which suggested that a joint "Community Development Committee"(CDC) be established to work in cooperation with MJ. The CDC is a structure constituted by the 3 *kebele* chairpersons, representatives from the 3 *Kebele Development Committees* (KDCs) and also the local *Iddir* leaders. The CDC is an institutional embodiment of community participation whose members are involved in all the project activities undertaken by MJ. The CDC is in turn divided into 5 sub-committees namely:

*   the women & children affairs sub-committee
*   the infrastructure sub-committee
*   the education & training sub-committee
*   the health sub-committee
*   the finance & material coordination sub-committee.

Each sub-committee is directly linked to the respective program components of MJ (the health, HIV/AIDS, Environmental sanitation, Education, Social Promotion and Micro credit components). The *iddir* leaders have proved very influential and more effective

than the *kebele* officials with regards to organising and mobilising local financial, material and labour resources. This of course is due to their influential position as leaders of the most ubiquitous and strong CBOs in Ethiopia, the *iddirs*. The *iddir* leaders exercise a great deal of informal sanctions upon the members themselves. The domain of the *iddir* membership itself is very large, for every person is a member of at least one such association. Their sustainability, wider constituency, simplicity and influence have now made the *iddirs* important entry points for community development work on the part of many Ethiopian NGOs. Mary Joy is one such organisation which has now resorted to forge a strong partnership and alliance with 32 local *iddirs* in the three *kebeles*.

1   MJ believes that the *iddirs* are the most sustainable, popular and flexible community organisations available. They are not fragile and unpopular as most other government structures established both during the Dergue's time and the incumbent regime. The community looks at the government structures with suspicion for it always feels that there are other ulterior political motives in any state sponsored venture. This affects even the construction a local feeder road within one of the *kebeles*. MJ believes it evades such fears and appears more credible and committed if it approaches the community through the *iddirs* themselves. The partnership with the *iddirs* is therefore anticipated to build trust between MJ and the community.

2   As part of its phase out strategy, MJ aims to replicate its activities and the sub-committees in the CDC in each of the *iddirs* it now works with. The monthly *iddir* meetings are now used as venues to disseminate knowledge on issues like reproductive health and child rights. Some iddirs have gone to the extent of revising their bylaws to include provisions in the Child Rights Convention. Still others have started to contribute money that is deposited in special accounts set up in order to care for the HIV/AIDS orphans in the *kebele*. To this end, MJ has committed itself to contribute a certain amount but it is agreed with the *iddir* leaders that MJ's contribution is supposed to decrease on a yearly basis. In such a manner it is believed that the *iddirs* will take over the responsibility of caring for the HIV/AIDS orphans in the community. MJ believes the *iddirs* are flexible enough that such development activities finally will be internalised by the community and the development initiatives therefore will be sustainable.

3   Not only for reasons of sustainability but also in terms of feasibility (project cost and management) the *iddirs* are better placed to raise a greater pool of capital that in turn may be used to provide credit facilities, cushion the problem of orphans, or finance outreach activities with sensitisation and awareness creation projects.

4   MJ also believes that despite their widely acclaimed attributes (being indigenous, sustainable and efficient in funeral management and organising community support to the family of the deceased), *iddirs* need to engage in organised, participatory development work in order to reach out to the poor and powerless in their respective localities. MJ believes that the fine skills of community organisation and resource management to defray burial costs, comfort the family of the deceased and render financial support have to be applied before life itself ends. Instead of managing a sequel of funerals due to HIV/AIDS, MJ believes that the increased incidence of death could be reduced if the *iddirs* embark more actively on awareness creation and preventive education on HIV/AIDS.

5   Collaboration with iddirs for community development work is again deemed useful since it may assist the iddirs meet some challenges to their raison-d'être, viz. funeral management and financial support. With the alarmingly increasing death rate in the cities the iddirs are increasingly depleted of their savings. Some have already collapsed since the monthly contributions from members no longer match expenditures on the deceased. Development work like preventive health education, family planning and HIV/AIDS is therefore directly relevant to the problems that have put the sustainability of the iddirs at risk.

The Community Development Committee have the following responsibilities:

- to take part in the strategic planning of the organisation and attend project activities in the entire cycle i.e. from the initiation to the evaluation phases
- to assess the problems of the *kebele* and prioritise areas of intervention with regards to activities like the physical construction of premises (recreation centres, libraries, communal latrines etc.)
- to screen beneficiaries in programs like Non-Formal Education for children, saving and credit schemes for women etc.
- to mobilise the community and collect contributions as matching funds for physical constructions like libraries, communal latrines, recreation centres etc.

The committee has also one permanent community representative who attends and supervises all purchase requests for project activities and attends the actual acquisition of assets. This has greatly bolstered community confidence in the credibility of MJ. All activities are carried out under the auspices of the program component supervisors in constant deliberations with the respective CDC sub-committee members. The sub-committees have meetings once in every month.

