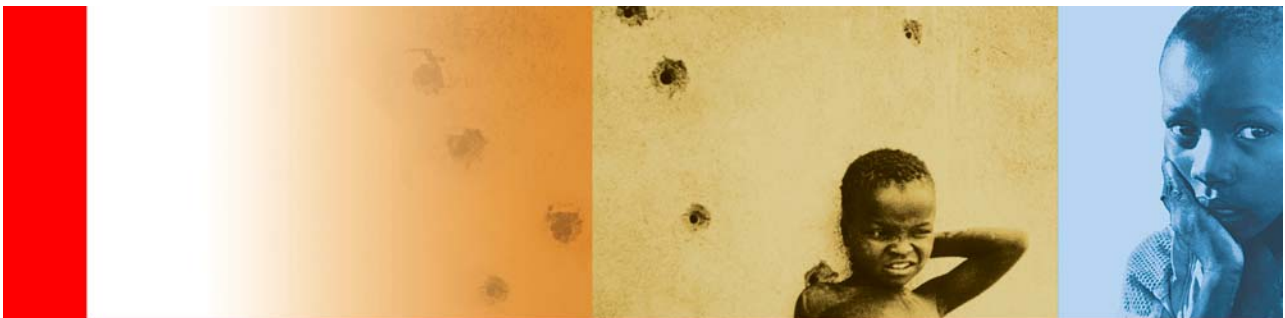Save the Children
Norway

# Global Evaluation

## Children Affected by Armed Conflict, Displacement or Disaster (CACD)

*"The kind of help we most needed was peace
– peace is the most important thing of all"*

*Angolan boy aged 11 years*

# Preface to the Global Evaluation on children affected by armed conflict and Disaster

It is with great pleasure that we present the first ever Global Evaluation of Save the Children Norway's work with children affected by armed conflict and disaster. The report will be a very solid and inspiring guide to both immediate action and longer-term strategy work for this thematic area in the years to come. This important event demands to be set in the historical context of the evolvement of Save the Children Alliance's a work with children affected by armed conflicts and disaster,-since it represents yet another significant contribution to the continual building of the field of knowledge and learning.

Save the Children was born out of the dreadful aftermath of the First World War in 1919. Its inspired founder, Eglantyne Jebb, drafted the Declaration of Geneva, which in five articles placed children's rights on the agenda of the fledgling League of Nations, and which evolved to the convention on the Rights of the Child as we now know it, almost universally ratified. Ms. Jebb pronounced the then controversial statement that *all* children, including children of the former enemy, had the *right to be the first to receive relief in times of distress.* The challenge in Europe was at that time enormous: four million children were starving; millions were left homeless and parentless. The very first relief action of Save the Children was in Vienna.

Ms. Jebb recognised early on the fundamental connection between how the world treats its young generation and universal peace. She also underlined the importance of not only providing relief-but staying on to help stabilise and improve conditions for children growing up under vulnerable circumstances.

As we approach the 200th. Anniversary for the establishment of Save the Children, we can look back and reflect on almost two centuries of working with children affected by war and disasters in almost all countries in the world. It is this wealth of accumulated knowledge and experience which has made Save the Children into the leading global non-government agency for children affected by armed conflict and disasters.

The experience of Save the Children in the field has allowed us to sit with authority and credibility at the tables of the United Nations, the European Union, and other regional and national bodies when important, often ground-breaking decisions and global policies are being developed.

The last half of the twentieth century witnessed a significant leap forward for the rights of children, and particularly children affected by armed conflict. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989, following 10 years of hard and dedicated work. The Optional Protocol on recruitment of children into armed forces was finally adopted, and the ratification process still continues. The UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, led by Graca Machel in 1996, provided new impetus for getting the issue of children affected by armed conflict firmly and permanently on the agenda of the Security Council, resulting in frequent resolutions and increased attempts at making states accountable for both the protection of children during armed conflict and the violations of their rights. The establishment of a Special Representative for Children Affected by Armed Conflict was also a landmark in the recognition of children's right to protection in armed conflict.

The International Save the Children Alliance's core areas of operation have been in the provision of food, shelter and medicines in emergencies, health provision, rehabilitation of children with disabilities, mine awareness programmes, keeping education going during and after conflict, tracing and reunification of separated children, work with widowed mothers, and rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with armed forces. The last twenty years, emphasis has also been given to the importance of integrating considerations of the psychological and social impact of armed conflicts and disasters on child development, families and communities into all our work. Recent years have also seen more effective systems developed within Save the Children Alliance to advocate

for children's rights, in particular with the establishment of positions at the UN in New York and Geneva, and in Brussels to relate to the European Union Parliament.

The Global Evaluation Report of the work of Save the Children Norway (SCN) in the field of children in armed conflict and disasters brings us in direct contact with children in seven different country programmes, reflecting the growing recognition and practice of children's right to express opinions and participate in influencing decisions which affect their well-being and lives. The report bears a strong message of the great hunger for learning from children; their desire for peace; their aspirations for a better world; and not least, their willingness to actively contribute to reconciliation and peace in the families, communities and nations. Harnessing this energy and the amazing resourcefulness of children will be a major challenge for SCN and its partners in the coming years. Children have also valued access to adults who have had the time and training to listen to their fears, to contain the knowledge of the horrors they have been through, and to encourage them to use and develop their resources and skills to build new lives for themselves. High on the list is also children's appreciation of activities undertaken to restore their health, as they return from captivity in armed forces.

The reporters return throughout the report to the ever-present issue of poverty and its connections with both disaster and armed conflict, and challenge Save the Children Norway to do more at both the local level and in terms of urging greater adherence to the national Poverty Reduction Plans.

We are also taken to task by children themselves to ensure that projects are more inclusive and transparent, extremely important in building the necessary trust in conflict-affected populations. The findings also point to the still considerable scope to increase the participation of children in all programme activities, and to build their capacities for leadership.

The reporters have taken time to describe the international situation regarding armed conflicts and disasters, noting that although the actual numbers of ongoing conflicts have decreased from thirty-two to nineteen, that the risk that several countries will return to civil war is high. The importance of donors and humanitarian organisations remaining in the post-conflict phase for a further ten years is emphasised, and also in keeping with SCN policy. In view of the fact that due to climate change natural disasters are on the increase globally, Save the Children Norway is urged to develop it's emergency and child protection work to focus more on this area.

The findings show that SCN does not incorporate a "survival" response component in their programming, in that the provision of shelter, food and medicines, at least on a large scale, is missing. This relates partly to organisational strategic choices, and also to the development within the Save the Children Alliance of the Emergency Liaison Team in recent years. However, certainly this issue needs to be reviewed: under what circumstances should SCN also engage in direct emergency provision?

The report also challenges SCN to strengthen our work in protecting children from HIV/AIDS, since in many conflict areas the prevalence is usually higher than the more peaceful parts of a country. Advocacy is dependent on good documentation, and the reporters urge us to do more of both. We are still not utilising to maximum effect the considerable store of knowledge and experience generated from field practice. Much of it is in people's heads and hearts-not on paper. In addition, the development of advocacy strategies at country programme level would be fundamental to making links to the international level.

Overall, the report acknowledges the high level of professional work SCN is carrying out with it's many partners in the protection and development of children affected by armed conflict, and in particular the capacity-building aspects of partnership.

We thank the reporters Maggie Brown and Joao Neves for handing over to us such a comprehensive, balanced and inspiring analysis of SCN's work with children affected by armed conflict and disaster, and we hope to do this significant piece of work justice by seriously considering all the recommendations.

Elizabeth Jareg, Senior Adviser, Save the Children Norway, Bente Damsleth, Adviser in Children in Armed Conflict and Disasters, Save the Children Norway

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## Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to this report but the most important and those to be mentioned first are the children and youth from Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Kosovo, Montenegro, Sri Lanka, and Uganda, as well as those children who have made their homes in Norway, who worked with us to identify and analyse the issues of greatest importance to them. We are extremely grateful to you all .. you are the most important people in this evaluation.

The Global Coordinators of the evaluation would also like to pay a special tribute to the staff of Save the Children Norway and partner agencies who work in all the projects covered in this report. Many work in situations of danger and risk and may be separated from their own families for weeks at a time. Your courage, determination and commitment are fundamental to support children in conflict and disaster.

Finally, we thank the consultants who researched and consolidated each of the country reports.

## Executive Summary

This evaluation is about children and youth and their rights to protection, survival, development and participation in the context of armed conflict and disaster. It aims to analyse Save the Children Norway's programme and advocacy approaches and ask whether they are the most relevant and effective in the context.

The context of armed conflict and disaster is ever-changing and for programmes to be appropriate and relevant, they must remain abreast of those trends. In armed conflict, some major trends are emerging. Large scale armed conflicts are gradually reducing in number globally as negotiated ceasefires and settlements lead to fragile peace agreements, often with populations living under tension for many years. Around half of these countries will return to armed conflict within a period of ten years after a negotiated peace agreement. These countries or territories need support in the medium term to maintain peace and the role of children and youth is particularly important as they will be the young adults that maintain peace or return to armed conflict.

In that context, Save the Children Norway's work in psychosocial recovery, peace-building, healing and reconciliation with children in post-conflict fragile democracies and transition states is of great importance. There is growing recognition of the need for bottom-up community-based measures in all of these areas in combination with top-down peace-keeping measures. Save the Children Norway can and does play an important role at both of those levels.

In relation to disasters, global trends show that they are increasing in number and in the number of people affected. The number of people dying from disasters (excluding the tsunami) is falling due to early warning systems and better disaster management, but there are enormous issues of the loss of livelihoods and poverty that result from disasters. While Save the Children Norway's thematic area is called Children Affected by Armed Conflict, Displacement and Disaster, the 'D' has had relatively limited attention.

Another aspect of disaster is the HIV/AIDS epidemic, especially in Sub Saharan Africa (particularly Southern Africa) where 3.2 million children and adults died in 2004 and over 3 million people were newly infected in the same year. These figures dwarf even the tsunami statistics. Although HIV/AIDS is a cross cutting issue for SCN, the evaluation found relatively limited attention paid to the issue.

The probability of a disaster or conflict affecting a population is vastly increased by poverty. Equally countries living in poverty are associated with high percentages of children in the population. In some cases, children face all three: poverty, conflict and disaster as happened in Sri Lanka and Aceh, Indonesia in the tsunami.

These trends present enormous challenges to organisations promoting children's rights in armed conflict and disaster. The objective of this evaluation is to assess SCN's programmes and advocacy against these current trends and against the major objectives of the SCN policy on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Disaster, below:

- Achieve peaceful solutions to political and military conflicts on the basis of children's rights
- Secure the rights of children to protection, survival, development and participation through advocacy and programme work
- Take a comprehensive perspective of children's needs, rights and resources in situations of armed conflicts, displacement and disasters

- Support and take initiatives that contribute to the protection of children, in particular from recruitment into armed forces, sexual abuse and other atrocities
- Take measures to ensure as far as possible, continuity and access to education during armed conflict, displacement and disasters
- Promote community-based efforts to assist and integrate children who have been separated from their families and communities, including those associated with armed groups/forces

## Methodology and ethics of the evaluation

This meta-evaluation represents an overview of six country evaluations of programmes in the area of CACD and identifies lessons learned and strategic recommendations for the direction of this work in the future. Country programmes included in the evaluation are: Angola, Guatemala, South East Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro), Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Uganda and through the Norway Programme to advocate for the rights of child refugees.

The evaluation was carried out in all countries during 2004 and a Global Evaluation Coordinator has consolidated the main points of the reports into a meta-evaluation. During the course of 2004 the Global Evaluation Coordinators visited all countries engaged in the evaluation and worked with the consultants and staff team conducting country evaluations. Each country evaluation was coordinated by a Country Team Leader and a Country Representative for SCN facilitated the evaluation and will carry forward the recommendations. A standardised framework was used for country reports to facilitate consolidation.

Child participation was a fundamental element of the evaluation. Children analysed issues and gave us their views through a workshop and focus groups in Uganda, a child reference group in Bosnia and Herzegovina, participatory exercises in Guatemala and Kosovo and focus groups in Angola, Sri Lanka and Norway. In Angola, two children were part of the evaluation team. The parameters for child participation in the evaluation were established through an SCN paper on the ethics of children's participation in evaluations and research.

Fuller explanations of the methodology are set out in annexe 1.

## Major achievements in the thematic area

*Child participation* – In all countries included in the evaluation SCN has done a great deal of work in most countries to enhance children's and youth empowerment and leadership through children's clubs, youth centres, youth committees in schools, youth-run radio programmes, children's parliaments and young people's participation in local planning. Importantly, these initiatives build on children's self-esteem rather than focusing on the negative aspects of the past.

*Peace-building* – Much of SCN's work engages children in processes of peace-building, even where it has not been articulated as such. Projects that support healing, addressing post-conflict cultures of violence, family reunification, access to education and vocational training all support building peace. Projects that bring children of different ethnic groups together to enjoy joint activities have been particularly important in building peace.

*Community based approaches to healing and child protection* – SCN has shown special strengths in community based work drawing on local cultures, traditions and languages to build on children's confidence and overcome fears of the past. Child protection committees help to provide a community alert system to call attention to violence or abuse of children while children's workshops provide a basis for reinforcing children's self esteem and for making sense of past events in a safe environment.

*Vocational training and access to school* – Children particularly value access to education and training and SCN has supported many different projects to enhance children's access to school and to training, giving children greater hope for the future.

*Reunifying separated children or support to foster care* – Armed conflict and disasters inevitably separate from children from families or leave children orphaned. In most countries in the evaluation, SCN has supported partners in family tracing, fostering and adoption programmes.

## Strategic recommendations

*Further develop a conceptual framework for child participation in peace-building* – The sense of direction of this work could be strengthened by a clear conceptual model, including indictors to monitor effect and impact.

*Building on advocacy with non state entities* – Although advocacy with non State Entities is extremely complex, difficult and sometimes risky work, it is essential to make real changes in the lives of children affected by armed conflict as NSEs are the greatest violators of children's rights.

*Maintain a strategic overview of armed conflict and disaster-* Trends in the area of armed conflict, displacement and disaster are fast-moving and these should be reflected in strategic decision-making on programmes. In particular, the size, frequency and numbers of people affected by disasters are increasing and more attention could be paid to this area. In addition, the number of active armed conflicts is falling but populations are more likely to live under long-term tension and the risk of a return to war. This underlines the fundamental importance of peace-building with children and youth.

*Advocacy for donor support in the medium term* – The evaluation found that donors often leave countries too early, before peace has been consolidated. The report recommends advocacy with donors to remain in fragile states for medium term periods.

*Monitor Poverty Reduction Strategies* – Armed conflict and disasters are associated with poverty and all states (except Angola) in this evaluation have Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers led by national governments. Children can engage in monitoring the implementation of these strategies, with a focus on investment in the social sectors, education and health.

*Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction* – In view of the increased number of disasters and growing number of people affected, children's clubs and association present an excellent venue to focus on child-friendly disaster preparedness training and possibly low-cost environmental projects with a view to disaster risk reduction.

*HIV/AIDS* – SCN is developing a new strategy for work in HIV/AIDS that will provide greater focus on this area. Further investment should include the prevention and reduction of stigma as well as models for direct support to children affected by HIV/AIDS and long-term solutions for children who lose parents. It would be helpful if clear links could be made to the new SCN advocacy strategy.

## Terms used in the Report

### Child
A child is defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as all persons below the age of 18 years.

### Child protection
This is a disputed term as to whether it encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual or whether it refers more narrowly to protection from harm.

In this report child protection is defined as the following: *The realisation of children's rights to protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect. This includes protection from recruitment to armed groups/armed forces and protection from all forms of violence in armed conflict'*

### Disaster
Using the definition of the major database documenting and analysing disasters, EM-DAT[1] disasters are events fulfilling one or more of the following criteria:
- 10 or more people killed
- 100 or more people affected
- A call for international assistance
- Declaration of a state of emergency

### Early Childhood Development
ECD refers to the holistic development of young children encompassing health, learning, family and community life.

### Major armed conflict
Two of the organisations most respected for their work in armed conflicts are the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Project Ploughshares, a Canadian Ecumenical group. Their definitions of armed conflict are different as SIPRI focuses on *major* armed conflict. A major armed conflict is defined by SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) as the 'Use of armed force between military forces of two or governments or of one government and one organized armed group resulting in the battle-related deaths of at least 1000 in any single calendar year' (SIPRI, 2004).

Project Ploughshares defines an armed conflict as: 'A political conflict in which armed combat involved the armed forces of at least one state (or one or armed factions seeking to gain control of all or part of the state) and in which at least 1,000 people have been killed by the fighting *during the course of the conflict'*. (Project Ploughshares, 2004)

Both definitions are used in this report, in order to track trends in armed conflicts, although we recognise their limitations, especially for children affected by armed conflict. The conflict in Uganda, for example, was not classified as a major armed conflict in view of the fact that there have not been 1000 battle-related deaths in a single year. However, it should be noted that many deaths in poor countries are not registered (in the same way that births are not registered) so the real death toll is unknown. In addition, there are vastly higher numbers of deaths, especially amongst children, as a result of poor nutrition and disease associated with the impact of armed conflict.

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[1] Emergency and Disasters Database of CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters)

## Peace-building

There are a number of definitions of peace-building, most applying to the post-conflict period but some also including phases of ongoing armed conflict. For the UK Department for International Development, peace-building refers to action undertaken over the medium to longer term to address the factors *underlying* violent conflict (DFID, 1999). For the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA, 2004) peace-building is action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. They are complementary definitions. For MOFA peace-building entails three mutually reinforcing dimensions:

- Security (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; humanitarian mine action; control of small arms; security system reform)
- Political development (support for political and administrative authorities and structures; *reconciliation;* good governance, democracy and human rights, civil society development, judicial processes and truth commissions)
- Social/economic development (repatriation and reintegration of refugees and IDPs; reconstruction of social infrastructure; social development: education and health; economic development, private sector, employment trade and investment)

In these definitions, reconciliation is an element of peace-building.

## Peacemaking

The official or unofficial diplomatic effort to end bloodshed between parties embroiled in conflict (Search for Common Ground).

## Psychosocial

Psychosocial refers to the dynamic relationship between psychological and social factors and processes in life, the one continually influencing the other. In conflict and disaster, psychological effects are those that affect emotions, behaviours, thoughts, memory and learning ability. Social effects refer to altered relationships due to death, separation, estrangement and other losses, family and community breakdown, damage to social values and customary practices and the destruction of social facilities (schools, health posts). Social effects extend to the economic dimension with the destruction of livelihoods.

Support to the psychological and social aspects of child development encompasses *all* actions which stimulate learning, increase self-esteem, self-insight and confidence, promote good mutual relationships, protect children from harm, promote good physical health, play and laughter, give comfort and hope, and provide opportunities for sharing of experiences and access to culturally appropriate healing traditions (SCN).

## Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace (SIDA, 2003).

For the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2003), reconciliation entails finding a way to live that permits a vision of the future, the rebuilding of relationships, coming to terms with past acts and enemies, a society-wide, long-term process of deep change and a process of acknowledging, remembering and learning from the past. Reconciliation is voluntary and cannot be imposed. Promoting reconciliation draws on instruments of healing, justice, truth-telling and reparation. Reconciliation takes place at all levels (national, regional and community), amongst all ages and across gender divides.

**Resilience**
Resilience is related to risk and can be defined as the capacity to withstand and overcome stress and adversity. This capacity is a dynamic feature of a person's being and the interaction between personal and environmental factors at any one time. Family and social networks are strong resilience factors.

**Youth**
Persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive (International Youth Year definition).

## Glossary of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| CACD | Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Disaster |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSC | Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers |
| CVSA | Children Affected by Violence and Sexual Abuse |
| KQE | Key Quality Elements – a set of attributes of the quality of programmes based around values and ethics |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |

# 1. Context

## 1.1. Children's voices on armed conflict and disaster

This report is about children and supporting them to protect their rights in armed conflicts and disasters. Their voices most clearly articulate children's priorities so we will begin with some of their comments during this evaluation.

**Views on armed conflict, displacement, abduction and reintegration**
The comments made by children on the impact of the armed conflict on their lives reveal the extent of children's suffering directly in terms of being victims of violence, being obliged to be the perpetrators of violence, separation from family, inability to play and be a child and the problems of reintegration into families and communities post conflict.

> *'The worst for me during the war was being hungry, not being able to go to school and having to walk all night in the rain to escape. Everything that we had that was good, the troops took off us ...'*
> *(child in Angola)*

'When I had just returned (from captivity with the LRA in Northern Uganda), I used to be very aggressive, I had no value for my life or that of other people. Now I'm surprised that I have human feelings. I also relate very well to other people and have a positive attitude to the world at large' (girl aged 15 years in Uganda).