There are of course a number of bottlenecks that MJ have met while attempting to work through *iddir*s via the CDC structure. One of these is the fact that *iddir* leaders are represented in the CDC and decide on matters related to the development work done in all the three *kebele*s. Sometimes they face problems in convincing their respective constituencies why another *kebele* or *iddir* area got the priority for the construction of a particular facility. The MJ staff is also convinced that the CDC structure, that fosters iddir participation through representation, has not been very helpful in collecting firsthand information or feedback on the opinions of the *iddir* members (or the community at large).

Another problem has been that the CDC subcommittee members, in particular the *kebele* chairpersons and development committee members, are not always available for the monthly meetings. This delays decisions and slows down activities on the ground. At present, it is not uncommon to see *kebele* and *wereda* officials locked in party meetings and *gimgema* party evaluations for weeks and months on end The turnover in *kebele* leadership following such party rituals and purges has made the *kebele* representation in the CDC highly unstable. Moreover the Addis Ababa City Administration has now restructured the city into ten districts called *kifleketemas* that are further subdivided into *wereda*s and *kebele*s. This very recent restructuring has brought the merger of two and three *kebele*s into one. This probably demands revisions in the CDC structure.

In cognisance of these problems a Consultative Meeting was held with both the *iddir* leaders and the *kebele* officials about the future of the CDC structure. The *iddir* leaders underscored the need for the MJ program staff to directly contact and communicate with *iddir* general assemblies on matters related to the development work. This is believed to open up a door for MJ to relate directly to community sentiments discuss issues directly. The *kebele* officials also admitted that they had not served in the committees as they were expected to do for reasons of their own and suggested that the CDC structure be improved to comprise only the *iddir* leadership. The suggestions were accepted by all parties (the *kebele* officials, the iddir representatives and MJ) and MJ has now assigned a permanent contact person to all the CBOs. The person will be playing a liaison and advocacy role between MJ and the respective *iddir* assemblies in order to better explain and defend CDC motions to community members.

Multi Purpose Community Development Project (MCDP)

MCDP is another local NGO engaged in urban community development work in Addis Ababa, founded by Ethiopian volunteer professionals in 1998, with Sr. Mulu as a driving force.

MCDP is a partner to SC Norway-E in a project to prevent child labour. It operates in three *kebele*s of wereda 8 in Addis Ababa. It concentrated its activities in this *wereda* because the founder herself is a resident in this same *wereda* and believed that she was well acquainted with local problems. Meetings were first held with the *wereda* officials to communicate MCDP's interest. The *wereda* was more than willing to cooperate and indicated that *kebele*s 23, 24 and 25 were the areas with a high proportion of poor and and a suitable place to start work. MCDP then ran a preliminary assessment in the three *kebele*s and took the initiative to launch a non-formal education program in one of the *kebele*s.

The non-formal education programme was a three years' project (1998–2000) funded by SC Norway-E. It was following the terminal evaluation of this project that another detailed "needs assessment survey" was carried out in 8 *kebele*s (the original 3 plus 5 additional ones) in the same *wereda*. A sample of 332 households was selected for the study. The study team conducted Focus Group discussions with children, women, weavers, and *kebele* development committee members. The youth from each *kebele* were represented by the new *kebele* youth associations, whereas children were chosen from both the non-formal education centre and the regular elementary school in the *wereda*. Weavers were purposively selected from the areas where they were known to be concentrated.

During Focus Group discussions with children the problem of children weavers (trafficked from the rural areas from parents who were promised that their children would be educated in Addis Ababa) and severe forms of exploitation of child labour were brought out. Later, an external consultant studied the case and found out that the problem is indeed very alarming and serious. The next partnership project with SC Norway (2001–2003) therefore focused on child labour prevention and the provision of non–formal education to these children.

Structures for Participation

The identification of the child labour problem made MCDP realise that it had not yet immersed itself fully into the affairs and problems of the community. It was decided to develop a structure that would bring MCDP lower down into the grass roots level. The *kebele* households were then grouped into what are called the Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs). Each NHG is made up from 25 to 40 households represented by one contact person. Every five NHG constitutes a second level of community organisation called the "zones". Zonal representatives are elected from the respective NHG leaders in that particular zone. The number of zones in one *kebele* might range from 3–5. The Zonal representatives, the kebele Development Committee members and the MCDP program staff then form the highest organ of the structure known as the MCDP-Development Committee (MCDP-DC).Three MCDP-DCs were established along this pattern in the three *kebele*s where MCDP is working.

The Development Committees in each *kebele* are the highest decision making organs in MCDP sponsored development ventures of the *kebele*. Accordingly, the DC members oversee and participate in the entire project cycle from the initiation of project activities to the evaluation phases. It mobilises local labour and material resources for development work especially in the construction of physical establishments (like communal kitchen and latrines).They also lobby *wereda* and city government officials for issues like insuring free space (land) for such constructions. They are also instrumental in

screening and selecting beneficiaries for savings and credit projects, as well as children who will be given places in the non-formal education programme. A lot of the trouble that comes with the prioritising of project resources is also resolved by the committee members themselves.

Members in the MCDP-DCs are of course people that are directly and democratically elected, first to a Neighbourhood Group and secondly as zonal representatives. The election at each layer of the structure often tends to favour knowledgeable and influential community members. They are the elite of society who already serve as *iddir* leaders, elders, or organisers of other community ventures. These overlaps (dual or multiple roles) have facilitated rather than hampered the work of MCDP inside the community.

The idea of establishing Neighbourhood Groups first started with the need to properly manage and maintain newly built facilities, like communal showers, latrines and communal kitchens/cooking facilities constructed by MCDP. The groups established were very efficient in this regard. With the introduction of the new structure, however, the number of Neighbourhood Groups was further expanded to serve as the lowest echelon of community participation in the development work.

NHGs are constituted of members that contribute labour and sometimes matching funds for the construction of physical establishments and infrastructure. As mentioned earlier, NHGs also take the responsibility for managing communally owned facilities that are built by the efforts of both MCDP and the community itself. They run a series of meetings to develop by-laws on how to efficiently and appropriately use and maintain these facilities. They also serve as the lowest platform to host awareness creation programs amidst the community on issues related to reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and child rights.

One of the most impressive features of MCDP's structure for community participation is the structure put in place for children's participation. The children were directly involved in focus groups discussions that first identified the problem of child labour and the fact that this information was acted upon and resulted in a project to actually improve the situation of the weaver children have created great trust between children and MCDP. The children now have a properly structured children's development committee (with an impressively articulate chairman) that meets every 15 days to discuss the situation of children in the three kebeles and to report perceived violations of the rights of children to the MCDP and the *kebele*. The committee is charged with running awareness campaigns against HIV/AIDS among the children and are active in child right clubs.

In contrast to many other situations, the MCDP actually takes the concerns of children seriously and actually commit resources to projects suggested by the children's development committee. In addition to the project against child labour the children have been able to initiate a number of activities that have been brought forward through the child rights clubs and the children's development committee. Some of these have required financial outlays that have been financed by MCDP (such as the construction of a library, the organisation of a local music club, the publication of a local quarterly magazine written by and for children, the organisation of local football tournaments) while others have mostly been a matter of effective advocacy work and lobbying, for instance to increase the number of public telephones in the *kebele*s.

MCDP feels that it has secured genuine participation at a grass roots level with the introduction of this elaborate participatory structure. MCDP is confident that it has secured trust and credibility in the community by reaching out to the household level through the Neighbourhood Groups and involving them in the decision making. The Neighbourhood Groups in particular are used as forums to sensitise the community

about issues of reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and child rights. Earlier, a MCDP officer explains, *"we used to announce to the residents via the kebele that there would be meetings in the kebele assembly halls. We expected people to come and participate, which was not efficient at all. We now have a better outreach to the grassroots level through the Neighbourhood Groups themselves"*.

MCDP also believes that the challenge of organising the community from scratch to ensure meaningful participation in development is by itself an achievement. It provokes people to be concerned about community welfare and social development in an institutional manner. The MCDP staff believes that the Development Committee structures at *kebele* levels have been effective. None the less, there have been problems in selecting localities where communal facilities are to be built or in screening people for credit or for acceptance to non-formal education. Difficulties might arise between members of different neighbourhood groups, zones or *kebele*s. The community representatives in the DCs often find it difficult to explain back to their constituencies the need to prioritise project activities. Poor people find it difficult to accept that the problems may be even worse in other neighbourhoods.

MCDP actively tries to divest itself of project responsibilities as projects mature. A number of stakeholders (the city administration, *kebele*s, *iddir*s or NHGs) need to be consulted and options reviewed if they are to stand a chance to sustain any of the project activities. For instance, MCDP has this far handed over newly constructed communal latrines and kitchens to NHGs because these households are the firsthand users of the establishments that will be able to render appropriate care to maintain or refurbish them if the need arises. In another case, however, MCDP has handed over a small public library that it built inside the compound of *kebele* 25 to the Addis Ababa City Cultural and Information Bureau. This was done after a general meeting with the community and the local *kebele* officials was held. The meeting itself proposed that the community or the *kebele* could not take over and manage the library for financial reasons (it cannot afford to pay the salary for the librarian, procure books or cover maintenance costs). *Kebele*s on the other hand took over the management of public showers, charging clients a small amount of money that in turn is used to cover maintenance costs plus salaries to the cleaners. The Saving and Credit Cooperatives of the Women, initiated by seed capital from MCDP, have now become independent and have been very successful in collecting outstanding loans in due time and replenishing the revolving fund to service new users. Three such cooperatives have been established and are now expanding both in their size of clientele and membership.