The difficulty of reintegration was a recurring theme, especially for Ugandan children who had been abducted and lived in captivity away from families.

> *'Children are abducted and forced to join the rebel army. Those that survive and manage to regain freedom and return home are severely traumatised, labelled criminals, killers, Kony's wives ... This creates a very strained relationship with the community as nobody wants you because of the atrocities you committed during captivity moreover against your will. In some cases even the families of formerly abducted children don't want them to stay at home for fear of being alienated by the community. This creates a very painful lack of belonging'*

Children in Angola also described abduction, being used as soldiers and sex slaves and about the impact of witnessing violence. They also referred to the fact that most of the time, there was nobody there to protect them except their immediate family. For children in the bush during the war, only parents, grandparents and sometimes older brothers and sisters were able to try to protect them. No child protection agencies were present. For those in towns, the churches were often closest to the population and provided the most immediate support.

> *'During the war they took our Mums as cooks and wives of the commanders and our Dads to carry guns. They they'd let the Mums come back to the children for a while ... the people who didn't want to go were shot or knifed ...I'll never forget the blood' (child in Angola)*

> *'The girls were taken to be 'wives' of the bosses and the boys to carry stuff and be soldiers' (child in Angola)*

The lack of hope was a recurring theme in children's comments.

> *'People always live in fear without any hope for the future. Families cannot plan for their future and for the future of their children' (children in Uganda evaluation retreat)*

> *'There were no good times, we were always afraid that someone from UNITA would appear and take someone or our things' (child in Angola)*

Children talked about being deprived of the right to play.

> *'They could have given us toys but we wouldn't have been able to play with them because we were in the bush trying to escape from the fighting' (child in Angola)*

Views on projects to help children recover from experiences in armed conflict
Children in Uganda, South East Europe and Guatemala most effectively articulated their views on efforts to help them to recover from the effects of armed conflict.

Children in the Uganda children's retreat found counselling to be very helpful in restoring feelings of self-worth and helping with long-term recovery. However two critiques were made of counselling services: i) counselling is very irregular and may be stopped before children had fully recovered ii) methodologies used are not sufficiently varied: children preferred a community and group approach with sports, games, drama and other recreational activities rather than one-to-one talking.

> *'The project has helped to restore my human self through counselling and material support. I came back from captivity pregnant and was only thinking of killing myself because I had nowhere to go. I started living on the Lira streets. At one time I thought life in captivity was better and was looking for ways to go back. Through counselling and love ... I now love myself and my baby. Now I'm doing tailoring at one of the outreach vocation centres and I know I will be able to support myself and my baby' (Girl aged 15 years with 7 month old baby in Lira, Uganda).*

In South East Europe and in Guatemala comments also focused on the importance of developing self-esteem and helping children to feel more confident about the future. This was clearly much more important and useful than raking over painful experiences during the war.

> *'We prefer ways of working with children that increase our confidence so that we have no fear' (Child Reference Group in the Stakeholders workshop in Bosnia and Herzegovina).*

> *'Some of the best projects are the extra-curricular activities in the Youth Centres, especially those that don't make our particular difficulties visible to each other' (Child Reference Group in Bosnia and Herzegovina).*

This child was referring to a feeling that adults discount the many small, concrete initiatives for reconciliation and community building that occur naturally to children.

In Guatemala, the most important aspect of the activities was to help children (second generation who have experienced the armed conflict through their parents) to overcome timidity and fear which was used and manipulated within the indigenous population during the armed conflict.

*'The activities have helped us to participate, talk without fear and express our opinions .. we can communicate better with people .. they have helped us to respect each other' (children in Guatemala)*

In common with children in South East Europe in comments above, children in Uganda made a point of discussing stigma and the importance of not being made to feel different or stand out.

*'We are not happy having to go to Lira hospital. We prefer to have all our illnesses handled here (CEASOP centre) where our problems are appreciated and understood. It helps to keep our confidentiality and avoid further stigma' (boy aged 16 years in Uganda)*

### Views on education

Access to education and the quality of education was an absolute priority for children in countries in the evaluation usually following the immediate life-saving sectors. In the children's retreat in Uganda, education came over as the first priority issue for formerly abducted children and several aspects were raised. The greatest priority was the lack of the children's access to school materials (exercise books, uniforms etc.) followed by lamenting the fact that only some, not all, children were getting support to return to school. Issues about access to start up kits following vocational training were also a major issue.

In Angola, some surprising comments emerged that demonstrated the extent to which education, even in the midst of active armed conflict, is a priority for children and their parents. Parents told us that the armed groups (UNITA) often aimed to find school materials in towns during attacks and used these to hold basic field schools in the bush. This was a testament to the fact that few attempts are made to supply civilians with school materials for children in areas that are very difficult to access.

*'When the troops arrived to attack a town, they took schools materials for our kids ... but there was never enough .. and then we always had to move on' (parent of a child in UNITA controlled areas in Angola)*

In post-war Angola, children made school construction and the distribution of school materials an absolute priority and SCN's most important projects. Nevertheless, even in a time of peace, problems remain with corruption in access to education.

*'The most important for children is education and health .. but everything's difficult for us now in the city ... I paid for my child to get into school but the Director stole the money and he's still not in school' (parent in post-war Angola)*

In South East Europe, children focused on the importance of education for a more positive future but had comments about the quality of education:

*'Unqualified teachers are used in schools .. and teachers are often unresponsive and can't think like us' Child Reference Group in workshop in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

In Sri Lanka, large numbers of children had been forced to drop out of school due to war-related poverty. Children observed:

*'If only I could get an opportunity to go abroad, I would do nothing but study. But my school life is already dumped. As my family doesn't have any proper economy how can I study? '(child in Sri Lanka)*

> *'Three of our family go to school. We lost our father in the conflict. As I am the eldest of the family, I have been forced to take up the duty of looking after my brothers and sisters and my sick mother. I can only come to school two or three times a week ... I know that education is very important for my future life ... I imagine how I could have studied and brought up my family if my father had been alive'* (child in Sri Lanka)

In Uganda, children described repeating classes in order just to stay in school as there was no form of support to continue in education after basic primary.

> *'There is so much difficulty in accessing education, we are forced to repeat classes for the sake of it so that we can at least remain in school especially after we have completed our primary 7. Since there are no organisations helping to pay for secondary education we keep repeating primary 7 as a way of trying to hang around in school'* (children in evaluation retreat in Uganda)

**Views on families, domestic situations and separation**

In situations of armed conflict, children often suffer most through the broader impacts on the family. The frustrations families experience in armed conflict can lead to domestic violence and in Sri Lanka alcoholism and violence at home was one of the aspects most prioritised by children in the child study. These views were echoed by children in Bosnia and Herzegovina who described the fact that parents facing problems of very high unemployment, poverty and lack of security for the future often struggle to find time for their children.

> *'Many parents are being influenced by alcohol. We even saw parents demanding their children to fetch and carry liquor and cigarettes for them'* (Children in Sri Lanka).

> *'Projects don't provide any help for our parents – but they are too preoccupied with their own problems to always support us ... for lack of attention from families, children can end up on the street'* (Child Reference Group in Stakeholders Workshop in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Children also referred to the problems of separation from families and the difficulties of living with foster families. The views expressed by the child below are similar to the conclusions of David Tolfree's work with separated children: that we should not be over-confident about spontaneous foster families and children are often at risk of exploitation in that way.

> *'Some children who haven't retraced their families are taken up by well-wishers and relatives. Some of the relatives take them on for the sake of exploiting them and they are often subject to child labour and other forms of abuses'* (children in evaluation retreat in Uganda)

In Angola, experiential workshops held with parents in family camps at the time of demobilisation when people were just emerging from the bush tired, hungry and in fear of the future were thought to have had a very positive calming effect on domestic violence.

**Views on peace, peace-building and reconciliation**

Many children who participated in the evaluation made comments on the peace processes. In all cases, children wanted peace, sometimes justice, and never revenge.

In Uganda children called on SCN to enhance the component on advocacy and negotiations towards peace and reconciliation aimed at a non-violent end to the armed conflict. In Angola, children had already recognised the value of peace and saw it as an important end in itself.

> *'Government should stop the war, all actors should get to the root cause of the problem and then all other problems will automatically get resolved' (girl aged 15 years in Northern Uganda).*

> *'SCN has not included enough work on advocating for ending the war' (children in the evaluation retreat in Uganda).*

> *'Now we can go to school and play as we like. We have schools, water, businesses and trucks!! In the war cars couldn't go to Luanda .. now we can go where we like. Now we can sleep without worrying' (child in Angola)*

In Bosnia and Herzegovina where children still suffer from tensions and ethnic divisions although there is no open armed conflict at the present time, children, parents and professionals made comments about the risks to stability inherent in their current situation. They observed that living in poverty at the same time as the society being in a state of transition (towards democracy) is risky and has not been adequately addressed. They felt there was far more work to be done in peace-building in the broadest terms.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, children also referred to the many small ways in which reconciliation takes place between children in every day exchanges provided these are allowed to happen. They said that forcing efforts at reconciliation are not helpful but providing joint activities in which children of different ethnic groups can participate can help to break down barriers. In talking about reconciliation and the importance of creating a open environment in which reconciliation can happen naturally between children, a child member of the reference group described how children should be given these opportunities to share experiences with other ethnic groups without a specific focus on reconciliation because:

> *'(Adults) can never see things how we children see them'*

There is considerable difficulty in mixing children of different ethnic groups in South East Europe, especially in Kosovo, as residential areas are increasingly divided. In relation to the Community Based Education Centres for young children, staff in Kosovo commented:

> *'As residential areas are now segregated, the possibilities for mixed intakes of ethnic Serb and Albanians are low; however there are more possibilities for other ethnic groups (i.e. Roma)'*

**Views on equality and access to resources**
Children revealed a keen sense of fairness and inclusion about aid provision. In South East Europe and Uganda, children referred to the unfair distribution of goods and services and lack of effort made to ensure that all groups of children were included. This was not a reference exclusively to Save the Children but about government and aid agencies in general.

> *'The post-war financial assistance was not transparent or divided appropriately … there was poor organisation of services – some collective centres were neglected'* Children and Parents in South East Europe

In Uganda, it was evident that the criteria used to determine the distribution of assistance through the project were not always fully understood.

> *'The project promotes discrimination and favouritism. Some children benefit from all types of material support (school materials, bedding, medical help) . others have received nothing at all'*
> *(Children's Evaluation Retreat, Uganda).*

> *'The project has only targeted very few children especially regarding facilitating them to attend school ... there are many formerly abducted children in the community who have not been supported to attend school ...'*
> *(Children's Evaluation Retreat, Uganda).*

These comments suggest that criteria for the distribution of assistance should be more transparent and discussed with children. A revealing comment by one boy reinforces this conclusion:

> *'My own brother who is also formerly abducted was not lucky like me .. he was not selected by the community outreach team and I don't know why'*
> *(Children's Evaluation Retreat, Uganda).*

Children and parents also objected to the exclusion of specific groups:

> *'Education for the displaced and Roma peoples was not adequately addressed'*
> *(Children and Parents in South East Europe)*

The project does not help children with unique problems .. for example children with disabilities' (Children's Evaluation Retreat, Uganda).

**Views on poverty and the economic situation**
Poverty was a recurring theme and the linkages between poverty and armed conflict. There was also recognition that poverty in combination with armed conflict and division can risk traditional support systems. Economic opportunities were also seen as a fundamental aspect in recovery, both in terms of poverty reduction and in terms of independence and self esteem.

> *'Before the war parents and community members had associations and self help groups. They lent each other money in times of need. Now with people scattered in displaced camps and many dead, this is not there'* (children in the retreat in Uganda)

> *'Displaced people can't grow their own food. The host communities don't let the displaced engage in agricultural or other economic activities. In any case, communities don't find it worthwhile to engage in serious agriculture for the fear they will have to run anytime'* (children in evaluation retreat in Uganda).

> *'We are illegal settlers. We don't have proper jobs but earn an income as day-labourers. We have no paddy field and when we don't find any work we borrow money from the neighbours and survive day to day. When we find jobs, we pay back the money. We don't have anything – all we do is work and pay back. We live a very hard and sad life'* (parent in Sri Lanka affected by the travel and settlement restrictions).

**Views on participation in projects**

Comments from children in Uganda showed that even when adults create opportunities for participation, it is not always clear to children what they are doing. However, they were keen to participate as they frequently articulated the fact that they have a better understanding of their own problems than staff or adults in general.

> *'A group of children were invited to participate in a workshop here in Lira at a place called the Lira Hotel. At that meeting we assessed and identified children's needs. We were also told to make suggestions on how some of these problems can be addressed'.'*

> *'Since we are the ones who have undergone these horrible experiences, we know and can articulate our problems better than anyone else'*
> *(boy aged 15 in CEASOP project, Northern Uganda).*

SCN Guatemala has invested a great deal in participation projects of various forms – it is their largest thematic area in terms of expenditure – and this includes a project in Children for Peace. One child commented:

> *'…children are given the opportunity to express their opinions and ask questions … outside the group, in the community, we are not able to speak or ask questions. The topics we cover are rights and responsibilities, peace culture, cultural identity, the environment' (Girl aged 13 years in Guatemala).*

**Views on health in armed conflict**

Children often had difficulty with accessing health services for problems arising as a result of the armed conflict and this was the case even after returning from abduction or the bush.

> *'The children suffered much more from illnesses in the bush than us adults'*
> *(parent in Angola)*

> *'I was shot in the ribs and suffered a very big wound for a long time. Up to now I have never received proper medical treatment and I have terrible pain. I can't do chores that need me to use a lot of energy. I don't think I can manage to take a vocational skills course as most of them use a lot of energy and a healthy chest. I think I can only benefit if I'm helped with secondary education and not vocational training' (boy, aged 17 years in Uganda)*

> *'We don't have a dispensary or hospital in our village. Not even in our neighbouring village. If we are sick we have to go to Batticaloa but we don't have any transport. Even if we do go, we cannot be sure to see a doctor as the hospitals are so crowded. If anyone gets sick by night, there is no way to take them to take are so crowded. If anyone gets sick by night, there is no way to take them to take them to the hospital because of the military checkpoints' (child in Sri Lanka).*

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**<u>SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS OF CHILDREN'S VOICES</u>**

Children's priorities in conflict included the following:

- Protection from abduction and being used as soldiers, sex slaves and other forms of abuse and from hunger and disease.
- Access to education at all times is vitally important as part of building hope for the future. That includes access in the bush in the midst of conflict, not being forced out of school because of poverty, access to school materials, the quality of teachers.
- Peace is vitally important as an end in itself. In terms of reconciliation, there are many small daily opportunities for sharing between children that adults may not understand.
- Projects that build on self esteem, reduce stigma and provide hope for the future are of much greater value than those that oblige children to relive the negative experiences of conflict.
- Parents and extended families need opportunities to relieve poverty and the conflict in order to provide adequate support to children.
- Aid and support should be distributed fairly and evenly and criteria should be clear and transparent.
- The experience of participation and of adults and children listening to your opinion helps to develop personal confidence
- It is important to get access to health services in conflict

We will return to many of the issues raised by children later in the report as we discuss issues arising from the evaluations. The next section provides an overview of trends in conflicts and disasters and puts a broader framework on many of the comments made by children about the linkages between conflict and poverty, issues of the need for peace-building in the medium to long term and the importance of education as an instrument of hope in recovery.

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## 1.2. Global trends in armed conflicts and disasters: the impact on children

To ensure that programmes and projects are as relevant as possible to children's needs and rights, they must be planned in the context of current trends in armed conflict and disaster. The following analysis considers current trends globally but with a particular emphasis on countries included in the evaluation.

Many of the aspects discussed below provide evidence to back the views expressed by children and parents. Children and parents referred to the risks to stability of countries in poverty and in transition to democracy. They described the importance of adequate and fair distribution of support to countries in a post-war phase. They also described tensions in countries where the armed conflict has ended but there is no reconciliation. These are key points in the discussion below.

**The number of declared major armed conflicts is falling globally … but many post-conflict states are left in a state of no effective closure, justice or reconciliation**
The number of major armed conflicts[2] across the world has fallen over the last fifteen years. This may come as a surprise in the context of increased world tension with the 'war on terrorism' but in fact external pressure brought to bear on political actors has reduced the number of countries classified as current major armed conflicts from 32 in 1990 to 19 in 2003 according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2004).

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**Conflicts by continent**
**Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2004**

|  | 1990 | 2003 |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 11 | 4 | (Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, Algeria) |
| Americas | 4 | 3 | (Colombia, Peru, USA v. Al Qaeda) |
| Asia | 13 | 8 | (India – Kashmir, India-Pakistan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan) |
| Europe | 0 | 1 | (Russia) |
| Middle East | 4 | 3 | (Israel, Turkey, Iraq) |
|  | **32** | **19** |  |

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The armed conflict in northern Uganda is not included in the above breakdown as it has not resulted in more than a thousand battle related deaths in a single year: the definition of major armed conflict. There are serious limitations to this top-down definition that does not recognise the deaths, injuries and multiple additional consequences to children of armed conflict (see Terms Used in the Report p.4), however we have used it as it helps to track armed conflict over time and demonstrate trends.

The figures for the number of conflicts are higher if we use Project Ploughshares' broader definition of armed conflict (one thousand armed conflict-related deaths during the course of the armed conflict) but the trend remains the same: a decrease from 44 conflicts in 1995 to 36 in 2003.
The trend towards bringing armed conflicts to an end is reflected in the countries participating in the evaluation. Of the countries/territories included all have reached some form of an end to the armed conflict with the exception of Uganda. However, although open warfare has ended, underlying tensions often remain active for many years and there may be no effective closure, justice or reconciliation. Indeed, research suggests that half of all armed conflicts that have ended will re-emerge within ten years (SIDA, 2003).

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[2] Defined as the use of armed force between military forces of two or more governments or of one government and one organized armed group, resulting in the battle-related deaths of at least 1000 people in any single calendar year (SIPRI, 2004)

| Country in evaluation | Current situation | Date ended |
|---|---|---|
| Angola | Armed conflict ended with Memorandum of Understanding | April 2002 |
| Guatemala | Armed conflict ended with set of agreements | 1996 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Armed conflict ended with Dayton Accords | 1995 |
| Kosovo | Armed conflict ended with military-technical agreements | June 1999 |
| Sri Lanka | 'No war, no peace' Ceasefire declared | February 2002 |
| Uganda | Ongoing | |

The consequence for children of the trend towards ending armed conflict with no effective closure or reconciliation is that it is their generation that will bear the brunt of feelings of resentment, discrimination and fear. They are likely to live with ongoing political uncertainty and with weak investment in the young generation in terms of education, employment opportunities, health services and reconstruction. In this complex environment, they will become responsible for carrying forward peace or armed conflict into the future.

In this evaluation, children articulated clearly the over-riding importance of peace itself and many children expressed a wish to become more actively involved in peace-building in some form. This is likely to be a growing role for SCN and partners in the future as relatively few organisations have experience of child participation in peace-building. Lobbying to get children's post-conflict needs clearly on peace agreements with donor and government commitment to an intensified period of investment on their behalf is also fundamental. This should include education/vocational training, health, resettlement of separated children, assistance to children with disabilities and the demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration
of children associated with armed forces.

**Armed conflict has changed in nature over the last century and children are increasingly affected and targeted. The 'war on terror' brings a whole new set of dilemmas and issues.**
The nature of armed conflict changed over the twentieth century. In the first half of the twentieth century armed conflicts were mainly inter-state and, on the whole, there was a consensus that the Geneva Convention principle of the distinction between combatants and non-combatants should be respected and applied. In the second half of the century, there was a shift away from inter-state to internal armed conflicts in which the distinction between combatants and non-combatants became increasingly obscured. Children are frequently the *targets* in armed conflict and are disproportionately affected by the outcomes.

Within the present country evaluations children were deliberately targeted in Guatemala to destroy the fabric of Mayan society and culture while the conflict in Uganda has probably been the worst in the world in abducting children and forcing them to kill, maim and sexually abuse each other and their own families and communities. In Sri Lanka and Angola children have been targeted for recruitment an din all contexts they have been physically or sexually assaulted, forced to witness or commit abhorrent acts of violence, as well as losing access to family, school, play and the positive routines in their lives. Some estimates suggest that civilians make up 90% of the direct victims of violence (Machel, 2000).

In recent years, there has been a new departure in armed conflict with globalisation in terrorism and the 'war on terror'. Although children are not directly targeted as in many internal armed conflicts, the percentage of child victims is extremely high and efforts to distinguish between combatants and non combatants are far from adequate. In Iraq a recent study by Johns Hopkins University showed that 46% of fatalities as a result of the war were in children under 15 years (Roberts, L et al, 2004).