7 Capacity building and strengthening civil society

The preceding review indicates clearly that SC Norway's primary focus, in Ethiopia as well as globally, is on the situation of children and on activities aimed at improving the situation of children within the framework laid down by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In its programming strategy SC Norway has picked out a few substantive fields in which it wants to focus its attention and efforts, most notably within primary education. In the case of Ethiopia SC Norway has by all accounts contributed an innovative and feasible model for expanding the first cycle of primary education. The pilot phase has shown that the ABECS model can play a significant role in Ethiopia's efforts to provide primary education for all by 2015. The ABECS model is now being applied in an increasing number of local communities in northern Ethiopia. SC Norway is particularly aware of the difficult issues involved in maintaining the quality of the education offered in this scaled-up approach.

SC Norway in Ethiopia is involved in other activities as well, partly arising from the objectives of its global strategy, partly from the country-specific adjustments and additions set out in its country programme for Ethiopia. The spectacular results reported from the efforts to combat Harmful Traditional Practices in northern Ethiopia have been met with a sound measure of scepticism, included in SC Norway's own mid-term review of its country programme. The results have yet to be independently verified.

In fields like the exploitation of child labour, the sexual exploitation of children, the promotion of child rights and combating HIV/AIDS the outputs of SC Norway activities are less spectacular and less clear-cut. This is partly because the subject matter is complex and the problems of such a scale that quick results cannot be expected, but it may also be related to deficiencies regarding monitoring systems reported in SC Norway's mid-term review. The review goes as far as stating that it found "*an absence of systematic and regular monitoring of impact*", but also commends SC Norway for revising policies and taking measures to improve project design in this regard.

There can be no doubt that SC Norway in Ethiopia addresses significant problems affecting the situation of children, with some success. As pointed out above each individual component in SC Norway's country programme for Ethiopia can be justified with reference to SC Norway strategy documents, but it is difficult to see how the various components support each other in any programme-level synergies. Although there are clusters of projects that actually display such synergies, the country programme as a whole can be seen as a collection of individual projects funded for a variety of reasons.

It is important to point out, however, that successes in the SC Norway country programme have largely been achieved in fields where SC Norway has cooperated closely with government agencies. SC Norway policies and strategy statements are not dogmatic about who its partners should be. Active and capable NGOs are not seen as valuable in their own right, and SC Norway operations do not depend on a thriving civil society as such. Put simply, SC Norway does not have a strategy to strengthen civil society in Ethiopia, except in the sense that increased acceptance and respect for the UNCRC can be seen as important qualitative aspect of society. Partnerships seem to have been pragmatically entered into with the primary aim of reaching as many children as possible. In the rights-based approach that SC Norway has adopted, it makes perfect sense to primarily address the duty holders, those who are responsible for ensuring children their rights. In Ethiopia, the government is the primary duty holder within the substantive fields that SC Norway has selected for attention.

In Ethiopia, civil society has become synonymous with NGOs. These comparatively recent organisations in Ethiopia have not enjoyed a happy relationship with the government. Most of them lead a precarious existence in the space that the government has been prepared to grant them, and they

still depend financially on the international NGO community. They have an extremely poor reputation in the eyes of the government, the academic community, the media and the public at large, as repositories of privilege and extravagance, symbolised by the (formerly) yellow number plates on expensive four wheel-drive vehicles. The background for this negative image is complex, the criticism simplistic and populist and the reputation unfair. However, all of this is slowly changing. Local NGOs are increasingly showing their mettle in many local contexts, confronting the multifaceted issues of poverty in Ethiopia in ways that sometimes are impressively innovative, at other times doomed to failure. They have more or less voluntarily restricted themselves to providing services, filling local gaps in government programmes and inadequacies in government policies. They depend on building alliances from below with both CBOs and local government, particularly at the *kebele* level. Government suspicion is abating and the regulatory environment is slowly improving.

SC Norway maintains a number of partnerships with local NGOs that work within the scope of SC Norway policies and strategies. Again, SC Norway does not support the development of local NGOs for their own sake, but because of the contributions that they make to reaching SC Norway's specific policy goals with regard to children. Hence, SC Norway provides support to selected parts of the work that the local NGOs carry out. Agreements are for short time periods and for specific activities, to the extent that one may perceive the relationship as that of local NGOs taking on sub-contracts to implement parts of SC Norway's programme.

This argument may be further substantiated by the fact that many of the senior staff in the SC Norway's partner NGO's are former SC Norway employees. An alternative view is that SC Norway staff cuts in Ethiopia, made in connection with the decision to abandon direct implementation, in fact have made a significant contribution to the capacity of the Ethiopian NGO sector. Those made redundant were senior and highly experienced SC Norway staff. While the NGOs that they subsequently founded depended on SC Norway contributions at one stage, they are now highly conscious of the need to diversify sources of income and to consolidate their independent profile as genuinely Ethiopian NGOs.

None the less, SC Norway has made extensive investments in the NGOs supported by partnership agreements, in terms of infrastructure support, training and human resources development and through annual budget grants. It is therefore surprising that the mid-term review of SC Norway's current strategic plan displays some reserve concerning how well SC Norway has transferred knowledge or specific technical skills to its partners and how well it has succeeded in contributing to organisational development or human resources development in these young NGOs. The partners express clearly their appreciation of the annual budget grants and other forms of funding, but have a more varied assessment of these other forms of value added by SC Norway to the partnerships. It should be added, however, that SC Norway will give the issue of capacity building additional attention and that surveys to get a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of partner organisations (both government and NGOs) have been carried out.[44]

SC Norway partnerships do not extend beyond the local NGOs, and SC Norway's present strategy does not include direct work with communities. The NGOs supported by SC Norway, however, have in turn displayed an increasing fascination with various forms of community-level organisations. These may be formally constituted CBOs (such as the *iddir* burial societies), other traditional social forma-tions (such as user groups in traditional natural resources management) or even social groups created by the NGOs themselves for specific purposes. The *iddir*s have attracted particular attention, probably because they are easily recognised as well-ordered and effective organisations, displaying a high degree of internal cohesion and discipline and operating entirely on the basis of voluntary contribu-tions from their membership. Some of SC Norway's partner NGOs have invested a lot of effort in the *iddir*s, with the aim of getting them to accept the new challenges of contemporary Ethiopia. Progress has been slow, because the efforts involve engaging in well-established democratic processes in the internal governance of the *iddir*s. Members join the *iddir*s for the specific purpose of saving towards funeral expenses for themselves and their closest kin. Their apprehensions with regard to the new tasks

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44   see for instance Berhanu Birke et al (2003) SC NorwayE Local Partner NGOs Capacity Assessment
      Report, Save the Children Norway, Addis Ababa.

proposed, specifically involving a responsibility for HIV/AIDS orphans (in some cases also home-based care for HIV/AIDS patients), are understandable.

Given the way the SC Norway country programme in Ethiopia is organised and implemented, SC Norway relies on a long chain of delegation to ensure that the intentions and goals expressed in its global strategy are transformed into outcomes in local communities and impact on the children SC Norway wants to reach. It is important to underline that this is not a chain of command, but rather a series of partly overlapping interests. SC Norway has not given itself any particular mandate to intervene and structure this impact chain, except for its general commitment to partnership. This may change if SC Norway decides work more actively to build organisational capacity in its partner organisations. Up to now, this structure seems to have worked, as long as service delivery has been the main item to be passed along the impact chain. In a rights-based approach, however, advocacy and the mobilisation of interest will probably be more important in the long run to succour children in difficult circumstances. In the case of Ethiopia the impact chain with regard to child rights' advocacy has proved less effective. While local NGOs are still reluctant to engage in active advocacy, SC Norway, through the Save the Children Alliance in Ethiopia, has become a civil society actor in its own right, engaging actively in surveillance ("watchdog") and lobbying functions that are normally associated with a dynamic civil society. This must be seen as a short-term and temporary strategy that is difficult to sustain. Under the circumstances alternatives are not easy to identify.

8   Impact on democratisation, human rights and poverty reduction

SC Norway has been working in Ethiopia for close to four decades, under three different political regimes. In this period SC Norway has changed its mode of operation in significant ways, from small-scale institutional support, to large-scale service delivery and on to the current partnership mode with an emphasis on child rights. Throughout this period SC Norway's activities have ultimately been justified with reference to the situation and rights of children, but there has been a clear evolutionary trend from the needs-based approach underlying the large community development programmes of former times to the more sharply focused rights-based approach driving the current country programme. Renewed emphasis on the UNCRC has given SC Norway a platform for infusing concerns for child rights in all its programming.

The three different political regimes in Ethiopia in this period have each laid down a set of preconditions for foreign NGOs like SC Norway to engage in development work. It is a curious paradox that the last two regimes, both of which have strongly propounded that political processes are the key to development in Ethiopia, have so carefully excluded from the political arena the many large or small organisations that share the development aims of the government. Both foreign and national NGOs subscribe to the same development objectives as the government, which have been given formal expression in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Even with the Dergue government, tension was primarily over the mode of implementation rather than the development objectives as such. As far as the governments of both the Dergue and the current regime are concerned, the NGOs should restrict their outlook and their work to service delivery within the general framework laid down by the government. NGOs are rarely invited to take part in policy debates or policy formulation. In a way they operate "outside" politics. The relationship between the government and the NGOs seems to be changing slowly, however, with inclusion of the NGOs in the consultation process of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) being a first sign.