Essentially the current phase has led to a new set of complex dilemmas in humanitarian agencies as there is a 'dangerous blurring of the lines between humanitarian and political action' which leaves many aid agencies in a position of being funded by the governments promoting the war. For child-focused agencies, it is essential that the fall out of the war on terror in all world regions is carefully monitored and reported against the CRC, optional protocols and other humanitarian and human rights instruments.

**Most armed conflicts are internal rather than international and are often associated with weak democracy**
In recent years, as armed conflicts have become increasingly intra-state (or internal) rather than international (only 2 of the 19 armed conflicts recorded by SIPRI in 2003 were international), they are associated with weak states and lack of effective democracy.

For this reason, concepts of peace-building and reconciliation are increasingly associated with strengthening democracy. Frameworks are being developed to provide a clearer methodology for reconciliation and peace-building but there has been less emphasis on the role and participation of children in peace-building. The work of SCN and partners in this respect will contribute to learning together with UNICEF, IRC and others on the engagement of children in peace-building. We will consider this aspect in greater detail below and analyse the role of children in relation to broader frameworks and activities.

**Armed conflict is increasingly associated with poverty and countries with populations with high percentages of children**
During the decade 1994-2003, for states in the bottom third of the Human Development Index, there was almost an even chance (47%) that they would be in a state of armed conflict while only 5% of those in the top third experienced armed conflict (Project Ploughshares, 2004). This is a change in the nature of armed conflict and did not apply in the First and Second World Wars. The poorest states are also associated with proportionately higher percentages of children within the population. Almost three quarters of the states in armed conflict are countries where children under 15 make up more than one third of the population (ibid). This equally was not the case in earlier decades.

Again, the same trend follows in the countries included in the evaluation. All are relatively poor and four have full Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers agreed by the government with the World Bank (Uganda, Sri Lanka, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Angola has a draft PRSP and Guatemala held various workshops although a PRSP has not been prepared. PRSPs include a diagnosis of the poorest groups and identify strategies to reduce poverty.

PRSPs are often not systematically implemented by governments but can serve as important advocacy frameworks for civil society in poverty reduction. Given the linkages between poverty and armed conflict, monitoring the implementation of PRSPs, especially from the point of view of children and their rights, can be an important strategy for conflict reduction in the medium term.

**The legal and administrative framework to protect children from recruitment to armed groups/armed forces has been successfully reinforced but is having limited impact at ground level**

In spite of the fact that three important international treaties to end the use of children associated with armed forces/groups[3] were adopted in the space of just two years from July 1998, the numbers of children used do not appear to be falling. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC), a NGO group founded in 1998 to lobby on this issue, estimates that there continue to be some 300,000 children associated with armed forces or groups around the world. The term associated with armed forces or groups is used advisedly; it is essential to ensure that children who are not soldiers but are used as sex or domestic slaves or as porters are also included in the analysis and campaigns.

The legislative framework appears to be having some impact on states parties but virtually no impact on non state actors. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to stop the use of child soldiers has been signed by 130 states and ratified or acceded by 85 states. Of the states included in the evaluation, all but Angola have ratified the Optional Protocol. In a recent report to the UN Security Council by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUSC, 2004), in a survey of 17 states that had been using children associated with armed groups/forces, 11 were no longer using children in the armed forces while 6 states continued to do so. Of the states in this evaluation, Uganda was the only one included within the group of 6 and was criticised for tolerating child recruitment into the Uganda People's Defence Force and local defence units.

Of non state armed groups, the problem is more intractable and less influenced by international perceptions: 15 of 17 were still recruiting and using children, most often by force.

Since 2001, the Security Council has been calling for the Secretary General to compile lists of specific parties to armed conflict that were recruiting and using children in conflict. In April 2004 this went a step further when UN Security Council called for an action plan for monitoring violations against children in armed conflicts.

As this moves closer to fruition, it is hoped that these measures will provide a system from international to local community level for responding to violations against children in armed conflict. One factor is essential: NGO staff at field level must be made fully aware of the importance and rationale behind these mechanisms, as well as how to use them, whilst protecting children and not risking themselves or their programmes.

**The use of landmines is falling**

Following the Mine Ban Treaty of 1997 (the treaty outlaws the use, production, trade and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines) there is evidence that the use of landmines has fallen dramatically. 152 countries have agreed to ban the use of anti-personnel mines, although 42 countries remain outside the treaty, including three permanent members of the Security Council: USA, China and Russia. While 15 governments were confirmed as using mines in 1988/9, that figure had fallen to 4 governments in 2004. Of 50 states known to produce landmines 36 have ceased production and the trade in anti-personnel mines has fallen to a very low level of illicit sales (Handicap International, 2004).

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[3] July 1998, Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court that made the conscription, enlistment or use of children under 15 years a war crime; June 1999 the International Labour Organization prohibited the recruitment of children under 18 years as part of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and in May 2000 the UN adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that established 18 years as the minimum age for participation in armed conflict.

Non state actors continue to be largely outside of the influence of the pressure groups and while governmental users of landmines had fallen to four in 2003, sixteen non state actors were reported to have used mines during that year.

The combination of reduced use and increased investment in mine clearance is beginning to have an impact on the numbers of casualties. The Landmine Monitor Report of 2004 researched the situation in all countries and found that new mine victims declined from 8333 in 2002 to 8065 in 2003. In some countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Lebanon and Sri Lanka) the fall was significant.
However, the report also observes that 86% of casualties were civilians and that overall 23% of victims are children.

Of the countries in the evaluation, landmine use has reduced in all countries, including Uganda the only country still in active armed conflict and where the principal aggressor is a non-state actor. However, this appears to be due to lack of time to plant mines and unfavourable weather, not due to a lack of mine stocks.

| Country in evaluation | Number casualties | Casualties 2003 | % child casualties 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angola | 2636 (1999-2002) | 178 | 4% |
| Sri Lanka | 958 (1995-2003) | 99 | 23% |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 1,479 (1996-2003) | 54 | 17% |
| Uganda | 328 (1991-1998) | 53 | NK but 7 victims aged under 10 |
| Serbia and Montenego | 100 (1992-2000) | 4 | 0 |
| Guatemala | 177 (1972-2002) | 0 | 0 |

Angola is one of the most landmine infested countries in the world and the figures for casualties reflect this situation (although statistics are unreliable and the rate of injury to children appears to have been grossly underestimated). Within the countries included in the evaluation, Angola has the highest number of casualties and is likely to continue facing high casualty rates for some years to come. Sri Lanka also has a very high rate of landmine infestation with a high rate of child casualties.

The landmine campaign has shown the success that can be achieved by consistent and well researched advocacy. However, it has drawn attention to some of the principal issues in armed conflict in general: the intransigence of some states to address issues of armed conflict when they consider that their own flexibility to act would be at risk (as in the case of the three permanent members of the Security Council) and the fact that non state actors remain largely beyond the reach of international pressure.

**Non state entities (or paramilitaries) represent a major risk for children**
In most of the countries included in the evaluation, even where there is a ceasefire or peace process in place, paramilitaries (or non state entities) are still active.

In addition to recruiting children for warfare, their actions may turn to crime and they may target children for criminal activities (eg. child trafficking in the Balkans, kidnapping in Guatemala). In other states, they continue to recruit children and in some use them as suicide bombers, eg. Sri Lanka. In yet others, children are targeted to gain the maximum publicity and leverage for a cause such as the school attack in Beslan in Russia in September 2004.

Increasing children's resilience to 'voluntarily' becoming part of such organisations and enhancing their understanding of tolerance, civic behaviour, democracy and inclusion are probably the most important tools in helping to resist the influence of paramilitary groups.

**There is a tendency for donors to withdraw too quickly after armed conflict ends**
In a context in which negotiated agreements (often under external pressure) are becoming more common while many of the issues that provoked armed conflict lie dormant or unresolved, it is important that governments continue to support countries in the medium term. To negotiate an agreement and withdraw or reduce support shortly after represents a risk to stability. The recently published Norwegian Ministry of International Development (MID, 2004) strategy on peace-building argues that governments must take a medium term approach of at least ten years to place countries on a more secure footing and avoid slipping backwards into armed conflict.

This evaluation resolutely supports the view that donors should not pull out too early and this issue was raised in the evaluations for South East Europe and Angola. A medium term perspective would present an opportunity to establish a kind of 'Marshall plan' for children and may help to prevent the huge depletion of young human resources from war affected areas as they leave permanently to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

## 1.3. Trends in Disasters and their Impact on Children

**'Natural' disasters'[4] are increasing in number**
The World Disasters Report (IFRC,2004) shows that the number of 'natural' disasters has grown from 428 reported disasters per annum from 1994-98 to 707 per annum from 1999-2003. The number of people whose lives and livelihoods are affected is growing and reached 608 million in 2002, three times the annual average for the decade to 2001 (World Disasters Report, 2003). However, the official death toll had fallen by 38% to 24,532 comparing the decade of 1983-1992 and 1993-2002. This is largely due to more effective early warning systems especially in relation to floods.

Clearly the death toll as a result of the vast Tsunami in South East Asia on 26th December 2004 has dwarfed the former death toll figures (some 300,000 children and adults died across the region[5]). It has served as a wake-up call on the importance of early warning systems and procedures to all world regions.

Unfortunately, these statistics are not disaggregated by age so we do not know what percentage of deaths or those affected were children, although UNICEF estimated that one third of tsunami victims were children. In other disasters, children are likely to be disproportionately affected as they have less capacity to defend themselves in the face of flood and are more vulnerable to disease related deaths in famine as a result of drought (the cause of the majority of deaths – with the exception of the tsunami).

**The impact of natural disasters is far higher on poorest countries**
Disasters, like armed conflict, have the greatest impact on poor countries. Of those killed in 2002, just 6% lived in countries of high human development (World Disasters report, 2003). This is largely because poor infrastructure cannot resist the impact of disasters, and poor people are more likely to be living on marginal land and are usually dependent on rain-fed farming.

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[4] For a definition of 'disaster' see 1.1 Terms Used in the Report
[5] ReliefWeb: 9.1.2005

**Dearth of research on the impact on children**

There is an overall dearth of research on the impact of natural disasters on children[6]. However it appears that children suffer more deaths and illness than adults, particularly as a result of floods (drowning and water-borne disease) and drought (malnutrition/ infection). A study by Save the Children and ECHO in Vietnam showed that far more young children died from drowning in floods than adults or older siblings, largely because parents were so busy earning a living, they did not have time for adequate child care and were often not at home when disaster struck (Save the Children, 2003).

Of those limited studies that do exist, there is evidence that natural disasters can have significant social impacts on children for some time after the event. For example, after the super cyclone in Orissa, India in 1999, some 1,500 were left without parents and many thousands more lost one parent and their homes (Info Change Disasters, 2004). Just days after the cyclone there were reports of trafficking of women and young girls in the local press, many were reportedly recruited by employees looking for child and domestic labour. No record was kept of where children were taken (ibid). To protect women and children, separate shelters were established. Many of the same stories have been told following the tsunamis in South East Asia.

Studies with children affected by the earthquake in El Salvador (2001) showed that children displayed symptoms of stress with crying, fear of being alone, sleeping difficulties and suffering from nightmares (Plan, 2002). It was found that insufficient attention had been paid to the design of camps from a child protection perspective and children had suffered sexual abuse. This led to recommendations for future disasters on camp design and on the need for Child Friendly Spaces within the camp. In relation to child participation, children interviewed reported that they wanted to participate in the recovery effort in any way possible. This included removing loose stones and walls, helping to clear refuse and rubble and planting trees.

In summary, many of the lessons that have been learned about the protection and participation of children in armed conflict also apply to disasters but are often not given the same level of importance in that context. Nor has there been significant research on the impact of disasters on children. Save the Children could play a key role in this respect especially following the tsunami in South Asia.

**Countries included in the evaluation and disasters**

Analysing the countries participating in the evaluation, there were no projects designed to mitigate natural disasters, nor projects on disaster preparedness with children. However, of the countries included, all had lived through disasters in the last five years with significant numbers of people affected.

Here we have included only the largest disasters in the last five years (and not including the tsunami):

| Country | Disaster | Date | No. affected |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angola | Flood | January 2004 | 331,700 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Flood | April 2004 | 275,000 |
| Guatemala | Flood | February 2002 | 98,740 |
| Sri Lanka | Flood | May 2003 | 695,000 |
| Uganda | Drought | 2002 | 586,326 |

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[6] Looking back at all articles published in the journal Disasters since 1997, only one single article refers specifically to children in the title, not including those dealing with infant feeding.

Once again, these figures are extremely low in comparison to the impact of the tsunami in Sri Lanka which is thought to have caused 30,718 deaths and to have affected over a million people by displacement, disease and other effects.

However for all other countries, the numbers of children affected by disaster are lower than those affected by armed conflict in the same countries.

**The HIV/AIDS pandemic can be considered a disaster – certainly for development and especially for southern Africa**
Children are affected by HIV/AIDS by becoming infected and ill themselves, they are orphaned by AIDS, they become carers of parents and relatives, they lose siblings and friends, they can lose access to school or lose their teachers to AIDS, they can be stigmatised and ostracised within communities, impoverished and it can affect their life and hope for the future. In areas profoundly affected by HIV/AIDS children can also lose a critical mass of adult role models, constituting a real risk for children to fall into illegal or risky behaviours.

Globally 39.4 million people are living with HIV and of these, 64% live in Sub Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2004). With more than 3 million new infections in sub Saharan Africa (SSA) in 2004, the numbers vastly outweigh other world regions. During 2004, estimates suggest that 2.3 million adults and children died of AIDS in SSA (an increase from 2.1 million in 2001; all statistics from UNAIDS, 2004).
These figures dwarf any other type of disaster for the number of deaths caused (including the tsunami) and the number of children orphaned, impoverished or left without access to education.



New infections in 2004
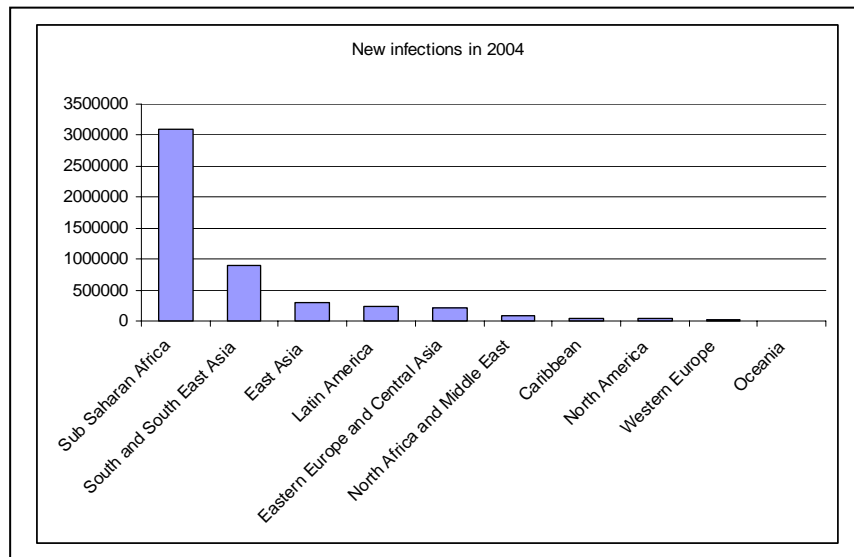
HIV/AIDS is also a gender issue. In areas where transmission is mainly hetero-sexual, especially in SSA, young women aged 15-24 years are three times more likely to be infected than men and boys of the same age group. To avoid infection is not just a case of women being faithful to husbands and partners; most women are infected by their regular partner and the issue is about negotiating safe sex even with husbands.

**Disaster preparedness and children**
There are some excellent examples of disaster preparedness training with children using locally and age-appropriate materials. In Vietnam the SC Alliance worked with the Red Cross to produce and pilot disaster preparedness training for children as well as distributing key preparedness items such as life jackets. Save the Children in Nicaragua has produced child-friendly planning and training materials focused around earthquakes, landslides and other disasters and SC Zimbabwe has also produced materials. A consortium of local NGOs in Andra Pradesh, India has done the same kind of work.

An example of the potential impact of disaster preparedness training arose with a child in Thailand during the Tsunami disaster. She had recently analysed the behaviour of Tsunami in school, recognised what was happening through the movement of the waves and was able to reach safety and warn many other people around her before the Tsunami waves struck.

Given the fact that the tendency is for natural disasters to increase in frequency and intensity, Save the Children Norway, with other Alliance members, could usefully enhance work in this area. It would be particularly helpful to review the effect of the work already undertaken especially the pilot approach in Vietnam.

In addition, there are excellent materials already developed for sensitising children and youth to issues of HIV/AIDS and SCN could play a greater role in this area.

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**Summary of Main Points on Global Trends**

**Armed conflict and children**
1. Major armed conflicts are falling in number but leaving more states in a position of no effective closure, justice or reconciliation
2. Armed conflict has increasingly targeted children
3. Most armed conflicts are internal and associated with weak democracy
4. Armed conflict is increasingly associated with poverty and with high child populations
   The legal framework and lobbying appears to having some impact on reducing state recruitment of children to armed forces/groups but having limited impact on non state entities
5. The use of landmines is falling
6. Non state entities represent a major risk for children
7. There is a tendency for donors to withdraw too quickly after armed conflict ends

**Disasters and children**
1. Natural disasters are increasing in number and in the numbers affected
2. The impact of natural disasters is highest on poor countries
3. There is a dearth of research on the impact on children
4. HIV/AIDS is a major disaster, especially for Southern Africa
5. There is very limited disaster preparedness work with children at present

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# 2. Countries included in the Evaluation

## Contexts, Issues Raised and CACD Programme

### 2.1. Overview of country contexts

The global evaluation includes the following states and territories: Angola, Guatemala Kosovo, countries supported through the South Eastern Europe Regional Office: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro; Sri Lanka; Uganda; support to child refugees in Norway.

The following table shows each of the countries ranked by poverty since poverty is a fundamental factor in the impact of both armed conflict and disaster on children. Using the measure of living on less than $1 a day, Uganda is the poorest and Angola in second place followed by Guatemala. However, figures for Sri Lanka do not reflect the extreme poverty in the North and East, the geographical focus of the armed conflict and these are likely to put part of the Sri Lankan population into the same poverty levels as Angola and Guatemala.

If the poverty line is increased slightly to $1.7 a day, the percentage of Angolans in poverty shoots up to 68% of the population (Government of Angola, 2003). Poverty in Guatemala and Angola are partly due to serious income inequalities. Although Kosovo registers as 0% for population living $1 a day, more than 30% lives close to the *national* poverty line and 12% in extreme poverty[7].

Poverty is clearly associated with high child populations and in the three poorest countries, half or over half of the population is under 18 years. The under five mortality rates follow poverty status although Angola stands out as having one of the highest in the world as a result of armed conflict and the neglect of social services.

*Basic Indicators: Countries/Territories included in the Evaluation*
(statistics for 2003)

| Country | Total pop. (million) | % under 18 | % living on less than $1 per day | U 5 mort | Net prim enroll. | GNI per capita | HIV infect. (low/ high est) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uganda | 25 | 56 | 82 | 141 | 87 | 250 | 2.8-6.6 |
| Angola | 14.2 | 54 | 28 | 260 | 37 | 660 | 1.6-9.4 |
| Guatemala | 11.2 | 49 | 16 | 49 | 84 | 1750 | 0.4 |
| Sri Lanka | 18.9 | 30 | 7 | 19 | 97 | 840 | 0.1-0.2 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 4.1 | 22 | 0 | 18 | 86 | 1270 | 0.1-0.2 |
| Kosovo | 2 | 40 | 0 | 17 | 97 (77 for Roma) | 940 | 0.1-0.4 |
| Norway | 4.52 | 22.5 | 0 | 4 | 100 | 43,350 | 0.0-0.2 |

Sources: UNICEF, Countries at a Glance 2004, UNAIDS, 2004, World Bank Gobal Poverty Monitoring, 2004

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[7] Poverty in Kosovo is defined by a minimum food and non-food basket. Extreme poverty means not able to cover minimum food expenditures, poverty means able to cover food but not essential non-food items.

The two African countries have the highest estimated rates of HIV infection with Angola potentially overtaking Uganda. All other countries have relatively low rates.

All countries have rates of school enrolment over 80% with the exception of Angola that is very much lower as a result of the near-total destruction of schools in the interior of the country. However, in Uganda rates vary considerably between the northern area affected by the armed conflict and other districts of the country. In Guatemala, SCN country reports show that most key indicators are deteriorating with a worsening economic situation in the country.

What follows is an analysis of each country context and programmes (countries in alphabetical order).