The current government has not been overly appreciative of the gap-filling functions provided by the NGOs, characterising them as "*simplistic welfare activities*" that have not contributed significantly to the transformations that in the eyes of the government are necessary for genuine development to take place. The government has jealously guarded its hegemonic control over the political processes and has only granted miniscule parts of the political space to organisations with alternative views. As pointed out, opportunities for articulating alternatives points of view have arisen in comparatively non-controversial fields, like children's rights or the situation of women. Beyond this, the government is sensitive to criticism and has been prepared to suppress, with the means available to it, the diversity of views that would normally feed a democratic process within other more contentious fields.

The government keeps tight control over Ethiopian NGOs by means of a detailed and vigilantly enforced schedule of regulations. It has on several occasions shown that it is prepared to use these regulations to de-register NGOs, thus making them illegal. With a few notable exceptions, Ethiopian NGOs do not have the financial or organisational capacity to confront the government on any issue. In a few exceptional cases the maintenance of a high international profile seems to be an important part of such a confrontational strategy, with the *Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO)* and the *Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA)* being prime examples. More usually, advocacy work is carried out within the parameters laid down by the government.

A few of SC Norway partner organisations, most notably the *Forum on Street Children* and the *African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)* are involved in advocacy work on child rights. Both are comparatively robust organisations, enjoying a fairly diversified income base with support from a number of international NGOs, including specific project support from SC Norway. It is important for local NGOs to work with multiple donors (and preferably

to develop additional local sources of income if and when this becomes permissible) in order to achieve autonomy from any single donor. The Forum on Street Children and ANPPCAN have also succeeded in safeguarding their legitimacy by developing an important network encompassing both national and regional partners, despite the fact that they are not membership organisations. Most importantly, they work in a field where the government has signed several international conventions and is committed to change. Hence, they are typical of the advisory nature of much of the advocacy work found in the Ethiopian NGO sector, which can be viewed as professional support of and technical advice on the implementation of government policy rather than as confrontation over views and values or competition over political alternatives.

SC Norway works to promote children's rights though partnerships with these Ethiopian NGOs, even though the partnerships, to a large extent, are focused on (and for most practical purposes, limited to) the budget grants that the organisations receive from SC Norway. SC Norway's own mid-term evaluation of its current strategy period points out that more attention should be given to contributions to other aspects of the partnership, on the basis of common values and shared knowledge.

Particular mention should be made of another aspect of advocacy within the field of children's rights in Ethiopia. The members of the Save the Children Alliance in Ethiopia all support the advocacy work carried out by Ethiopian NGOs in the field, but have also gone a step further by organising their own independent platform for child rights advocacy. The Alliance has gained access to crucial institutions in the Ethiopian political system (e.g. the Legislative Assembly), creating active links to both the judiciary and the executive branches of government. The common interest that the Alliance holds with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in implementing the UNCRC in Ethiopia should be particularly noted.

It is unclear, however, if the Alliance's advocacy work should be seen as a temporary measure generated by the general reluctance and poor capacity of Ethiopian NGOs (with the exceptions mentioned above) to involve themselves in this kind of work. There can be no doubt, however, that active advocacy from genuinely local NGOs rooted in the social realities of Ethiopian society will enjoy a higher degree of political legitimacy in the long run than advocacy from international organisations. Local NGOs may be technically deficient and may not have a clear domestic constituency behind them, but over time these shortcomings are likely to be outweighed by the advantages of child rights in Ethiopia being championed by politically legitimate actors representing genuinely Ethiopian concerns. The active involvement of foreign NGOs in the political process may easily become counterproductive to the effort of rooting child rights as a valid democratic concern in Ethiopia.

The fight against poverty has been promoted to the primary goal of all Norwegian development cooperation, at the same time as the development discourse has become increasingly sophisticated in its discussion of poverty. Today there is a much better understanding of the complex interrelationships across and between sectors that create poverty, beyond the simple measurements commonly used before. The reduction of poverty therefore involves a lot more than simply increasing monetary income. Issues like food security, education, health, gender relations and essential social services like water and sanitation are all aspects of poverty. The MDGs take all these aspects into account and commit development agencies to concentrating their attention on achieving progress along these dimensions of poverty.

The SC Norway country programme in Ethiopia is clearly linked to the MDGs. With its clear bias in favour of primary education (approximately 65 % of the annual budget) the impact of the SC Norway programme on poverty must be assessed in terms of the various outcomes of its education programmes. As indicated above, SC Norway has been successful in promoting a model for primary education that has made the first cycle of primary education much more affordable and accessible to people in Northern Ethiopia. In SC Norway's own pilot project improvements in enrolment and retentions rates have been impressive, and the strategic choice to concentrate on quality issues in subsequent phases, involving many additional actors and multiplying the number of schools by 30, is probably wise. So, the impact of the ABECS model and SC Norway Quality in Education project may go well beyond the comparatively modest amounts of money that have gone into the programme. On the other hand, it will take a while before the impact of better primary education becomes evident.

On the other side of the spectrum only 5% of SC Norway's annual budget is classified as relating to poverty in the sense of increasing incomes. Outcomes here are more uncertain and the impact more difficult to trace. This is largely a matter of scale. "*Income poverty*" is a massive problem in Ethiopia, with over 80% of the population living below $ 1 a day.[45] From this perspective SC Norway's efforts are rather modest. Most of SC Norway's budget contributions in this area go to a food security project in Northern Ethiopia; a micro-finance project in Addis Ababa also receives support. Although outcomes at the level of the individual beneficiaries may be positive, SC Norway's own annual report laconically states that "*there is no significant change in the poverty level of the country*".

Having said this, it is necessary to keep in mind that the challenge of poverty in Ethiopia is formidable and that the resources that SC Norway can bring to bear on poverty are miniscule. Ethiopia remains classified as one of the absolutely poorest countries in the world and progress is slow. Most relevant statistics[46] point to many small incremental changes in the indicators over the last decade, interrupted by significant setbacks. Famines have become a regular feature of Ethiopian society, and a common interpretation has been that famines are an important contributing factor to poverty in Ethiopia. It is necessary to be absolutely clear, however, that famines are caused by poverty more than anything else. Famines are symptoms of poverty and cannot be used to explain poverty. In this context it is important to keep in mind that the famous famine of 1973–74, which provided the back-drop to the Ethiopian revolution (and the advent of many of the major INGOs in Ethiopia), affected approximately 1.5 million people. The latest famine in 2002–2003 affected 14 million people, or approximately 10 times as many, in a population that has grown from just below 30 million to 60 – 65 million people in the same time period.

Such sobering statistics should deter complacency and serve as a constant reminder that there is a lot of work that remains to be done.

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45   UNDP: Human Development Report 2003, p.200.
46   UNDP: Human Development Report 2003.

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Appendix 1
Terms of Reference

Study of the impact of Norwegian voluntary organisastions based on the case studies of FORUT in Sri Lanka and Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia.

1. Background

The Storting has on several occasions expressed interest in the activities of the Norwegian organisations working in developing countries and asked for more information about the impact of their work. The Minister for International Development has informed the Storting that a study will be conducted in order to assess to what extent the organisations affect and support the building of civil society. The study should also evaluate the wider impact and the "value added" of the work of the Norwegian voluntary organisations funded by public means.

Since 1987 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has published 100 evaluation reports of which 25 wholly or partly deals with Norwegian NGOs. Much knowledge exists about the activities and outputs of the work of Norwegian organisations, but less is known about the impact of their work.

In order to address the impact of the organisations' work, it will be necessary to conduct a more thorough and long-lasting study than usually undertaken in evaluations. This study will be carried out over a period of two years. The study will concentrate on two case studies: the work of FORUT and Redd Barna with their partners in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia respectively.

The issues to be studied will refer to the objectives for governmental support to NGOs, as stated in the guidelines for financial support to organisations for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation made by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

The understanding generated about the impact of the work of FORUT and Redd Barna will be used as a basis for generalising, and it will be part of the study to present an outline of an impact reporting system.

2. Purposes

The purpose of the study is to:

1) assess the impact in a broad perspective of the activities of FORUT in Sri Lanka and Redd Barna in Ethiopia, and
2) present an outline of an impact reporting system for NGOs.

The study will include:

- an assessment of the capacity building of the Norwegian organisations with their Sri Lankan and Ethiopian partners, and of how the Norwegian organisations and their partners contribute towards building civil society in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia
- an assessment of the impact of the work of the Norwegian organisations and their partners particularly in relation to poverty reduction, democratisation and human rights, which are referred to in the guidelines for financial support
- a presentation of an outline for a reporting system for NGOs on impact of their work.

3. Major Issues

Capacity building: strengthening local partner organisations and civil society

The emphasis on capacity building reflects a shift away from a model where Norwegian voluntary organisations were operational organisations that themselves implemented development projects. The current trend is a *partnership* model in which local partner organisations, non-governmental as well as as governmental organisations, become responsible for the actual implementation of the projects and programmes that none the less have been influenced and funded by the Norwegian NGOs. The study will assess the ways in which Redd Barna and FORUT contribute to:

– technical and administrative capacity building in relation to their partner organisations
– strengthening, building, or institutionalising, civil society and/or
– improved public management and governance
– economic sustainability through capacity building.

The roles of the organisations can generally be divided into three main types: service provision, advocacy and mobilisation. These three roles require different ways of working and different relationships, for example towards the authorities. This study will be concerned with and discuss all three roles of the Norwegian organisations and their partners in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia.

Impact Assessment

The guidelines for financial support to the Norwegian NGOs defines a range of areas where the organisations could make a contribution; poverty reduction, democratisation, human rights, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in the humanitarian area. Based on the guidelines, and the objectives of FORUT and Redd Barna, three broad areas will be selected for an impact assessment: democracy, human rights and poverty reduction. The study will also include reconciliation where there is a post-conflict context.