## Angola

The armed conflict in Angola lasted for some forty years, going through different stages from the war for independence from the Portuguese to becoming a theatre of the cold war funded by external powers and finally to being a struggle for power by elites supported by armed forces. It ended abruptly in February 2002 with the death in combat of the leader of the opposition movement.

The majority of the population of children and adults had not experienced an extended period of peace during their lifetimes. During the post-independence armed conflict from 1975, some 1 million people died, 3 million became displaced (mostly during the 1990s) and 400,000 became refugees in neighbouring countries.

Children were recruited to the armed forces on both of the sides of the armed conflict and girls (and their mothers) kidnapped to serve as sexual slaves. In all areas of the country education and health services suffered the consequences of the war, but by far the worst hit were the rural areas where services were completely destroyed. Reconstruction in the interior will take many years. During the 1990s, UNICEF's indicators for child survival and development classified Angola as the worst place in the world to be a child. The culture of conflict fuelled domestic violence and a particular phenomenon in the north of Angola with children being accused of witchcraft.

There is a widespread consensus that the death of the opposition leader ended the armed conflict permanently and the issue now has become the struggle for social justice and democracy for all Angolans in a state governed by the same political party since 1975.

## Guatemala

The armed conflict in Guatemala lasted thirty six years from 1960 to 1996 and was rooted in the attempted military control of the civilian population, particularly the indigenous Mayan groups in the North West of the country. The military supported by civilian defence patrols experimented with different forms of social control that included direct violence (murder, rape, aerial bombing), forced displacement and deliberate humiliation of people of ethnic groups to attack their culture, values and beliefs. Local community and religious leaders were targeted for attacks and in some places, whole villages were wiped out.

It is estimated that 150,000 people died and 50,000 disappeared during the armed conflict, while in the most intense period between 1980 and 1984, 100,000 people died during four years alone (evaluator's report). Of the disappeared, nearly 450 were children (ODHAG,

2002). Children and adolescents were recruited both to the armed forces and to the guerrilla opposition movement.

Children were direct victims of summary execution, disappearance and sexual violence. The Catholic Church through the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop has made some of the most extensive studies of individuals affected by armed conflict to promote healing through testimonies for the 'historical memory' of the armed conflict (a truth commission). The Office has shown that children represent 14% of torture victims, 11% of the disappeared, 60% of deaths through forced displacement and 27% of victims of sexual violence (ODHAG, 1998). The children and adolescents of the 1980s who suffered the massacres directly are the parents of today.

A peace agreement was negotiated over several years promoted by political mediators from Norway and comprises a number of different instruments including agreements on democratization, human rights, resettlement of the displaced, identity of indigenous populations and constitutional reform. However, one of the striking aspects of this armed conflict is that the Truth Commission achieved the documentation of gross human rights abuses but was not mandated to include an element of justice or reconciliation. Some of the military leaders of that period are still public figures competing for power and truth without justice is a source of extreme frustration for many people, including youth with whom SCN is working. A national reparation programme for the victims of the armed conflict was established in May 2003, but payment has yet to start.

Guatemala is a classic case of issues of armed conflict being passed from one generation to another. Child participants in the community based psychosocial support project Utz K'Aslemal were not born at the time of the armed conflict but have been affected by it through the long term impact on their parents.

## South East Europe[8]

The armed conflict in the Balkans was driven by complex political factors that are far from resolved. In the early 1990s, following the collapse of the communist philosophy, Orthodox Serbia, the largest republic, fuelled a revival of nationalism and pressed for territorial gain. In turn, the ambition of a 'greater Serbia' drove Catholic Croat nationalism as well as a Muslim movement for a 'greater Albania'. The armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was quelled with the Dayton Accords in 1995 but four years later armed conflict arose again in Kosovo when Serbia 'cleansed' Kosovo of a million Albanian Kosovars. There have been subsequent threats of armed conflict in Macedonia and further unrest in Kosovo.

There is a general consensus that although there is no active armed conflict at the present time, the region remains at serious risk. Conflict and raised tension in any part of South East Europe could result in further repetition of the domino effect of conflict and tension into neighbouring states. Across the region, reconciliation is resented by populations and regarded as an unreasonable imposition of the international community.

The problem of displaced or refugee populations is vast but subject to official neglect as the UN refugee agency is withdrawing and national governments have shown indifference. Since 1992 more than 2 million people have been displaced within their own countries or left to become refugees in third countries; of these, some 40% were children. Serbia houses 600,000 displaced or refugee persons; 400,000 from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

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[8] Although the context of the South East Europe region is addressed in one section here, the regional programme of South East Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro) and the Kosovo Programme are separate. There were also two separate evaluations.

(1992-1995) and another 200,000 from Kosovo (1999). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 330,000 people remain displaced following the Dayton Agreement. Since the Kosovo accords in 1999, 100-200,000 displaced ethnic Serbs have lived in enclaves including Northern Mitrovica.

In terms of the effect of the armed conflicts on children, while children were not forcibly recruited to the armed groups or forces, they were targeted in psychological warfare. Rape was used as a deliberate means of ethnic insemination or humiliation and children were forced to watch the violation of their mothers and sisters, while adolescent girls were singled out for such attacks, especially in Kosovo. Children were also victims of sniper fire and schools were deliberately destroyed. Particular efforts are needed to overcome the transmission of inter-ethnic hatred amongst youth.

In relation to Kosovo, the territory's legal status remains in dispute. While UN Resolution 1244 describes Kosovo as integral to Serbia and Montenegro but with substantial autonomy, the ethnic Albanian population is convinced that Kosovo should be an independent state. The Serbian population continues to use their own school curriculum from Belgrade, currency and language. There is no integration with the Albanian population.

Kosovo is the poorest area in Europe with 36% of the population living below the poverty line. The general rate of unemployment is 57% and higher still (71.2%) within the 16-24 year old age group. This makes youth unemployment the highest in South Eastern Europe. Most youth in this evaluation could only envisage a positive future out of the region.

## Sri Lanka

The armed conflict in Sri Lanka began in 1983 as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) asserted their demand for a separate state of Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the country. The roots of their frustration lay in complaints of discriminatory treatment by the majority Sinhalese government since independence from the British in 1952. The Sinhala population is by far the largest at 74% of the total of 19.4 million, while Tamils make up 18% and Muslims (largely Tamil speaking but who identify themselves as Muslims rather than Tamils) 7%.

A significant factor in the Sri Lankan armed conflict is the number of children recruited into the forces especially into the LTTE. Recruitment is often on the basis of persuasion to join the cause through meetings organised at local level. Families are expected to contribute children to the fighting forces and this can include child recruitment to the notorious suicide bombing squad, the 'black tigers'. This has continued in spite of commitments to the UN Special Representative for Children Affected by Armed Conflict and to the Executive Director of UNICEF to cease child recruitment. While the LTTE have released some children since the ceasefire agreements, most were those recruited *after* the ceasefire who have not been engaged in active combat. Of the children recruited *prior* to the ceasefire, very few have been released and if a peace agreement is eventually signed, these children will be young adults.

Even when children are released by the LTTE, they are at risk of re-recruitment. It is important to note that this includes girls (who are held in separate camps from boys and there are no allegations of sexual abuse).

Over the years there have been several attempts at resolution of the armed conflict, the most durable being the current situation of 'no war-no peace'. In late 2001, the LTTE and newly elected government announced a ceasefire and in February 2002 signed a ceasefire under the auspices of Norwegian government facilitation. Although the ceasefire is holding, talks on the extent of autonomy in the Interim Self Governing Authority in the North and East have

stalled since October 2003. A split in the ranks of the LTTE in mid 2004 has led to an intensification of the already fragile situation and in the aftermath of the recent tsunami, the LTTE has shown a considerable level of distrust of the extent of aid reaching Tamil controlled areas alleging further discrimination.

## Uganda

The armed conflict in Northern Uganda began in the mid 1980s. A group known as the Lords Resistance Army mounted an opposition movement to the Government of Uganda, based in the northern Districts of the country. The unusual and particularly abhorrent aspect of this armed conflict is that it is focused on children. An estimated 25,000 children have been abducted over the years to serve the LRA as combatants and sex slaves. Children are forced to kill and maim others – including their own family members - and to attack villages in the north of the country. Many have been marched across the border into Sudan and held in camps. From 2002/4 some 12,000 children have been abducted (UNICEF, 2004b); the highest number in 17 years of armed conflict (UN Security Council, 2003)

The total number of children who have escaped from captivity is not known but in 2003 over 2,000 children escaped and returned to the Districts of Lira and Apac. Formerly abducted children (FAC) often have difficulties reintegrating into the community; communities are often suspicious of FACs and FACs themselves may struggle to overcome the appalling events in their lives. Of 840 recently returned girl abductees, thirty per cent are estimated to have returned pregnant or had babies as a result of their ordeal (UNICEF, 2004c). Child mothers can face multiple problems including emotional difficulties in accepting becoming a mother at such a young age, possible rejection from families and society as well as the economic strain of having to support a child.

Up to the year 2000, the armed conflict was focused on the Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts in the far north. In 2002, the Ugandan army was permitted by the Sudanese Government as part of a peace deal to pursue the LRA at their bases around Juba inside Sudanese territory. This was the beginning of the first 'Operation Iron Fist'. The LRA routed like hornets from their nests were forced back into Uganda and divided into many small groups. This led to the spread of the LRA into Apac and Lira Districts as well as neighbouring areas.

On a broader level, the armed conflict has prompted widespread displacement of the population: from 450,000 in 2002 to 1.5 million in 2004. In Lira District, over 50% of the population is displaced. More than 900,000 people are living in camps in the North that are reported to be way below the Sphere standards and much of this population has had to cope with these conditions for some 15 years. As the figures above show, poverty is widespread and most cannot access land for cultivation because of insecurity. In addition, some 14,000 children commute on foot every night to sleep in shelters in Gulu and Lira towns to avoid abduction. Stories of sexual or physical assault on region are common and neither parents, local authorities nor NGOs appear to have been able to provide significant protection.

As a result of sexual assault, sexual servitude and life in squalid overcrowded camps (where the population has only had recently had access to education on HIV/AIDS and without an adequate supply of condoms), prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS are much higher in Gulu and Lira in Northern Uganda than in the rest of the country. While 10-14.9% are HIV positive in Gulu, the national average is 6.6% (UNAIDS, 2004). Country wide Uganda is considered to be a success story in curtailing HIV/AIDS but these figures are an example of the neglect of the North.

| Norway (as a country receiving children seeking asylum) |
| --- |

Norway has made a significant contribution to support separated children seeking asylum: Norway received 916 separated children seeking asylum in 2003, 7% of all separated children seeking asylum globally[9]. The emphasis within the SC Norway Domestic Programme is changing from a major focus on separated children to encompass all children within the refugee population. In February 2004, 5211 children, most with and a number without their families, were living in reception centres in Norway. SCN recognizes that these are vulnerable children most of whom have experienced armed conflict and persecution as well as
suffering separation from families.

## 2.2. Summary of issues for children resulting from country contexts

Key issues were raised by the country evaluations, analysing country contexts and what they mean for children and adolescents. The following issues will be debated in the next chapter.

### *Issues about the roots of armed conflict and how they can be addressed*

**Peace, justice and reconciliation**
In all countries, issues of achieving and maintaining peace and of reconciliation were key questions for children and the adult population. Issues of what constitutes justice were also raised and considered fundamental in the context of long-term peace. Breaking the cycle of fear, frustration and intolerance often passed from one generation to the next was also raised.

**Addressing poverty and the need for investment in the medium term**
Poverty and its consequences on families, the lack of hope for the future, school dropout, poor health and other factors was an issue in most of the evaluations. Although the linkages between poverty and armed conflict were more than evident, the evaluations in South Eastern Europe, Guatemala and Angola, observed that the international community and donors are withdrawing prematurely.

**Lack of a regional voice**
In South East Europe the evaluation raised the issue that there is not sufficient coherence and cohesion in raising civil society and children's voices across the region.

### *Issues about the impact of armed conflict on children*

**The importance of education in conflict**
Many examples arose within the evaluations of the efforts that families make to ensure that children retain (or gain) access to education during armed conflict. This is testament to the very high value of education for children and families in armed conflict. Various other issues related to the delivery of education in emergencies were also raised.

**Reintegration of children returning from armed forces/armed groups**
The difficult process of reintegration into families and communities was raised with particular reference to children who have escaped from captivity in Uganda and children released from the LTTE in Sri Lanka.

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[9] In 2003, 12,800 separated children applied for asylum in 28 industrialized countries but 73% of all claims were lodged in the following countries in order of magnitude: UK, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Norway. UNHCR, 2004.

**Children deprived of their rights on demobilisation**
This issue specifically applied to Angola where children who had been associated with armed groups and armed forces were not given demobilisation packages in the same way as adults.

**How to effectively protect children from abuse and exploitation**
In all countries children referred to experiences in which they were exposed and unprotected. They witnessed and were forced to commit atrocities as well as being the victims of rape, physical and mental abuse and abduction. This begs the question of whether there is more than can be done to help children and families to protect themselves from risks in armed conflict (and disaster).

**Poverty can provoke separation, especially for girls, and they often remain an 'invisible' group**
The Angola evaluation raised the issue that the Child Protection Committees established through the CACD Programme are raising the visibility and helping to protect children accused of witchcraft (mostly boys). However, the much larger number of girls placed in other families as domestic servants and vulnerable to violations of many of their rights remain 'invisible' and more difficult to reach.

*Issues about programmes and advocacy in armed conflict*

**Terminology**
Questions were raised in South East Europe and in Uganda about the terminology frequently used by governments, UN agencies, NGOs and others working in this field, such as reconciliation, peace-building, psycho-social and others. Often there is no common understanding of these concepts and they can lead to misunderstandings.

**Reliance on volunteers**
In Uganda and Angola community based services for child protection and psychosocial support depend on volunteers. Issues were raised about the motivation of volunteers and their capacity to provide a quality service.

*Working with governments – issues about the slow delivery of services*
In Uganda and Angola, much of the programme is implemented with government partners but
serious limitations were observed in service delivery capacity.

## 2.3. Projects and Programmes in CACD

SCN is supporting a wide variety of projects and programmes in CACD, as shown in the table below. Some of the projects below are ongoing, others have been phased out as the context has changed. Almost all are implemented with partners, based on SCN's partnership policy aimed at increasing the impact of projects, embedding work in the local context and reducing administrative costs in relation to programme costs. Partners include both NGOs and local/national government agencies and institutions relevant to children.

Projects and programmes are analysed in chapter 4 against the policy objectives and evaluation questions.

| Country | Projects | Implementing agency |
|---|---|---|
| **Angola** | Child Protection Committees | Provincial Government |
| | Birth registration | Provincial Government |
| | Child Friendly Spaces | Self implementation |
| | Basic Education Projects | Provincial Government |
| | Children's clubs | Self implementation |
| **Guatemala** | Community based psychosocial care | NGO |
| | Tracing and restoring contact – families separated in the conflict | NGO |
| **South East Europe** | Centres for children and youth (children's clubs) | NGO |
| | Fostering programme | INGO and Government |
| | Institute of Mental Health | Government |
| | Early childhood development | INGO and Government |
| | Division for the Rights of the Child, Ombudsman Institution | Mixed |
| **Kosovo** | Abandoned babies and foster care | Government and NGO |
| | Community based education centres (Early childhood development) | NGO |
| | School reconstruction | Government |
| **Sri Lanka** | Separated children's project – support to foster care, reunification | NGO |
| | National capacity for psychosocial care – training – leading to micro projects including micro finance, children's clubs, women's groups, vocational skills | NGO |
| **Uganda** | Mobile Assessment Team to support children affected by the conflict | District Government |
| | Vocational skills/psychosocial care for formerly abducted children | NGO |
| | Capacity building Lira and Apac District Local Governments | District Government |
| **Norway Domestic Programme** | Better Care for Unaccompanied Minors | Advocacy directed towards Government and wider society |
| | Home country visit to Sri Lanka | Olso District Council |
| | Advocacy for children who are refugees in Norway | Advocacy directed towards Government and wider society |

# 3.  Analysis of Issues raised

**The roots of armed conflict – how children can help to break to the cycle of violence**

## 3.1.  Peace-building, reconciliation and justice

In this evaluation, children emphasised the importance of peace as an end in itself. They also discussed the importance of advocacy for peace (Uganda) and considered their own role in reconciliation and promoting tolerance.

There is a growing body of work analysing concepts of peace-building, reconciliation and justice but most analysis focuses on the role of adults rather than that of children. Where the role of children is considered, it is usually in a passive form, addressing the impact on children of policies to promote reconciliation (for example, by inter-ethnic education) rather than considering children's potentially active role. The challenge for SCN is to build on existing perspectives to identify a framework for engaging children's drive and energy in peace-building, reconciliation and justice.  This must be achieved without placing children at further risk.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its framework for peace-building identified the following mutually reinforcing dimensions of peace-building with and through adults (MOFA, 2004)

- Security (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; humanitarian mine action; control of small arms; security system reform)
- Political development (support for political and administrative authorities and structures; *reconciliation;* good governance, democracy and human rights, civil society development, judicial processes and truth commissions)
- Social/economic development (repatriation and reintegration of refugees and IDPs; reconstruction of social infrastructure; social development: education and health; economic development, private sector, employment trade and investment)

In this framework, peace-building is regarded as the overarching model that *includes* reconciliation, justice and investment in social/economic infrastructure with a view to reducing poverty. Relating this framework to children, we will consider the role of children and the experience of SCN in peace-building through reconciliation, including justice and truth commissions. In other parts of the report, we also consider the role of children in poverty reduction, promoting social investment and in advancing democratic processes.

**Reconciliation**
Reconciliation is a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace (SIDA, 2003). For the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2003), reconciliation entails finding a way to live that permits a vision of the future, the rebuilding of relationships, coming to terms with past acts and enemies, a society-wide, long-term process of deep change and a process of acknowledging, remembering and learning from the past. Reconciliation is voluntary and cannot be imposed and promoting reconciliation draws on instruments of healing, justice, truth-telling and reparation. Reconciliation takes place at all levels (national, regional and community), amongst all ages and across gender divides.

IDEA believes that reconciliation is fundamental to create the conditions for dialogue necessary to develop the working relationships required of a democracy. It is both a process and an end in itself. Reconciliation is viewed as an overarching, inclusive process that includes the key instruments: justice, truth, reparation and so on by which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future.

Reconciliation is both top-down in creating the conditions and incentives for cooperation at a local level and bottom up in focusing on inter-personal relations among community members. IDEA has developed a framework to analyse and design practical actions for reconciliation (adapted from John Lederach's work: Lederach,).

The challenge for SCN is to adapt this model to the perspective of children. The following sections set out SCN and partner experience in healing, truth telling, restorative justice and reparation.

**Model for Building Reconciliation**
**International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2003**
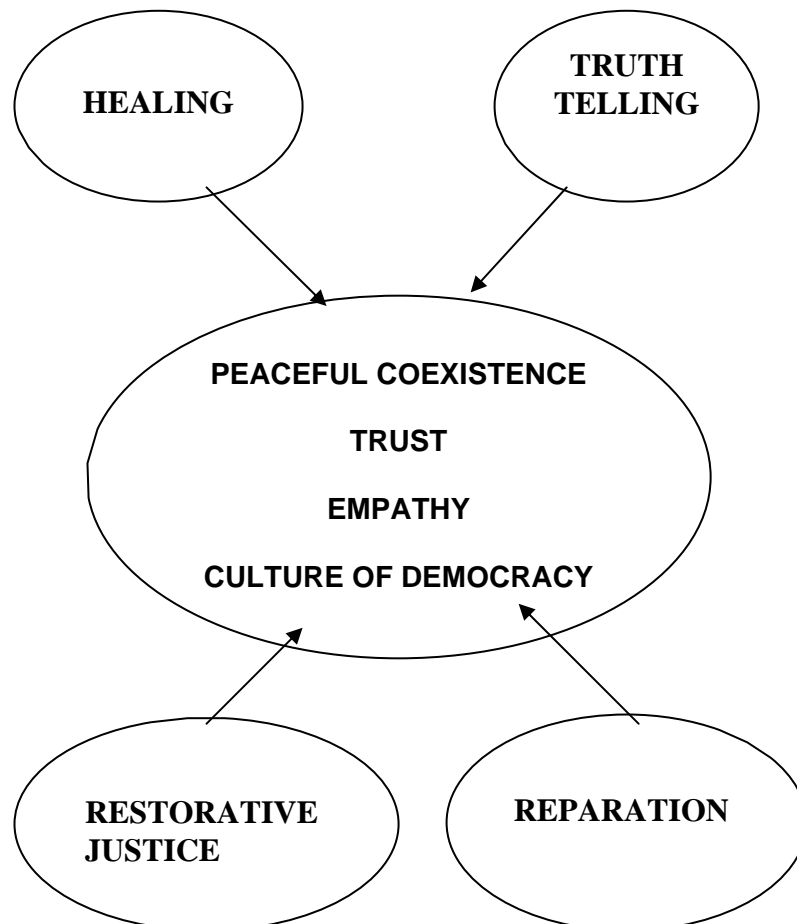


**Healing:  What have we learned about the engagement of children?**
SCN has an exceptional wealth of experience in programmes which include activities to promote the psychosocial and social aspects of child development and healing at the local level. Specific examples are the work of Utz K'Aslemal in Guatemala in using a *programme of structured 'experiences'* based on building on Mayan culture to make sense of external

events and rebuild confidence and self-esteem in Mayan children. The approach is particularly important as it addresses the very heart of the issue of the armed conflict in Guatemala: an attempt to destroy the fabric of Mayan society. The same organisation is providing healing ceremonies and counselling support to children and families whose relatives are being exhumed as the process of opening mass graves and providing dignified burials for the 'disappeared' continues.

*Traditional rituals and ceremonies* can also be important tools in healing. Children who have been forced to commit atrocities often suffer from multiple psychological manifestations. The form these take are partly dependent on cultural beliefs. A common universal problem is recurrent nightmares which can severely disturb sleep. In sub Saharan Africa where there is a widespread belief that the sprits of persons one has killed invades and takes control over one, some children are extremely troubled by the sense of being revisited by such a spirit. SCN partners in Uganda and Angola have found that traditional healing and cleansing ceremonies can help to draw a line under past events, allowing children to free themselves from guilt and villagers to accept the children's return to society.

An interesting project aimed at healing in Guatemala was established by youth and adults in a small town that was the site of mass killings and disappearances during the war. The population spent some months planning and *painting a mural* all along a cemetery wall that visually represents the different stages of the armed conflict and who was affected and ends with a more positive view of the future. The mural is maintained by the local residents and is an important element in their healing.

| **Examples of children's engagement in healing and reconciliation** |
| :--- |
| 1. Painting a wall mural depicting all stages of the conflict in Guatemala and ending with a positive image of the future |
| 2. Children's clubs in Angola, South East Europe, Sri Lanka and Uganda aimed at building confidence, tolerance, self-esteem and leadership |
| 3. Sinhala children learning the Tamil language in Sri Lanka |
| 4. Workshops to promote self-esteem and re-valuing Mayan culture in Guatemala |
| 5. Children's camps in Kosovo bringing mixed ethnic groups together for joint activities |
| 6. Tamil and Muslim youth working together on local development planning for young people |

*Children's clubs* in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Sri Lanka and Uganda are working to achieve similar goals: they provide a safe and stimulating forum through which children and young people can think about and discuss complex issues. The clubs are successful in empowering children and youth although in terms of reconciliation, the evaluations of the Sri Lanka and South East European programmes caution that in spite of developing more tolerant attitudes, membership of clubs is usually not ethnically mixed. This is partly due to geographical division of ethnic groups and partly that mixed membership just seems too difficult to contemplate.

However, there are some interesting experiences such as children's clubs in Sri Lanka, supported by SCN, where *Sinhala children are choosing to learn the Tamil language.* Willingness and interest in sharing a language can be very important in breaking down barriers. Another experience in Sri Lanka through a local partner is in the work of the People's Progressive Development Society bringing Tamil and Muslim youth together at village level to work on *joint planning* for local development.

Experiences of associations at local level in Guatemala are being taken to *regional alliances* of SCN partners through The Initiative (of Guatemalan Children and Youth in a Post-War and Peace Building Context) and this provides children, especially Mayan children, with a more powerful voice to address issues of their rights through the media and at regional/national levels. Such interventions not only develop leadership skills amongst the children themselves, they also provide an opportunity for children to understand political participation and how to ensure that future armed conflicts are addressed by dialogue.

One key element to local level reconciliation with children and youth is finding *cross cutting interests* that may not relate directly to a stated aim of reconciliation. In Kosovo, SC promoted a Crossing Borders and Peace and Tolerance Summer Camp bringing children from different ethnic groups together. During the camp, differences and divisions were gradually broken down but it proved difficult to sustain the capacity to work together after the youth returned to their areas of origin.  More recently, Albanian youth have invited Serbian youth to debate children's rights and have reserved a place for them in a SCiK-sponsored municipal youth assembly in Prishtina. This is extremely long term work and has to be sustained in spite of multiple setbacks and difficulties.

Apologies can also be extremely important in healing and reconciliation if they are sincere. For example, the willingness of governments to apologize for past atrocities (eg. Germany's apology to the Jewish population of a Polish ghetto) can have a long-term impact. One study found that where there had been 'reconciliation event' 64% did not return to armed conflict but where no such event took place, only 9% did not return to war (SIDA, 2003). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fact that the government of Serbia and Montenegro has not apologised for the massacre in Srebrenica and only recently acknowledged the event, remains a source of pain to the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were no experiences of children's engagement with advocating for apologies by leaders within the evaluation but this is perhaps an area that could be further explored depending on the local context.

To conclude, SCN and other agencies have a wide variety of experiences with the engagement of children in healing and reconciliation. Using these ideas as the starting point, children will undoubtedly invent new and locally appropriate ideas for themselves. This work is fundamental in breaking the cycle of violence but must be done carefully to avoid placing children at further risk.

**Truth telling:  What have we learned about the engagement of children?**
The most visible form of truth telling in the context of armed conflict is in the form of the Truth Commission. Some 25 countries have established Truth Commissions since the early 1970s with different mandates and different levels of engagement of the public and a great deal has been learned through the experience. The two most frequently cited are Guatemala (1994-1999) and South Africa (1995) in view of the extensive research and vast number of testimonies obtained (7,388 in Guatemala). Children participated in both of these processes. The groundbreaking Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa following the fall of the apartheid regime (1995) introduced the collection of testimonies from children in a child-friendly environment and use age-appropriate methodologies. Testimonies were also collected from children in the Guatemalan truth commission. This was later followed by similar work in the Sierra Leone from 2002-3 and in Sierra Leone a separate child-friendly report was written to help to explain the armed conflict and concepts of reconciliation to children.

UNICEF has developed a set of policy guidelines (UNICEF, 2001) on the engagement of children in truth commissions based on the experience in Sierra Leone. While the SC Alliance cautions against too much enthusiasm for child participation in truth commissions without a fuller understanding of the issues (Save the Children, 2004), there certainly does

seem to be an inherent value in children feeling that their voices are heard and their experiences validated. Within the countries included in the evaluation, none has a current truth and reconciliation mandate, but growing attention is being paid to TRCs and especially the importance of local level truth and reconciliation. It is highly probable that TRCs will be established in SCN's countries of operation in the future.

An alternative form of feeding children's voices into registering the historical events of armed conflict and the impact on children has been the type of child study undertaken in Sri Lanka through which 2,000 children were able to recount their experiences. The study was published although not as formal document in the same way as truth commissions. Similar projects to register children's voices in armed conflict have been undertaken by SCN partner agencies such as Christian Children's Fund in Angola. Both forms of registering children's views and experiences are important and may bring forth slightly different viewpoints.

**Restorative Justice**
The essence of restorative justice is to 'restore and affirm the human and civil dignity of victims' (Kiss, 2000). This is distinct from retributive justice which formalises retribution of society against offenders. Typically restorative justice handles wrongdoing differently: it 'works with the full participation of the victim and relevant communities in discussing the facts, identifying the cause of misconduct and defining sanctions' (IDEA, 2003). In the context of armed conflict or post conflict, restorative justice can be one element of an approach to promoting peaceful co-existence, trust, empathy and a culture of democracy.

This is not the same as amnesty as it involves the community defining an appropriate form of restoring the equilibrium rather than annulment of liability. IDEA cautions that amnesty for perpetrators can be a risky strategy as it may leave the vicious cycle of impunity unbroken.

These questions are particularly interesting in the context of Uganda where the Acholi and Lango populations in the north who have been most affected by the armed conflict for many years are desperate for peace and calling for traditional restorative justice in combination with amnesty through the National Amnesty Commission rather than retributive justice. They are concerned that every time the International Criminal Court is raised, abductions and attacks by the LRA increase. There appears to be a consensus that it would be appropriate for Joseph Kony, the leader, to be tried by the ICC at some date in the future although that should not be an overriding goal: much more important is bringing the armed conflict to an end and reintegrating the majority of the members of the LRA.

Within the countries included in the evaluation, restorative justice was only discussed in the context of Uganda, although it is also used by rural communities in Angola. A challenge to restorative justice in the context of Uganda is that it is not 'designed' to address gross, continual and widespread atrocities such as those carried out by the LRA. Nevertheless where communities accept that children were obliged to commit such acts against their will, it may achieve some level restoration of the equilibrium in society.

In relation to the engagement of children in restorative justice, great care must be taken to ensure that any process is in the best interests of the child and protects all of his/her rights. References are made to the use of restorative justice with children in Liberia in the SC Alliance guidelines on children associated with armed groups and armed forces, *A Fighting Chance* (Save the Children, 2004) in which a boy describes how his public confession was voluntary and helped to remove 'bad luck from his shoulders'. The important element here is how restorative justice could help children with reintegration but at the same time being extremely careful of not causing further risk of stigma. Children in the evaluation stated very clearly that one of their greatest fears was of stigma and being treated differently.

In summary, it would appear that restorative justice for adults can be positive if it can help to promote reconciliation. With children, *if* restorative justice can help with reintegration and *if* children enter into it fully prepared it may be helpful but should be considered with great caution, not as an panacea and special care should be taken with girls as traditional justice can be extremely gender-biased.

**How can children engage in reparation?**
The principal question is not how children can *make* reparation but how they can *demand* reparation, especially in social services. Reparation is a particular issue in Guatemala where the peace agreements have committed the state to reparation but none has yet been forthcoming. This is clearly a risk factor to long term peace and should be addressed by advocacy with and on behalf of children.

**Conclusions**
It is extremely difficult to test how far peace-building actually makes a difference in practice. The International Peace Academy and partners have attempted to assess the effect of peace-building interventions with no firm conclusions (Tschirgi, 2004). Even fewer attempts have been made in relation to the engagement of children in peace-building. This can be seen as an opportunity for SCN in not only engaging with child participation in peace-building but also considering how to do more effective participatory monitoring in relation to the views and attitudes of children and adolescents through engagement in the kinds of activities described above.

## 3.2. Addressing poverty and the need for investment in the medium term

A post conflict state should show the seriousness of commitment to change, including poverty reduction, if it aims to build and maintain peace. As shown in chapter one, there are clear links between both armed conflict and disaster and poverty. Children who participated in the evaluation also spoke forcefully about the importance of poverty alleviation. They discussed their own problems of having to drop out of school and described their own lack of hope for the future because of poverty but they also talked about the impact on parents who are so worried about their own problems that they have little mental space for their children. Addressing poverty is pivotal in preventing armed conflict and in reducing harm in disasters.

At individual level, options for reducing poverty are through vocational training, formal education, microfinance services and (in some cases) legal support to access property rights.
At household level, enhancing market linkages for products, business grants, labour saving techniques and microfinance can help to relieve poverty. These ideas are discussed in recent work related to economic strengthening to improve the well-being of orphans and vulnerable children in the context of HIV/AIDS (SARA, 2004). The Sri Lanka evaluation discusses SCN projects with partners encompassing micro finance interventions and points out that these should be undertaken by organisations with specialist and adequate training in this area otherwise they risk being ineffective.

At a macro level, there are two particularly important vehicles for advocacy on poverty reduction.

- Millennium Development Goals: the targets established by world leaders to reduce poverty (MDG) by 2015
- At country level, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that set out how countries will work towards the MDGs and aim to reduce poverty through all sectors

In spite of the linkages between poverty and conflict there is a tendency for international support to be withdrawn from countries a relatively short time after achieving a peace agreement. Within this evaluation, Angola and South East Europe were particularly concerned about the early withdrawal of economic support and of political interest. There had been no donor conference on Angolan reconstruction and a number of key donors are in the process of withdrawal less than three years after the Memorandum of Understanding. In South East Europe there is a similar concern, although the post-conflict period in South East Europe has been longer, there remain serious problems of a fragile transition process and poverty.

The Norwegian Ministry of International Development strategy for peace-building recognises this issue in its commitment to peace-building and argues for a 10 year commitment to countries in the post armed conflict period. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports this position and SCN's policy on CACD also emphasises a medium term approach.

SCN can play an important role in monitoring international support to countries in the post-conflict phase and, fundamentally, feeding a children's perspective into the PRSP process and *monitoring the implementation of the PRSP*.

## 3.3. The importance of a coherent regional voice

In South East Europe, many of the issues are similar across countries and for children in those countries. However, the evaluation pointed out that there has been limited focus on joining forces amongst children's voices to ensure that the messages carry greater weight. While SCN has been supporting the South East European Child Rights Action Network (SEECRAN) since its inception in 2001, it was felt that there is scope for further strengthening of regional debate, beginning with children's clubs and moving into regional alliances, including SEECRAN and others.

Similar observations have been made in other regions and in 2000 SCN brought children from the Great Lakes area (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania) together with the objective of developing a regional perspective on children's issues. However, there remains scope for much further work of this nature.

*Issues about the impact of armed conflict on children*

## 3.4. Importance of education during armed conflict and reconciliation

There is growing recognition of the importance of education in the context of armed conflict and in peace-building. Education is increasingly recognised as the 'fourth pillar' of humanitarian assistance, along with food, shelter and water/sanitation/health care (Machel, 2000) and the SC Alliance has participated in developing standards and indicators for education in emergencies (INEE, 2003). The World Bank has also recognised education, alongside poverty reduction and protecting the planet, as the principal tools to promote stability and peace in the long term (World Bank, 2004). To provide maximum attention to the issue of education in armed conflict and disaster, the SC Alliance has adopted Education in Emergencies as the theme of the Alliance Global Challenge for the next five years.

These global perspectives are in harmony with the views expressed by child participants in the evaluation. In Angola and Uganda education emerged as the major priority for children, after immediate safety and security. Education unlocks doors to a more positive future and gives children the chance to look forward. Schools can also provide a place of security although they can also be places of risk where girls can be sexually abused or exploited and

both sexes can be recruited to armed groups/forces. A number of specific issues on education arose during the evaluation as follows.

*Poverty* was closely linked to school access and drop out during armed conflict and in the post conflict phase (Angola, Uganda, Kosovo). Children and families were frustrated by access issues even in countries where primary education enrolment is supposed to be free (Angola).

In all countries issues of poverty were coupled with gender discrimination and girls are more likely to drop out earlier than boys (Angola, SEE, Kosovo, Uganda, Guatemala). The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (MSEE) reinforce the responsibility of governments to provide primary education free of charge and SCN can help to monitor the question of hidden charges that are often a reason for school drop out or non registration.  It is also fundamental to children in armed conflict and disaster that commitments to education made through PRSPs are monitored.

A second issue raised on education is what type of *catch-up classes* are effective for those who have missed out on education. Of all the countries in the evaluation, Angola has the lowest school enrolment rates and highest numbers/percentages of children who have missed out on education (children at the age of 11 years should be in the 6th class but in Angola only 2% of 11 year olds are in the correct class and 17% are still in the first grade).  This means that the content of the curriculum can be out of step with children's age and maturity. SCNA tried to introduce a new age-appropriate curriculum unfortunately without success as the Ministry of Education did not pursue the project as their immediate priority was increasing access overall (and introducing 6 primary level classes instead of 4). The Angola report observed that from the children's point of view, the absolute priority was to have access to school whatever the curriculum and that their agenda was more closely aligned with that of the Government than of Save the Children. It may be that excluded children prioritise *access* to education whatever the curriculum.

In Eastern Europe catch up classes assisting children who had missed one or two years of the curriculum appeared to be successful. The MSEE discuss the use of catch up classes and separate classes for older children where appropriate.

In Angola an issue was raised about how to help children access *education even at the height of the conflict*. Parents who had been part of the UNITA forces during the armed conflict noted during interviews that UNITA soldiers had stolen school materials during raids on villages and towns to try to provide something to their children in the bush. The question is whether it is possible to provide these materials to communities in the bush through organisations that are able to cross lines if SCN is not able to reach them (eg. in Angola padres from the church were considered to be neutral and were always able to cross lines). Although providing school materials only is a poor substitute for primary education, it was clearly extremely important to these children and families. At a minimum it would facilitate learning to read and allow children access to books.

Another question raised is the extent to which schools can be a base for *psychosocial support*.

In Guatemala schools were used as a base for a series of workshop experiences aimed at building on children's self-esteem, valuing local culture and reducing fear passed on by parents and communities. They were a successful base for this work but reached larger numbers of boys than girls given gender bias in school access. A different form of psychosocial recovery through schools was witnessed in South East Europe where the youth centres supported by SCN had established children's councils to empower children to debate issues of concern. The success of this kind of programme is likely to depend on the

motivation of teachers, which itself depends on the extent to which their work is valued, paid adequately and whether they have access to basic materials.

Save the Children generally prefers to focus on the quality of education rather than access and this leads SCN to resist *school construction* in most countries. For countries in armed conflict however, where schools have been targets there can be an enormous shortage of infrastructure, especially in the post-war phase when school rebuilding is worth the investment. Children and parents in Angola valued school construction projects more highly than all other types of project, especially where care had been taken to construct school with adequate latrines (especially for girls) access to drinking water and other essentials. School reconstruction was also highly valued in Kosovo where it gave children the opportunity to rapidly return to school in the resettlement phase and was part of rebuilding villages and confidence in the future.

The experience of IBIS in Angola in coupling school reconstruction with a strong emphasis on parent-community links and school governance is showing that reconstruction projects can have an impact beyond building the school itself (IBIS, 2004). The World Bank has also conducted extensive research in the area of school construction and has identified points to be taken into consideration in projects of this kind (World Bank, 2003). In the future, SCN could usefully consider increasing its contribution to school construction in the post-war environment and in the context of a broader focus on community engagement with schools.

An issue raised in the Kosovo evaluation related to children's *safety en route to school*. A worryingly high percentage of children felt unsafe going to school (nearly 80% of boys) and this was associated both with ethnicity and gender. Boys were more likely to feel unsafe than girls and Roma children were more unsafe than Albanian. However, most Albanian children said they did not feel safe from cars while Roma children felt unsafe from harassment. Safety en route to school is an issue that is rarely addressed but can be a major factor in children's lives and, in this case, long after the formal end of armed conflict.

In Sri Lanka, children empowered by the child-led project in Batticaloa addressed the issue of safety en route to school directly with the army. They had been walking a long way round to avoid the army check points, risking stepping on landmines. By approaching the army and arguing that they should not be harassed they successfully gained safer and shorter access to school.

*Early childhood development* was recognised as being extremely important in providing stability, routines and opportunities for stimulating development and ECD projects were discussed in the reports from Angola and South East Europe and Kosovo. In Kosovo, the projects were felt to contribute to the lives of young marginalised children who would otherwise not be given opportunities to learn outside the home. Although these projects were recognised as being very important for young children, SCN and partners struggled to find financially sustainable models in contexts in which neither local authorities nor families could afford recurrent costs (after the infrastructure and equipment had been installed and staff trained). This is further discussed in point 4.6.

## 3.5. Reintegration of children from armed forces, armed groups

The reintegration of children formerly associated with fighting forces can be very complex and was raised in the evaluations from Sri Lanka and Uganda and in a different way in Angola. The kinds of problems raised concerned *acceptance* by families and the wider community, especially of girls who had been sexually abused and returned as child-mothers, issues of children *'marked'* by the fighting forces (e.g. cutting of Sri Lankan girls' hair in the

LTTE that stigmatises girls on release) and the *fear of reprisals* of association with children formerly part of fighting forces.

To help child-mothers in their return to families, SC in Uganda proposed that a greater engagement of the extended family of child-mothers could help to create a positive environment before the girl returns to parents. The team felt that grandparents, aunts and uncles can often understand the issues more clearly and play an intermediary role to prepare parents for the girl's return and to ensure that it is viewed as a point of celebration rather than shame.

A key to reintegration for boys and girls in Uganda is felt to be their vocational training as it provides children with skills that are in short supply in rural communities. They have something positive to offer and feel valued. Access to education is also fundamental, together with the attitudes of children and staff in schools. For that reason, SCiU has provided sensitisation in schools on the issues faced by formerly abducted children.

Although children's clubs could serve as a positive environment for community based reintegration in Sri Lanka, many children and youth fear reprisals for associating with children released from the LTTE. As a result, children released from the LTTE are not yet fully welcomed in clubs and the evaluator recommends providing further training in children's rights to the LTTE.

While some of the issues about the reintegration of children formerly associated with fighting forces are specific to the level of violence they have witnessed or been part of, most of the problems are generic to separated and vulnerable children. They have the same needs and desires as all other children for acceptance, love and affection and for a positive future. As we have seen in the children's comments, they are very worried about stigmatisation.

The area where most work has been done on community based reintegration of orphaned and vulnerable children is in Southern Africa as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Many ideas on community level support could be equally applied to children associated with fighting forces (see Richter et al, Family and Community Interventions for Children Affected by AIDS, 2004).

## 3.6. Children deprived of their rights on demobilisation

The Cape Town Principles on children associated with armed groups/armed forces argues that children should be given priority in the demobilization process and that they should not be discriminated against in services and benefits for demobilized soldiers. However to avoid the risk of being accused of committing a war crime in having child soldiers, the Angolan peace process excluded children completely. In 2002 during the demobilisation process children were rapidly removed from the demobilisation camps and placed in family areas so they could not be identified. Adult women who had fought with the troops were similarly excluded. Given that the children were not an identified group, they did not receive a demobilisation package or any kind of specialised psychosocial support.

Of particular concern was the group of girls forced into sexual relationships with commanders, many of whom became child-mothers in the same way as girls in Uganda. It was extremely difficult for child protection agencies to identify the girls at the end of the war and agencies assume that most were too intimidated to come forward. Attempts were made to identify them in the demobilisation camps but it took many months for the population to reach a sufficient level of confidence to share confidential information. The assumption is that many girls were 'lost' and forced to continue in abusive relationships. A study is underway by Christian Children's Fund on this issue and attempts should continue to reach this group.

## 3.7. How to effectively protect children from abuse and exploitation

Children in Angola and Uganda described the types of violence to which they had been subjected or obliged to perpetrate on others and children in Sri Lanka had done the same through the child study in 2001. When considering who could help in their moments of crisis of course it was those closest to them – parents, grandparents and friends – who were most able to protect them. This is especially the case for those children living on or close to the front line and for those outside towns where there are no formal services. It was evident that churches had also played an important role in protecting children in some cases. In most cases, humanitarian workers came much further down the line.

In recent years, policy and legislative frameworks at international level have been strengthened to protect children in armed conflict. However, they are not always translated into action on the ground. While it is extremely difficult to protect children from multiple risks in armed conflict, it is essential that field based staff are very clear about the possible practical actions that could be taken to enhance protection so that they can debate the feasibility of each measure in the local context. While recognising that children and families develop imaginative coping and protection mechanisms of their own, these could be reinforced by helping children to articulate the risks they face, what resources/capacities they have to protect themselves and how the humanitarian agencies can reinforce the children's own approach. Some recent ALNAP work on Humanitarian Protection suggests that lead questions may be:

- The nature and timing of the threats confronting them
- The mindset, personalities and relationships between people posing these threats
- The resources within their community
- The history of previous threats and coping mechanisms
- The practical possibilities and opportunities for resisting these threats
- The optimal linkages between their own response and that of an agency

(taken from Humanitarian Protection, ALNAP, 2004)

## 3.8. The 'invisible' girls – including them in analysis and programming

In the Angolan evaluation the point was made that girls most affected by family breakdown and poverty during conflict are often those who are formally or informally placed with another family effectively as a domestic servant. They become 'invisible' and vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation as well as to domestic slavery. In a situation of low school attendance this situation is particularly worrying as they can have virtually no opportunities to leave the home and share concerns with others.

Systems of community child protection committees and community alert to the abuse and exploitation of children must include not just the most visible groups (eg. the children accused of witchcraft in Angola) but must also reach out to girls in this situation. Child protection committees with strong community links can be a source of community sensitisation on the rights of separated girls living with other families as well as a point of contact for girls in this situation and they should be included in SCN analysis and programming.

*Issues about programmes and advocacy in armed conflict*

## 3.9. Terminology in psychosocial support

Issues of terminology used in psychosocial support to children in armed conflict and disaster were raised in South East Europe, Sri Lanka and Uganda. The question is of a different perception of commonly used terms such as psychosocial, separated children, child protection, child-rights programming, reintegration, reconciliation and so on. While the question of terminology concerns SCN, the SC Alliance and partners reaching a common understanding of some key terms, it goes beyond a macro level issue to a shared and common understanding of terms *in the local context*. It is important that children are included in this debate; if the term 'reconciliation' causes pain and cynicism amongst adults in Eastern Europe, it will be similarly interpreted by children.

Having different perceptions of common terms can also be extremely disabling between professionals and can even lead to professional paralysis in which people are reluctant to act for fear of not having fully understood what is required of them. It can also lead to inappropriate perceptions of children's status and even to inappropriate project interventions. In Sri Lanka, for example, concern was expressed that a project working with children in foster families described them as 'separated children'. The evaluator made the point that 'separated children' should be provided with tracing services and family reunification if appropriate but if they are permanently placed with foster families they should cease to be regarded as 'separated'.

SCN and the SC Alliance should ensure that terminology is as clear as possible for staff teams but over and above that, discussions and debates need to be held at local level in relation to perceptions in the local context.

## 3.10. Reliance on volunteers

The mobile assessment and counselling teams in Uganda and child protection committees in Angola are implemented through volunteers. The reason for working with volunteers relates both to sustainability and to embedding projects in the local community. The issue of how to motivate volunteers was raised in both of these contexts although most stridently in Uganda where volunteers wanted to be paid. There is no doubt that in poor communities the opportunity-cost of spending time volunteering is greater than that in countries where people are able to earn a dignified salary and volunteer in their spare time.

In Angola, three aspects appeared to be particularly important for motivation: i) being part of a broader structure that links to the local administration and having follow up visits by the project coordinator on a regular basis ii) training *and follow up of training* were important and iii) the occasional distribution of small items immediately related to the work but of value in a broader context (eg. boots to visit children in situations of concern). One important aspect of the responsibilities of child protection committee members in Angola, however, is that they are largely *responsive rather than proactive.* They are part of a community alert system that will call attention to abuse of children but are not normally *proactive* in providing counselling.

The responsibilities of volunteers in Uganda were greater. They were expected to visit the children in their group on a regular basis and provide counselling services. They received training but the evaluator felt that training needed to be reinforced. Children observed that volunteers were not always well trained or motivated although they recognised the value of counselling. Staff members of SCiU felt that volunteers may be more motivated if they had

a vested interest in the issues, for example if they were parents of abducted or formerly abducted children themselves.

One possibility in Uganda is to bring groups of volunteers together with groups of children from CEASOP to debate their needs and desires and think about how to enhance the service.

### 3.11. Working with government: maximising outcomes for children

The problem of low levels of service delivery through government was raised in Uganda in relation to the support provided through District local government structures. It was felt that support can become more diffuse through government structures and disappear into bureaucracy. Similarly questions were raised about the work in education in Angola. One way of enhancing government accountability is by promoting local associations of children or parents with an interest in the service to demand greater checks and balances. For example parents' associations if well organised and clear about their goals can oblige government to enhance education services at the same time as providing some support to isolated teachers. In the case of the District local government services, feedback and debate directly with children on criteria for service delivery and the specific problems they face could help to provide increased checks and balances.

# 4. Evaluation of the CACD Programme

This chapter analyses the programmes in relation to children's priorities, the external context of conflict and disaster and the evaluation questions.

## 4.1. Relevance and Appropriateness

### 4.1.1 Do programmes address the principal issues for children?

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**Summary of Main Points of Children's Voices**

- Protection from abduction and being used as soldiers, sex slaves and other forms of abuse and from hunger and disease.
- Access to education at all times is vitally important as part of building hope for the future. That includes access in the bush in the midst of conflict, not being forced out of school because of poverty, access to school materials, the quality of teachers.
- Peace is vitally important as an end in itself. In terms of reconciliation, there are many small daily opportunities for sharing between children that adults may not understand.
- Projects that build on self esteem, reduce stigma and provide hope for the future are of much greater value than those that oblige children to relive the negative experiences of conflict.
- Parents and extended families need opportunities to relieve poverty and the conflict in order to provide adequate support to children.
- Aid and support should be distributed fairly and evenly and criteria should be clear and transparent.
- The experience of participation and of adults and children listening to your opinion helps to develop personal confidence
- It is important to get access to health services in conflict

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The evaluation found the programmes in general to be consistent with children's priorities with the following observations:

**Positives of the programme in relation to children's interests**
i) A great deal of work has been done on access to primary education although not necessarily through the Thematic Area of CACD. One specific point to address in the future could be negotiation with non state entities to provide opportunities for children to study while living in inaccessible areas.
ii) SCN has done a great deal of high level advocacy on peace-building including with the Security Council and other UN bodies. Children's clubs and associations are excellent venues to address local issues of reconciliation and children in the evaluation showed a willingness to be more involved in peace-building through clubs and other initiatives.
iii) The programmes build on self esteem and avoid stigma.

**Aspects in which more could be done**
i) SCN has done a great deal to prevent the recruitment of children but children face many other risks (such as those who feel insecure en route to school in Kosovo) and more participatory work could be done with children to identify risks and analyse how they could be reduced.
ii) SCN has not always drawn attention to humanitarian needs in the life-saving sectors e.g. conditions in camps in northern Uganda are very poor and there are food shortages. Similarly access to health services is not always emphasised.
iii) Less attention has been paid to reducing poverty than other areas.

iv) Children's voices have not always been included in establishing criteria for the distribution of assistance.

### 4.1.2 Do programmes address the principal issues in the broader context of trends in armed conflict and disaster?

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**Main trends identified in armed conflict**
1. Major armed conflicts are falling in number but leaving more states in a position of no effective closure, justice or reconciliation
2. Armed conflict has increasingly targeted children
3. Most armed conflicts are internal and associated with weak democracy
4. Armed conflict is increasingly associated with poverty and with high child populations
5. The legal framework and lobbying appears to having some impact on reducing state recruitment of children to armed forces/groups but having limited impact on non state entities
6. The use of landmines is falling
7. There is a tendency for donors to withdraw too quickly after armed conflict ends

**Main trends identified in disasters**
1. Natural disasters are increasing in number and in the numbers affected
2. The impact of natural disasters is highest on poor countries
3. There is a dearth of research on the impact on children
4. HIV/AIDS is a major disaster, especially for Southern Africa
5. There is very limited disaster preparedness work with children at present

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**Positives in relation to trends in conflict and disaster**
i) SCN takes a medium term view of post-conflict engagement, recognising the fragility of transition states.
ii) SCN is an excellent position to work with children on concepts of democracy, civil society, civil rights etc. through children's clubs. Work has already been done on children's parliaments (Sri Lanka), participation in UNGASS (South East Europe), youth municipal assemblies (Kosovo), local development planning (Guatemala). These are extremely important activities in post armed conflict transition states.
iii) SCN has a strong network of partners, well rooted in the community with a solid understanding of culture, traditions, political and social issues and local languages. This is distinct from agencies that rely largely on international staff.

**Aspects in which more could be done**
i) Monitoring PRSPs with a view to poverty reduction.
ii) Lobbying and attempts to reach non state entities with child rights training.
iii) Participatory work with children in disaster preparedness, using child-friendly materials. Possibly consider disaster risk reduction projects with adolescents i.e. low cost environmental projects to be identified with disaster risk reduction specialists eg. UN Secretariat for the International Strategy for Risk Reduction.
iv) Participatory prevention work in HIV/AIDS.

### 4.1.3 Are projects appropriate with regard to cultural context?

There are many examples of how projects are appropriate to the cultural context; this is a particular strength of SCN. To cite a few, in Angola, the child protection committees work through local trainers and in local dialects and use experiential training methodologies based around the reality of the community. While accepting traditional beliefs in witchcraft, the project aims to put them into a context of not using tradition as an excuse for abusing

children. Similarly the methodologies used by the MAT teams in Uganda incorporate traditional approaches and traditional healing. In Guatemala, the project for community-based psychosocial recovery uses a mixture of Mayan culture and traditions with other healing methodologies including workshop-type exercises and Tai Chi, where it is felt to be helpful.

The evaluation did not find any instances of culturally inappropriate interventions.

### 4.1.4    Do interventions strengthen coping capacities of children/families?

Programme approaches support strengthened relationships within families through family tracing and reunification (Guatemala, South East Europe and Kosovo in an earlier period, Sri Lanka) and counselling between parents and children (e.g. formerly abducted children in Uganda, children accused of witchcraft in Angola).  Access to education is also an important coping strategy as it provides hope for the future. The element of preschool education and early childhood projects provide both education, some support to health and economic space to mothers to work. Area least addressed through CACD in terms of coping capacities are in poverty reduction and in the types of family issues that result from poverty and lack of hope, including alcohol misuse and domestic violence which were raised by children in Eastern Europe and in Sri Lanka. These are extremely complex issues with no easy answers but important to address in the context of family support systems.

### 4.1.5    How are psychosocial aspects of child development addressed?

Most of SCN's work in CACD is in the area of psychosocial interventions. The approach is age appropriate and takes account of children's development needs. Social interventions are mixed with counselling and other methodologies for healing. This perspective aims to restore routines and normality to children's lives as quickly as possible and includes family tracing and reunification, access to school or pre-school and play. In Uganda it also includes individual counselling but as part of broader interventions and can include therapeutic activities such as drawing or theatre addressing painful experiences.

The programmes globally tend to focus more on school aged children and adolescents than on  young children and babies. There is very limited work on child survival and relatively limited work on early childhood development, although there are small projects in Sri Lanka, Kosovo and Angola and had been work in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past. The principal reason for the limited work in this area is the struggle to make early childhood development projects sustainable in a resource poor environment.

### 4.1.6    Do programmes reflect gender based concerns?

Multiple gender based concerns were identified in the evaluation reports:

- Risks to girls of sexual assault, sexual slavery and STIs (Uganda, Angola, Kosovo during the armed conflict)
- Difficulties in reintegration from armed groups with a particular focus on girls
- Differences in school access and retention (not specifically related to armed conflict but exacerbated by armed conflict and slow progress in education for all targets): Angola, Guatemala, Kosovo.
- Limited numbers of female teaching staff, again not specifically related to armed conflict but that causes a particular problem with the risk of sexual exploitation in isolated post-conflict reconstruction zones (Angola)
- Girls being an 'invisible' group of domestic slaves (Angola)

- In Kosovo, more boys than girls (of both the Albanian group and the Roma group) felt unsafe walking to school. While part of the reason was car accidents, it was also due to the fear of harassment.
- Early marriage of girls (Uganda – sometimes to avoid abduction, Angola)
- Higher rates of HIV infection amongst girls in the north of Uganda than in the rest of the country. The armed conflict is directly associated with the spread of the infection especially as a result of sexual exploitation by armed forces and the LRA.

Of all the above issues, the one most analysed was the question of reintegration of girls in Northern Uganda and girls' school drop out in Sri Lanka; the remainder did not appear to have been addressed directly by programmes. Data disaggregated by sex and age is not always available, but the Angola report found that even where disaggregated administrative data on education was available, it had not been used in analysis to reach conclusions about the inclusion of girls.

Two of the reports (Guatemala and Angola) specifically made reference to the fact that gender analysis could be stronger. In general it would appear that gender analysis and the incorporation of conclusions into programming and advocacy could be strengthened.

## 4.2. Effectiveness and Quality

### 4.2.1 Programme and Policy Objectives in CACD

This section analyses the programmes against the policy objectives of the CACD Thematic Area and against the evaluation questions. An analysis of programmes against the Key Quality Elements is incorporated into the evaluation questions.

### 4.2.2 Policy Objective 1: Peaceful solutions to political and military conflicts

The promotion of peaceful solutions to armed conflict and raised awareness of the impact on children has been growing in importance and SCN has made some significant moves towards this direction in activities, although these are often not explicit in project objectives. Some examples of programme and advocacy work are:

- High level advocacy for peace in Uganda has contributed to increasing the profile of children's issues in northern Uganda within senior bodies (Security Council, Head of OCHA, ICC and EU) and to the higher profile of the armed conflict for children in Northern Uganda
- Children's clubs and youth centres/associations that have empowered child members in all countries included in the evaluation
- Peace-building work aimed at reconciling Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim groups in Sri Lanka (including groups of Sinhala children in a children's club choosing to learn the Tamil language). However, the evaluator points out that there has been limited work in building peace among Tamil communities and that there is often hostility and non-acceptance of children released from the LTTE[10]. This is even within children's clubs that understand the need for tolerance with the Sinhala and Muslim populations. The report concludes that much more work needs to be done in this area.

This work is likely to become ever more important in the future. The broad framework and objectives could be clearer as guidance to programmes and SCN could make a major contribution in attempting to monitor and evaluate the results of this work more closely in terms of changes in perceptions and attitudes of children and adolescents.

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[10] Hostility and non-acceptance of children released from the LTTE is due to the fear of LTTE reactions towards people regarded as associating with 'deserters'.

### 4.2.3    Policy Objective 2: The right to protection in armed conflict and disaster

There has been a mix of advocacy and programme approaches to address issues of protection. Some forms of advocacy/programming, especially when the goal has been very clear and specific, have been particularly successful and have had a real impact on children's lives. Some examples are encouraging children to escape from the LRA in Uganda through radio messages, drawing attention to the issue of children accused of witchcraft through a video of suspect 'treatment centres' in Angola that led to their closure, and organising for escaped children (from the LRA) to be returned directly from Juba in south Sudan to Gulu in northern Uganda rather than being routed through Khartoum and Kampala, which involved lengthy waiting and tiring journeys.

Other forms of advocacy are longer term, drawing attention to broader issues of conflict and it is more difficult to link activities to effects. For example, in Sri Lanka four major campaigns have helped to demonstrate that the armed conflict is national (i.e. not restricted to the Tamil population) and that it requires a national solution.

In South East Europe the work of the Ombudsman is a good example of effective advocacy to make real changes for children. In that case, the Division for the Rights of the Child of the Ombudsman Institution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is addressing legislation for child protection and following up individual cases of abuse as well as using individual cases as policy lessons.

The most important conclusions on protection are:
i) Although it is extremely difficult and painstaking work to advocate against the abuse of children, especially with non state entities, this work is fundamental and should continue to take place, however difficult.
ii) Children themselves often have the best local knowledge of the risks they face and where it is possible to work directly with children, it may be helpful to undertake participatory analyses of risks and opportunities for protection. See section 2.6.

### 4.2.4    Policy Objective 3: The right to survival in armed conflict and disaster

As noted above, the right to survival has not been a focus of most of the programmes in the SCN CACD programme. Assuming that the right to survival is addressed by the Sphere sectors they are:

- Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion
- Food security, nutrition and food aid
- Shelter, settlement and non-food items
- Health services

None of these areas were addressed by the projects in the evaluation with the exception of Kosovo that included vaccination, warm rooms (shelter) and winter clothing at an earlier stage of the programme and Uganda that distributed blankets and household utensils to formerly abducted children.

### 4.2.5    Policy Objective 4: The right to development in armed conflict and disaster

This includes:

- Access to education during conflict (addressed below), including non-formal education and vocational training
- Early childhood development
- Access to health services
- Access to adequate nutrition
- Being part of a family

The main focus of the CACD programme in terms of the right to development has been in advocacy for access to primary and non formal education and for reintegration of separated children into families. Health and nutrition have not been addressed by the programme (except for CEASOP learners). The issue here is whether children's comprehensive needs and rights are addressed (see 4.2.1.6).

### 4.2.6    Policy Objective 5: The right to participation in armed conflict and disaster

The programmes are making strides towards more effective participation while inevitably not all moving at the same pace. The Sri Lanka evaluation observed that there is a high level of child participation at all the major program stages. Children's clubs have been especially important in this process and have provided opportunities for children to share experiences and visit other parts of Sri Lanka, more or less affected by the armed conflict. In Sri Lanka children had been empowered 'to a degree rarely seen' by the experience of being members of clubs.

The evaluation of South East Europe also referred to the strength of youth centres in empowering children and youth. In South East Europe, children have participated in UNGASS preparations, a citizen campaign for elections and in capacity building in the management and promotion of inter-ethnic meetings. The evaluation also noted that the engagement of youth as board members of clubs is an example of genuine participation in decision-making. The work of The Initiative in Guatemala has provided opportunities for children to participate in regional forums including a campaign to follow up on the recommendations of the Truth Commission. The Guatemala programme is placing a very strong emphasis on participation and the majority of the budget is focused in this area.

Uganda and Angola were the two evaluations that most clearly felt much more work could be done in the area of participation. In Uganda the evaluator noted that although children had been part of a planning meeting, it appeared from their comments in the children's evaluation that they did not fully understand the purpose of the exercise. The children observed that they were keen to participate further in project design and planning. They were also keen to be aware of criteria used in the distribution of assistance. In Angola, participation was strongest again through children's clubs but the evaluation concluded that much more work is left to be done in this area.

The only example of children initiating their own activities was mentioned in the Kosovo evaluation that noted that Albanian youth had invited Serbian youth from the divided city of North Mitrovica to join them in a youth assembly.

The Oslo Programme Department Team observed that although child participation can be reinforced, it is evident that there has been considerable growth in participation in recent years.

#### 4.2.7   Policy Objective 6: Comprehensive perspective of children's needs, rights and resources

The issue of a <u>comprehensive</u> perspective of children's needs, rights and resources is fundamental to an effective response in armed conflict, displacement and disaster; in the absence of a broad analysis of the situation of children's needs and rights, there can be serious gaps in provision, or an inappropriate aspect can be emphasised. A stark example is that UNICEF's evaluation of their work after the Rwanda genocide found that the programme had focused on their core work of vaccination and had not registered the warning signs about the armed conflict. After the genocide, they discovered that the child victims had been massacred but were fully vaccinated.

To develop a comprehensive perspective requires regular, participatory (including children, partners and other stakeholders) situation analyses. Priorities can be identified through well managed stakeholder workshops (as happened in Angola and Uganda) but this needs to be augmented with a desk review of available research and administrative information.  A stakeholder workshop alone can be too limited in its perspective; the stakeholders are unlikely to have detailed information on which agency is engaged in which aspect of child rights work or statistical information on population distribution and other fundamental details. The information and analysis developed serves both programming and advocacy. It helps to identify whether programmes SCs and other agencies are meeting priority needs in a changing context and to identify the issues on which agencies should be advocating for change and with whom.

In general comprehensive assessments on children's needs, rights and resources in armed conflict were not a strength of the programme. However, there was one notable example of a major effort to disseminate children's voices on issues of armed conflict. In Sri Lanka a national child study by SCiSL in 2001 collected the opinions and experiences of some 11,000 children on the impact of armed conflict on children (distinct from the child study by SCN). It was used as part of the build-up to the Children's Parliament in the same year and the issues were presented to the Sri Lankan Government.

Another example of attempting to gather comprehensive information on children's rights over time is through the Division for the Rights of the Child (DRC) Ombudsman Institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The DRC is reviewing national legislation against the CRC and receives citizens seeking assistance in the protection of children's rights (112,000 contacts and over 19,000 open files in 2000).  The Division uses individual cases to analyse broader policy and legislative issues and amongst many other achievements, promoted the abolition of military education as an obligatory subject in secondary schools and negotiated agreement to withdraw separate curricula for Bosnian and Croat children in 1997.

The Norway evaluation also pointed out that there was no comprehensive assessment before the Domestic Programme launched its activities.

#### 4.2.8   Continuity and access to education

Continuity and access to education is a strength of SCN's programmes between CACD and Basic Education programmes and there have been significant concrete achievements that have made a real difference to children's lives as follows:

In Angola, through the construction of six classrooms and rehabilitation of a further two, 2,000 children accessed the initiation class who would otherwise have gone straight into the first class without the opportunity to practice learning in Portuguese (as opposed to their mother tongue). Around 7,800 primary level students received school course books (some 75-80% of children in two municipalities). This corresponds with an absolute priority for

children. Some 23,000 children received birth registration documents. Although this did not mean they were enrolled in school it dealt with the first barrier to school registration. This is a significant achievement in a country with a very low birth registration rate.

In Kosovo over 17,000 children returned to primary school in classes built or refurbished by SCN and in South East Europe children have had access to catch-up classes through the Basic Education Programme that has helped to redress learning lost during the armed conflict

In Uganda formerly abducted children were able to return to school with support from the project.

The area of education in emergencies is the focus of the Save the Children Alliance Global Challenge for the next five years and further progress should be made in the area of working towards the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies. It will be important that assessments in future take these standards into account and prepare analyses against the standards.

### 4.2.9   Community-based efforts to assist separated children

This refers to the extent to which country programmes are promoting care in the community as opposed to institutional care. All country evaluations showed a clear understanding of the policy and there have been considerable achievements in supporting children in the community, including the following:

- Opportunities for savings and credit have been provided to foster families in 43 villages in the north of Sri Lanka (to maintain separated and orphaned children in the community) as well as support to 203 children and 166 foster families in the East. These projects aim to counter-balance the growth of institutions which has reached a reported 600 children's centres in Sri Lanka.
- Over 230 children or young adults, survivors of the war in Guatemala, were registered as separated and 40 were reunited with families through the tracing programme implemented by an SCN partner
- Over 200 children were placed with adoptive families and 46 with foster families in Kosovo between 1999-2004 and SCN promoted a policy favouring community rather than institutional care of separated children.
- Support to 741 children in 536 foster families in Tuzla Bosnia and Herzegovina through services developed in cooperation between INGOs and government
- A small number of cases of children in Angola abused or abandoned because of accusations of witchcraft were supported in returning home rather than being placed in an institution
- In Norway, Save the Children is campaigning to shift perceptions and legal responsibility for refugee children (including separated children) from the immigration authorities to child welfare. For the present the proposal has been rejected but the Domestic Programme is continuing the campaign.

Importantly, SCN has worked to develop sustainable systems for foster care in Eastern Europe through government services. However, the evaluator's report points out that in the context of extreme poverty and poor public resources, the cantons will continue to need financial support.

### 4.2.10  Social integration of separated children

Social integration has proven a major issue for separated children but especially for those associated with armed groups/armed forces.  Save the Children has done a great deal in this

respect and given the importance of the issue it would be useful to document and consolidate those lessons.

### 4.2.11  Effectiveness of work around the project cycle

The evaluations found some difficulties with project design and monitoring but fewer problems with implementation.

In terms of *assessments*, section 3.2.1.6 discusses some difficulties encountered.

In general *objectives and indicator setting* was found to be weak and to need strengthening. Specific reference to this was found in Angola and Uganda; in particular to the problem of planning around concrete outputs while not also addressing *changes for children* (projects effects or outcomes). In the SEE evaluation reference was made to the need for training to keep staff and partners focused on the bigger picture, or programme goal level11.

However, SCN is fully aware of this issue and has already initiated capacity building in this area in some countries.
*Project monitoring and revision*
While the process of monitoring was not formalised in most cases, the evaluation found many examples of staff and partners to be constantly analysing the project and programme and making adaptations according to changed reality or changed outcomes over time. This demonstrates a firm commitment to the project and determination to make it as effective as possible.

*Participatory evaluation*
There was little familiarity with participatory evaluation of projects and programmes. To facilitate child participation in evaluations in the future it is important that they are fully engaged at earlier phases of the project cycle, including project monitoring against outputs and objectives.

### 4.2.12  Embedding of projects in a holistic, integrated programme

This question asks whether the group of projects under the CACD Thematic Area taken together by country have worked together in an integrated form in the spirit of the policy objectives. It also asks whether the group of projects have addressed all the major issues for children in the local context. Although very limited reference was made to this in the country evaluations, it would appear that more work could be done in this respect.

The Angola evaluation observed that although the projects were designed separately and to a large extent functioned separately, there was some integration. For example, the child protection committees use linkages with the police, health and education services to consider all aspects of the child's welfare and treat children accused of witchcraft in a holistic way. However, it also noted that there are many opportunities to enhance integration between projects (for example, by members of children's clubs participating in campaigns to help to identify children outside the school system or without birth registration documentation).

The South Eastern Europe evaluation noted that while there is a holistic approach to older children, the SCN programme does not consciously set out to cover all age groups.

In Guatemala concern was expressed in the evaluation about meeting the objectives of a project at the possible expense of the security of child participants. While parents welcomed the opportunity provided by The Initiative for children to participate in regional meetings

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[11] The staff team of the Regional Office were not necessarily in agreement with this conclusion.

that help to build skills and develop leadership, they complained that children had to walk long distances on isolated rural roads to reach the meetings.

### 4.2.13 Main challenges and obstructions to achieve programme objectives

The main challenges identified through the reports are:
- Poor motivation of volunteers
- Working through government that can be slow in implementation although it is extremely important in setting policy guidelines
- Sustainability, especially of pre schools
- Scaling up

Each of these issues is discussed in other sections of the report.

### 4.2.14 Achievements of the programme in building partner capacity

SCN has made considerable investments in developing the capacity of local partners with the ultimate aim of providing improved services to children in the long term. All of the countries in the evaluation were able to record achievements in this regard although inevitably some approaches were more successful than others.

Sri Lanka has invested a great deal in an innovative medium term programme of capacity building for psychosocial professionals, teachers and NGOs in the north and east, drawing on experience learned through programmes in the east and the Child Study in 2000. The training courses operated at three different levels: training of sensitizers who subsequently held shorter training workshops and a more intensive training for children's counsellors for five a month over a period of one year. For those trained over a longer period, NGOs could design small projects financed by SCN to implement the training. The evaluator considered the training programme a useful model that could be replicated although it requires more intensive follow up but expressed concern that a number of graduate trainees were forming a type of consulting group that could take the skills beyond the reach of the organisations that originally participated.

SCN Angola provided a great deal of training/learning support to the Provincial Government to develop the system of child protection committees and materials now used by local trainers. This project has been successful exactly because of the extent of SCNA's technical support bought-in through international NGOs already in country. In this case, SCNA was not satisfied with the approach of the first trainers and continued to experiment with another until a satisfactory model was achieved. This is in contrast to projects within the Ministry of Education where the results of technical support have been disappointing from the point of view of both partners. Part of the reason appears to depend on whether SCN's objectives coincide very closely with the partner's immediate priorities. In the case of education, the partner had prioritised the rapid expansion of school access and introduction of a new 6 class curriculum into primary education rather than the quality of education, as SCNA was promoting.

In Kosovo, training and technical support provided to government personnel in foster care, adoption, family law and guidelines for the Centres for Social Work and adoption have been crucial in developing these services. This has contributed to establishing long term systems and policies for fostering and adoption.

Training provided by mobile assessment teams in Uganda was felt to be valuable but, according to the evaluator was not sufficient. Children also confirmed that while the counselling was extremely valuable and some had very positive experiences, others felt that counsellors were not sufficiently well trained and were not always reliable. Clearly training

needs to be combined with a broader approach to service delivery or some of the investment can be lost.

The experience in Guatemala was different. The two main partners engaged in psychosocial interventions had not had training in their area through SCN and had largely developed their own psychosocial materials by trial and error. It is quite possible that their learning curve could have been reduced if SCNG had accessed and shared materials developed in this area by SCN in other countries, as well as through the SC Alliance and other organisations doing similar work, e.g. Christian Children's Fund, IRC, UNICEF.

### 4.2.15 Gaps in learning through projects and programmes

Three principal areas have been identified that could be reinforced through learning and training, depending on the direction of the programme in the future:

i) The framework and methodologies for peace-building, including how to monitor change
ii) Preparing children to cope with disasters and perhaps child and adolescent participation in risk reduction
iii) Enhancing child participation in protection issues.
iv) Setting clear objectives and indicators and project monitoring.

### 4.2.16 Innovative approaches and good practice models

Various innovative approaches and good practice models have been identified:

i) The children's clubs themselves as an approach to child participation in a multitude of issues and non formal education. They represent a unique opportunity in children's organisation for peace-building and inter-ethnic work. They are in an excellent position to heed the warning of children in this evaluation that peace-building should be focused around the simple sharing of joint activities of mutual interest.
ii) Child participation in children's parliaments and local development planning through which children's concerns about armed conflict can be transmitted as well as ensuring that reconstruction/reintegration takes child and adolescent interests into account.
iii) Child Protection Committees in Angola, linking the local administration to the community and providing a community alert system.
iv) Community based healing drawing on local culture and traditions. This was observed in Guatemala, Angola and Uganda.
v) Vocational training in Uganda focused around local skills gaps to provide adolescents and youth with valued skills and increase acceptance.
vi) The Child Rights Division of the Ombudsman Institution in South East Europe using many case examples to drive forward change in policy and legislation.

### 4.2.17 Where are programmes weakest?

The most frequently mentioned aspects to improve were as follows:

- Integration between projects
- HIV/AIDS
- Gender analysis
- Project and programme level monitoring (linked to the need to set clearer and more measurable objectives).
- Reconciliation has not always been addressed systematically and approaches/ methodologies require more work.
- Terminology also needs to be considered but always in the local context.

These points are discussed elsewhere in the report.

### 4.2.18 How effective was project documentation?

In general it was felt that more work could be done in documenting project development, good practice and lessons learned. Although there are some good training materials produced through the programme (e.g. in Guatemala through the community based psychosocial work) other training programmes are more informal and have no written materials (Angola). The Initiative in Guatemala has produced high quality material on peace-building and the post-conflict environment, but they are more oriented towards adult use than for children, although The Initiative is described as the initiative of children and youth.

The Uganda evaluator considered that the training materials for counsellors should be written and improved and were not adequate for the task. In Kosovo, SC and partners produced a foster care training manual and documented procedures that was subject to an external review for quality control.

More could be done in documenting lessons learned from projects and programmes, especially over a period of time. For example South East Europe pointed out that a lot of lessons had been learned on how to develop a foster care programme, support foster parents and how to promote child participation in planning and managing fostering but that these have yet to be documented.

## 4.3. Impact

### 4.3.1 The extent and impact of advocacy work

Advocacy work was most highly developed in the Norway Domestic Programme and through continuous advocacy efforts on Uganda and Sri Lanka through the Norwegian Government, the EU and the Special Representative for Armed Conflict. There has been less high-level advocacy work undertaken regarding issues in Eastern Europe, Angola and Guatemala.

Three international conferences have been organised in Norway following the Machel Study concerning all children affected by armed conflict, including one in 2003 in Oslo on Peace and Security for Children attended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Special Representative for Children Affected by Armed Conflict. The latter argued for children's participation in peace processes. The Great Lakes conference in 2000 was also attended by Graca Machel and government representatives from those countries and 'Bringing Children Back Home' in 2002 to launch an appeal for a comprehensive action plan (which UNICEF subsequently took over). International lobbying work has also taken place through membership of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

Although there has been significant high-level advocacy work, none of the country evaluations referred to a written advocacy strategy, so it was difficult to assess advocacy targets and methodologies. This is an area in which country programmes could share and learn together with the Domestic Programme and the DP could feed into debates on approaches to advocacy including identifying targets, tactics and approaches to lobbying.

The impact of advocacy is inevitably hard to measure given that by definition it is undertaken together with partners and coalitions, is extremely long-term and may be iterative (i.e. have a positive effect for a period but then slip backwards due to political changes). It would be helpful for SCN to clarify *how* advocacy will be measured in the future. Given that this is a very difficult area for all NGOs and is increasingly the focus of international NGO work, the literature on this area is growing and it may be helpful for key personnel to review

paper such as Action Aid's work on monitoring and evaluation advocacy (Chapman et al 2001).

### 4.3.2    Influence of the programme on policies and practice

There have been significant efforts at feeding into raising awareness on children's rights in all countries in the evaluation. Importantly, SCN has a place at the table to debate children's issues in all the countries included in the evaluation although successes in policy development have inevitably varied and policy objectives are not always well defined. In all countries, SCN participates in child rights networks and coalitions.

Some achievements and examples of work in policy and practice at local and national levels are as follows:

i) SC in Kosovo is participating in the campaign to set a national Agenda for Children's Rights at this formative time in the Kosovo's history. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the work of the Division of the Rights of the Child is influencing national policy and legislation on many different fronts but the evaluator pointed out that more could be achieved by reinforcing the nexus between the policymakers and practitioners within the programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, children in centres helped to identify children without identity documents and through the Division for the Rights of the Child, those children were registered. Similar work could take place by bringing policy and practice in the areas of inter-ethnic education and others.

ii) While SCN in Angola appears to have been fairly clear about policy objectives in relation to basic education for children affected by armed conflict, it has been difficult to bring about change as priorities have not always coincided with those of the Angolan Ministry of Education. On the other hand, SCN has worked successfully with Provincial Government to raise issues of child rights and the fact that the Institute of Child, a government agency, has taken on issues of the abuse of children is testament to their achievement in this area.

iii) The programme in Sri Lanka has established a children's parliament in 2002 with representation from various districts culminating in a national conference through which children of different ethnic groups presented their concerns to the national government. The national child study fed into this process. The process was effective in raising awareness although it is not clear whether it had any specific policy targets or contributed to policy change. The Sri Lanka programme has also been working closely with the National Child Protection Authority regarding institutionalisation of children and the reintegration of children with the LTTE.

iv) SC in Uganda has a long history of collaboration with the Government of Uganda on policy formulation for children including supporting changes in national legislation for children in the 1990s. At the present time, SCiU has a place on District Committees responsible for local planning in Lira that provides an opportunity to ensure that the realisation of children's rights remains firmly on the agenda. There have also been some successes in monitoring child recruitment, training the Armed Forces in child rights and protection and bringing about the demobilisation of some groups of children. SCN also participates in two important networks, one to lobby for peace in Northern Uganda and another to develop standards for psychosocial work with formerly abducted children.

## 4.4. Connectedness

### 4.4.1 Relevance of policy and strategy from Head Office

A number of themes were common across the programmes in CACD suggesting a strong influence of the Head Office policy. Analysing projects against the framework of policy objectives, all are consistent with policy objectives.

It was notable that in some countries, SCN staff were very familiar with the policies, especially the most important threads such as the indivisibility of child rights and child development.

### 4.4.2 Relevance and quality of the Programme Department's support

The Programme Department's support, particularly through the CACD Adviser has been extremely important in setting the parameters of programmes in countries visited on a regular basis. Staff teams described the importance of support in Uganda, Sri Lanka and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular, and internal evaluations were used to adjust project objectives (for example, in the Youth Centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro that made a shift from a psychosocial approach to a broader rights-based framework).

However, support to country programmes was not even, perhaps due to language barriers, and although it is impossible to guess what could have happened had there been more technical support at an earlier stage, it is possible that the Guatemala team would have recognised the need for tracing and reunification programmes much earlier than 1992, many years after the most intense period of the war in the mid 1980s. It is also notable in Guatemala that the Liga de Higiene Mental developed their own tracing methodologies by trial and error in spite of the fact that the SC Alliance has a wealth of knowledge and written material on this area that could have been used to short-cut time invested in developing methodologies.  In addition, the Utz K'Aslemal project is quite isolated from other psychosocial interventions.

Angola also had to cope with a lack of technical support in education, child participation and HIV/AIDS and viewed this as a barrier to the development of the programme.

However, it should be noted that the CACD Adviser responds to requests for technical support and if those requests are not forthcoming, the Adviser is not able to visit independently and provide advice. In the case of Angola, requests were made for advice but not until 2003 and not in the area of CACD.

Ongoing technical support from the Programme Department is extremely important with emphasis on the following objectives:

i)  Sharing experiences from other country programmes to short cut the learning curve and enrich programme approaches
ii) Ensuring that CACD programme strategy anticipates international trends and developments in this field eg. the increasing importance of peace-building and the growth in natural disasters
iii) Ensuring a level of consistency in programmes across the world and avoiding gaps in interventions
iv) Facilitating child participatory situation analyses in CACD
v) Introducing new programming areas such as disaster preparedness
vi) Linking country programmes to the work of the Alliance thematic groups, CACD, HIV/AIDS, Advocacy, Sexual Abuse and Violence and Education.

### 4.4.3   Working in the Alliance

Uganda, Kosovo and Sri Lanka are all countries with a unified SC presence under the Alliance. Most of the countries selected for consolidation in the first phase were countries in armed conflict. It is not clear whether this was deliberate or a result of having a number of international Save the Childrens working in the same country. Angola, although not previously a unified presence, is currently in the process of integrating programmes amongst the Scandinavian Save the Childrens (Norway, Denmark and Sweden).

Questions of the value and effects of working in the Alliance were most closely addressed in the Kosovo evaluation and there had previously been an evaluation assessing the effects of Alliance work in what was the first joint operational response in armed conflict and humanitarian response (Betley, 2002). In summary, staff considered that the Alliance offered enhanced opportunities for learning through a wider pool of technical skills and felt that the obligation to seek compromise positions was a learning experience in itself. However, there were issues about the slower speed of response in working through different agencies and problems in communication and trust.   In that sense, the picture is mixed about the advantages and disadvantages of working in a unified Alliance presence but it is important to note that the earlier Kosovo evaluation (Betley 2002) observed that consolidation had enhanced the profile of the child rights agenda as well as prompting a greater emphasis on partnership and capacity building with partners. These aspects appear to have been maintained in the programme to date.

### 4.4.4   Scope for cooperation between the Stand-by Team and CACD

There is enormous scope for further cooperation with the StandBy Team but the ideal model would require further refinement. At the present time, the difficulties with the StandBy Team that have been outlined in a separate evaluation are as follows:

i) Team members are Europeans with a great deal of experience of child protection and social work in their own countries but do not necessarily have many years of experience of working with children in armed conflict zones. They are drafted into a conflict or disaster to work alongside national staff who are often more experienced in armed conflict zones, speak the language and understand the culture. Although team members technical contributions are valuable, they may be outweighed by the time it takes to integrate team members, especially as they are on short term contracts.

ii) StandBy Team members have sometimes been shown to be most effective at the beginning of a disaster or early in an armed conflict, often with population displacement. Those with solid experience can be crucial in setting the parameters of a programme approach in the early stages of a response. For example, UNHCR reported in 1995 that a single member of the StandBy team was responsible for the more effective approach to separated and vulnerable children in one of the camps in Tanzania following the Rwanda genocide than in a neighbouring camp that had no such support in the early days of the response[12].

iii) The world of humanitarian workers has changed. Large responses, such as that in Darfur, Sudan have growing numbers of regional specialists, for example experienced staff from neighbouring Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia etc. Large responses are also increasingly recognising the importance of expertise in the rights of children to protection from recruitment, sexual and gender based violence and other risks. Given that there is a shortage of specialists in this area, the SCN StandBy could play an essential role in the specific area of child protection providing technical support not just to SCN or UNHCR but to whole operations, perhaps in conjunction with other Alliance members.

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[12] From interviews the author conducted on separated children for SCUK in 1995.

To be most effective in the future, SCN could consider the following model for the StandBy Team.

- Develop a small team of some 3-4 child protection specialists based in different regions of the world that are prone to armed conflict and disaster. They would preferably be nationals of a country in the region and could be existing SC staff working in the field with such issues already. They would be called upon to give acute programme support in times of emergencies.
- The team would require considerable investment in training and visiting projects in different parts of the world. Team members could meet for training at least twice a year and the remainder of the time would be a 'virtual' team meeting through email/phone.
- During 'down time' the team members could provide onward training to SCN programmes
- In the early stages of a armed conflict in their region, the team member could be called in to establish the programme approach from the start but aim to hand over to staff and partners at the earliest opportunity.

## 4.5. Efficiency

### 4.5.1 Are programmes efficient in the way they use funds?

The evaluation found SCN to be extremely careful in the way that funds are disbursed and generally project and administration costs are kept down as far as possible.

However, the evaluation also found considerable differences in costs for similar projects. For example the evaluation found a range of costs per capita between $88 (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and $250 (Angola) for children's clubs. Equally there was a vast difference in costs for the construction of schools between US$5,400 in Angola per classroom and US$24,600 in Kosovo[13].

This is a dilemma for programme managers as there is little doubt that expectations are higher in Eastern Europe than in African and most South Asian countries, however, it remains a question of whether a difference of almost five times greater for classroom construction is acceptable. The question of equity between regions was also raised in Graça Machel's study[14] on children affected by armed conflict and is regularly raised by ALNAP[15] through meta evaluations of humanitarian assistance.

It may be helpful for SCN to establish a cost range for similar project types eg. children's clubs per capita, preschools, classrooms etc. for SCN teams and partners to use as a guideline to acceptable costs.

*Administration to programme costs*
The costs of administration to programme costs have been difficult to measure as there is no single agreed format. However, at first glance and based on annual reports they appear to vary widely. There are also considerable differences between acute periods of armed conflict or disaster when organisations may disburse large quantities of relief items (indirect costs to project costs lower) and more stable periods (indirect to direct higher). Another factor that complicates this calculation is exchange rate variations. However, again it would be helpful to establish ranges of acceptable variations of direct to indirect costs. With the present evaluation, there were ranges of approximately 100% indirect to direct costs (Angola

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[13] However pre school classrooms were constructed at a cost of just over $3,000 in Kosovo.
[14] Graça Machel's study found that aid was provided at $0.59 per person per day in Kosovo and in African states at only $0.13 per person per day.
[15] Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance, London.

– partly due to major difficulties of access to the project area) and 37% (Kosovo), 40% (Sri Lanka).

## 4.6. Sustainability

### 4.6.1    How far are projects and programmes sustainable?

Sustainability is a difficult concept as it can mean different things to different people. The term can encompass:

- A social model of creating alliances and learning around an issue that will continue to drive the question even if SCN withdraws, especially through local NGOs
- Policy and strategy change (or support for existing positive models) within government agencies such that the state will drive the issue and provide services in that area
- A child development model
- An economic model of cost-recovery

In the first model, the *creation of alliances*, the question is about the sustainability of a particular advocacy message or programme approach rather than the sustainability of specific projects. This is particularly suited to the promotion of broad messages such as rights, peace-building, democracy, tolerance and prevention of recruitment/ abduction. This model of sustainability can allow specific projects to enter or leave without necessarily influencing the long-term sustainability of the programme goal. It can also bring different project types together (e.g. the Division for the Rights of the Child with Children's Clubs) so long as the programme/advocacy goal is in harmony. Finally, it can allow for diversification of project funding and not total dependence on SCN.

This model has been used by The Initiative in Guatemala and alliances of NGOs in Sri Lanka and could be analysed in relation to other country contexts. To ensure that alliances do not become talking-shops with no clear objectives, specific programme or advocacy objectives are essential and should engage children and youth in working towards those goals. It is also essential to monitor progress towards the goals established. Finally, to support partners in helping to sustain their own work, SCN could usefully provide training and guidance in fundraising and diversifying funding sources.

*Policy and strategy change* within government can be successful in shifting the government position but does not necessarily mean that the government will be in a position to provide funding for recurrent costs. The programmes in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina to shift government policies towards foster care and adoption of children rather than institutionalisation have been successful in policy shifts but recurrent costs are a problem. In Kosovo, Centres for Social Work have managed to support payments to foster carers but in Bosnia and Herzegovina it appears that cantons will struggle to sustain the programme when SC phases out (contributions have been decreased over recent years) and SCUK has started support to cantonal fundraising efforts.

Building on existing municipal kindergartens to enhance capacity to sustain preschools was successful in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24 municipal kindergartens were handed over to local authorities and all were sustained. This model was distinguished from that of SCUS of rapidly replicable McDonalds-like kindergartens that quickly reached 21,500 children in the immediate post-war phase and provided an important service at that point but once financial and managerial support was withdrawn, rapidly stopped working. This highlights the importance of a long-term approach

in disaster and armed conflict, unless there is a stated objective of a short term project that is expected to come to an end, such as child-friendly spaces.

Working with Government in Uganda in the MAT teams has also been successful in policy terms but less so in terms of revenue costs. SCN has been supporting the programme for some years and it would be extremely difficult for the Government of Uganda to fund the programme. However, this model like many others relies on partner contributions for revenue costs of the project not of salaries. In this case the assumption is that skills built by government staff working within SCN supported projects are sustainable within the government system, even if revenue costs for the specific project are not sustainable.

Supporting the Government to achieve its own aim in widening access to the initiation class in Angola was successful as SCN input training and classrooms while the Government supported the teachers and the classes have been sustained.

A *child development model* implies considering sustainability from the point of the view of the investment in the child rather than in the *project*. The focus is on children's development and rights as bearers of continuing benefits from the programme and could imply long-term external funding being acceptable if sufficient child-development gains could be demonstrated and if alternative sources of revenue funding were not available. The MAT project does not have sustainable revenue costs but is a child-development model as the investment in the child participants should provide a new possibility for children to find positive life pathways in the long term.

This model is likely to be effective for a relatively small and discrete number of children in a particular situation such as former abductees but if the target group was broadened it may not be possible for SCN to provide this kind of service.

In terms of the *economic model of cost-recovery*, the two principal examples found in the evaluation were through micro finance projects in Sri Lanka and in children's clubs in Angola, where children were contributing to costs. While the evaluator in Sri Lanka considered that poverty reduction through micro finance projects is extremely important, it was felt that the partner agencies did not have sufficient training or experience in managing complex micro finance project to ensure sustainability. The recommendation was for SCN to provide training in this area.

In terms of cost-recovery to promote the sustainability of children's clubs (or other long term projects such as pre-schools), it is essential that this should not prejudice the poorest and lead to exclusion. For that reason, careful analysis should be made of alternative contributions such as time rather than money. Even with a small amount of self-funding, there is likely to be an issue of long term funding for such projects. The evaluation in Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that the clubs are unlikely to be sustainable if SCN withdraws in view of the broader economic situation and urged SCN to continue support in the medium term especially as clubs are addressing issues of the displaced that other donors are not touching.

For projects like the clubs to be sustainable into the medium term, SCN should perhaps consider two aspects:
i) Throughput of club members. The evaluation in Sri Lanka pointed out that where projects do not have clear criteria for throughput, members join and remain there that can block entrance for new child members. To be sustainable in terms of objectives, the clubs should define how and when children enter and leave the project.
ii) Diversification of fundraising by local partners managing the projects. While SCN could (and should) guarantee project funding into the medium term so that partners can plan, it

should also expect partners to seek additional and alternative sources of funding simultaneously. This can include opportunities for internal contributions, local funding campaigns, international foundations, other donors etc. Training in fundraising and diversifying funding sources may be helpful in many country programmes.

There are no magic bullets with regard to sustainability, however it does appear that agencies are beginning to address questions of long-term transfers that were considered to be heresy in child rights agencies some years ago. This is partly due to the long-term effects of HIV/AIDS and poverty on children and the fact that whole generations will require support, at least part of which much come from outside the country. SCN could usefully debate these various models in relation to children's futures and to projects and further develop models to help country programmes to make these complex decisions.

## 4.7. Coverage

### 4.7.1 How many children have been reached? Is scaling up feasible?

One of the major challenges for SCN's work in CACD is how to scale up the effects of projects and not limit interventions to a small number of children. This requires a strategic approach in each country programme, looking a variety of opportunities in the local context.

For example, the children's clubs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro are playing a very important role in bringing children of different ethnic groups together for activities but are currently reaching only some 1,900 children between all clubs/centres. The same situation is true of most projects included in the evaluation.

The challenge of scaling up is to avoid losing the elements of the projects that may depend exactly on its small size while still reaching larger numbers of participants.

Some of the ways documented within the evaluation are as follows:

i) Engagement of children in the media, especially in radio programmes. This allows the groups of children to remain small and limited but to spread the message more widely (Angola, Uganda, Sri Lanka).
ii) Publication of the projects and/or training materials to encourage other organisations to replicate the methodology (South East Europe). Publications can be shared with donors as well as implementers.
iii) Training and learning opportunities for key structures whose policies and approach has a direct impact on children, such as peacekeepers or armed groups/armed forces. SCN has engaged in this work in Uganda, Sri Lanka.
iv) Training for NGO and Government partners that share similar goals such as the cascade system of training used in Sri Lanka.
v) Promotion of alliances and networks as described above to engage other organisations in the same issues and spreading replicable methodologies (Guatemala, Sri Lanka). This can be regionally, such as has been recommended in the Eastern Europe evaluation where the issues are similar across the region.
vi) Link projects to provincial or national government with a view to replication (South East Europe, Uganda, Angola).

Additional alternatives are
vii) Engagement in international research projects on peace-building or other themes. For example, Project Ploughshares sponsors research into what is effective in peace-building and publishes the work amongst agencies interested in this area.

While all of the methodologies above were identified, none of the evaluations was able to give an indication of how effective these various methodologies have been. This may be another area of further analysis for the future.

# 5. Conclusions and Recommendations To SCN

**Strategic Recommendations**

## 5.1. Children's role in peace-building and reconciliation

The number of armed conflicts is falling but many post conflict states are left in a position of fragile peace and no effective closure or reconciliation. Around half of post conflict states return to war within ten years.

The role of children and youth is fundamental in building long term peace. The energy and enthusiasm of children and youth can be channelled into positive processes to promote healing and possibly in truth telling, restorative justice and in demands for social justice. Children's clubs and youth centres are ideal venues for this to take place but in the case of ethnic conflict, they should be carefully positioned in mixed ethnic areas or bring children of different clubs together for joint activities. Where open discussion of concepts of reconciliation is difficult, the simple act of joint recreational or sporting activities can be extremely positive. Developing associations of clubs and use of the media can increase coverage and reinforce children's voices.

<u>Recommendation</u>
Build on existing work of children's clubs and youth centres in engaging children and youth in peace-building. Further develop a conceptual model for peace-building within SCN to provide greater clarity and direction to the work, including developing indicators to monitor effect and impact.

## 5.2. Advocacy with Non State Entities

It has been more difficult for all international children's rights agencies to influence non state entities. The greatest offenders in terms of child recruitment and the use of landmines are non state entities. Advocacy with non state entities is usually difficult, painstaking behind-the-scenes work that requires a high level of political understanding.

<u>Recommendation</u>
Support, encourage and provide training for country programme teams to undertake persistent quiet advocacy with non state entities on children's rights. Wherever possible this should include training on children's rights. Ensure that government partners understand *why* this is important for SCN and for children. However, before launching advocacy work with NSEs, undertaken an internal risk analysis to identify possible impacts on children, staff and programmes.

## 5.3. Maintaining a strategic overview of armed conflict and disaster

To ensure that SCN's programme and advocacy interventions are on track, scanning the external environment and maintaining an overview of trends in armed conflict and disasters is extremely important. Early warning systems through the UN as well as strategic analysis through peace-building institutes are growing in number and effectiveness and SCN could draw on these mechanisms.

<u>Recommendation</u>
Broaden the analysis in the status report on CACD to provide a strategic overview of trends in armed conflict and disaster to facilitate programme decision-making.

## 5.4. Advocacy for donor/international support in the medium term

There is a tendency for donors and international agencies to withdraw too quickly following peace agreements or ceasefires. Knowing that peace agreements are often extremely fragile, a medium term – 10 years or so – commitment is essential.

**Recommendation**
SCN should encourage donors and international agencies to remain in fragile states for the medium term. This should be done by evidence-based advocacy and research demonstrating the risks to long term peace. Alliances with the Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Development as well as the Human Security Group that share this goal are also extremely important.

## 5.5. Monitor Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

Both armed conflict and disaster are associated with poverty. PRSPs are an important instrument in reducing poverty and almost all countries in armed conflict or post-conflict have a formalised PRSP.

**Recommendation**
Develop child-friendly versions of the PRSP to analyse with children and youth and help them to think about they can engage in the process of monitoring the child specific aspects of the PRSP. Given Save the Children Sweden's work in this regard, SCN could analyse how joint work could be developed.

## 5.6. The role of children and disaster preparedness/disaster risk reduction

The number and scale of disasters is increasing and disasters happen in poor countries with a high percentage of children in the population. The impact of disasters on children can be similar to that of armed conflict: separation from families, emotional pain and increased family-level poverty. Effective child-friendly preparedness is thought to help although much more research is needed in this area. Good quality child-friendly preparedness/training materials have already been developed by the Red Cross and SC Alliance.

Disaster risk reduction measures include projects aimed at improving the environment that could be attractive to children and youth and can be low-cost.

**Recommendations**
i) Introduce child-friendly disaster preparedness training into children's clubs and work in schools, drawing on existing materials.
ii) Share the goals of the International Strategy for Risk Reduction with children and analyse how they can participate in small scale low-cost environmental projects.
iii) Conduct research on the effect of disasters on children, perhaps following the tsunami in South Asia.

### Programme Recommendations

## 5.7. Humanitarian assistance in the life-saving sectors

Children suffer from hunger, lack of clean water, no health care etc. in conflict and disaster. While SCN's long-term perspective is extremely important, humanitarian assistance is fundamental in the first stages of disaster and in armed conflict. The Uganda report pointed out that despite many years of armed conflict displaced camps remain well below Sphere standards.

**Recommendation**

SCN should ensure that effective ongoing humanitarian assessments inclusive of issues concerning children are undertaken with populations subject to armed conflict, displacement and disaster. The SC Alliance should take responsibility for some service provision alongside other humanitarian agencies if certain needs of particular relevance to children are not being addressed. Engaging at this level can reinforce moral authority for advocacy for children's rights.

## 5.8. Micro finance projects to reduce household level poverty

The evaluation only referred to micro finance projects through partners in Sri Lanka but they are an important measure in poverty reduction and poverty is clearly a major issue for children. However, micro finance has distinct methodologies and should not be mixed with other project objectives. Partners implementing this type of project should have adequate training to ensure that it produces quality results.

**Recommendation**

SCN should *encourage* micro finance interventions in view of the importance of poverty reduction but it is essential that this work is implemented by partners with specialist training and that it has distinct objectives. SCN could develop strategic alliances with organizations specializing in microfinance internationally in order to set parameters for the work at country level.

## 5.9. HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma reduction

HIV/AIDS is a cross cutting issue for SCN but there was relatively limited evidence of prevention work in this area.

**Recommendation**

Enhance preventative work on HIV/AIDS with children and youth drawing on many existing child-friendly materials.

## 5.10. Education in Armed Conflict

Continued access to education in armed conflict, including access to secondary level education, was a very high priority for children, following survival and a number of key points on education were raised through this evaluation: poverty and school drop out, catch-up classes and how they function, accessing education in inaccessible areas during armed conflict, focusing psychosocial support in schools, the importance of school construction.

In addition, schools can be a base for increased peace-building and reconciliation, disaster preparedness and reduction work and for enhancing child protection.

**Recommendation**

Together with staff of the thematic area of basic education, discuss the issues raised in the evaluation and consider the opportunities for enhancing school-based peace-building and disaster preparedness/reduction work. Feed conclusions into the plans for the Global Challenge on Emergency Education to be implemented through the SC Alliance.

## 5.11. The rights of children to protection from risks in armed conflict

Children face multiple risks in armed conflict, some of which are not immediately obvious to adults and could be mitigated by measures taken by children themselves with adult support.

**<u>Recommendation</u>**
Help children to identify the risks they face and how they could be reduced. This can be done by working through a structured set of questions that identify the risks, what they can do to protect themselves and how adults/agencies can support them.

## 5.12. Gender issues in armed conflict and disaster

Many gender issues emerged in the evaluation but most had not been fully explored by SCN country programmes. Some vulnerable groups of girls, especially domestic servants, remain large invisible.

**<u>Recommendation</u>**
Provide training to programme staff and partners on how to identify, analyse and reach programme conclusions on gender issues.

## 5.13. Terminology

Key terms such as psychosocial, child protection, separated children, child-rights programming, reconciliation are often used but staff and partners do not always share the same understanding of the concepts.

**<u>Recommendation</u>**
From SCN in Oslo share definitions with country programmes to be debated and analysed in the local context with partners.

## 5.14. Volunteers

The contribution of volunteers is extremely important in the provision of sustainable services where budgets are limited. However, they should be motivated and SCN and partners should seek every form of motivation possible including training, follow up, ensuring volunteers are part of a wider system (e.g. local administration, churches) providing recognition for quality service etc.

**<u>Recommendation</u>**
Where volunteers are engaged in projects, debate ways of recognising their service and motivating them to continue.

## 5.15. Working with governments

Governments are extremely important in establishing long-term policies towards children and their rights and SCN has done some excellent work in this regard but some evaluations questioned the capacity, speed and motivation of governments to provide some services. Governments can often be motivated by having to respond to user-groups.

**<u>Recommendation</u>**
Wherever possible, support children and youth in articulating their own demands and requirements (including counselling in northern Uganda, for example) and facilitate meetings with service-providers. This approach increases checks and balances and may help to motivate service providers.

## 5.16. Project monitoring

Participatory work with children and youth in CACD is innovative and provides many new lessons. To capture those lessons it is essential projects are well monitored and documented. This is currently not a strength of most programmes and could be made more interesting by engaging children and youth in more clearly defining objectives and how to measure them.

**Recommendation**
Engage children and youth in more clearly defining project objectives and simple ways of measuring whether they have been achieved.

## 5.17. Advocacy

While there are some excellent examples of high-level advocacy and of day to day behind the scenes work in encouraging change, more could be achieved by a strategic approach. Further training on advocacy could reinforce the capacity of country programmes to set out advocacy strategies.

**Recommendation**
Through regional training workshops, develop advocacy strategies with inputs and guidance from the three alliance focal points at the UN, Geneva and Brussels as well as members of the advocacy group and child rights experts. The Domestic Programme could engage in one or more of these workshops in view of their considerable experience and skills in advocacy.

## 5.18. StandBy Team

The StandBy Team is extremely important especially in setting the parameters for children's rights to protection from recruitment, sexual and gender based violence and other risks in armed conflict and disaster but further work could be done in bringing the StandBy Team into CACD.

**Recommendation**
Debate the ideas on the StandBy Team discussed in section 3.12.4 of this report.

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# Annexe 1: Methodology

### i)      Objectives of the evaluation

The primary objective of the evaluation was to advance programme development in terms of its quality, relevance and impact on children's lives. The evaluation aimed to document lessons learnt and good practices, as well as look for evidence of innovative