Democratisation

An underlying assumption in much of the discussion about support to civil society organisations is that they can contribute to democratic politics and to the development of democratic institutions. The study will assess if this is the case and to what degree they:

• contribute to good governance by playing the role of watchdogs and encourage accountability and transparency between government and civil society, both nationally and locally,
• influence policies as part of an advocacy strategy on behalf of beneficiaries or members,
• contribute to the creation of spaces for democratic politics as stressed in the Guidelines,
• function as "training grounds" for democratic politics and train people in the importance of following certain "rules of the game",
• engage local government officials in bargaining in order to protect themselves and their livelihoods and to improve their socio-economic position.

The democratising role is particularly important and difficult, under authoritarian regimes and in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Human rights

Human rights organisations contribute to improvements of human rights mainly through service delivery, as training, and through advocacy. The study will assess how the organisations and their partners work to influence national and local government, the police and the judiciary with regard to establishing and changing:

• the political issues on the agenda,
• the actors positions,
• the procedures, for example allowing access to new organisations, groups
• the behaviour of target groups.

As in the case with democracy, advocacy processes are harder to establish in contexts of authoritarian regimes and in post-conflict situations.

Poverty reduction

The study will assess whether the organisations target the poorest people/children in their work and whether they have created organisational structures which enable the poor and vulnerable to access necessary resources. The study will assess to what extent the activities of FORUT and Redd Barna has increased the ability of people to establish entitlements to resources. In Ethiopia the focus will be on the situation among the poorest children both in urban and rural contexts. The study will focus on:

- have the partner organisations included the poor, as members, board members, beneficiaries or employees,
- ways in which the partner organisations are connected to local economic institutions, such as markets, banks, other businesses, centres of education/training,
- whether the work of the partner organisations has resulted in improved access of the poor to services and capital from the authorities, and capital from the private sector.

Impact reporting system

The study will contribute to the development of an impact reporting system and suggest criteria for reporting on impact from the organisations. It will be based on a brief description of the current reporting system practised by NGOs and on relevant models for result based reporting, as from the environmental and social capital field, used by EU and UN. The presentation will refer to the requirements of the Norwegian authorities for financial support. The needs of other stakeholders for the reporting will be identified and the presentation will include:

- recommendations on suitable indicators for reporting within the areas of:
    – strengthening civil society
    – human rights
    – democracy and good governance
    – poverty alleviation
- recommendations on relevant levels of generalisation that may allow comparative analysis between countries and regions"
- systematising indicators at different level of detail and aggregation, and along dimensions of comparability and universality
- assess the feasibility of using the different indicators for reporting bearing in mind that reporting should be simple and user friendly.

4. Methods

This study is intended to be a learning process for Redd Barna and FORUT and partner organisations, and should be undertaken in collaboration between the organisations and stakeholders at different levels throughout the study period. The study should provide information and better understanding of the impact of their work.

The major focus of this study is at the level of groups, organisations and institutions, but the study will also indicate impacts for individuals of beneficiaries and at the national level.

The study will use a case study approach and select illustrative activities of the Norwegian organisations and partner organisations. The study will also look into the context in which the activities are carried out.

The approach would involve a description and assessment of:

- the objectives of the activities, including the perceptions of different actors,
  (for example an end to the recruitment of child soldiers)
- the activities; the input and the means,
  (for example an advocacy strategy)
- the results of the activities,
  (for example the knowledge building and sharing, alliance building, political pressure)
- the areas of change where impact can be traced, including changes of civil society organisations, changes of policies and activities of the authorities, and changes of behaviour of other actors targeted by the organisations,
- the external factors, such as the enabling environment for civil society
  (for example space for civil society allowed by the government)

5. Organisation and local research partners

The consultant shall establish a dialogue with collaborating research institutions in Ethiopia and Sri Lanka and involve them in the assessment of the issues. The study will also contribute to local research competence.

A reference group will be established for the study consisting of representatives from the MFA, Norad, NIBR, CMI and Redd Barna and FORUT. The role of the reference group will be advisory. The study team will report to the reference group, which will meet regularly through the study period and in connection with the presentation of draft reports and preparing for the seminars.

6. Expected products of the study

Written reports

Four reports will be produced:

1. An initial report discussing the approach and methodology of the study will be presented by May 2003.
2. A separate report on Redd Barna's work in Ethiopia will be submitted by June 2004.
3. A separate report on FORUT's work in Sri Lanka will be submitted by June 2004.
4. The synthesis report on the study, summarising the results of the study and presenting an outline for an impact reporting system. The draft final report will be submitted to MFA by October 1, 2004.

Seminars

A study seminar should be organised by the end of each study year in Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Norway, where the participating organisations and other relevant organisations are invited to share the experiences gained by the study. In addition opening meetings and seminars should be organised among the stakeholders in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia.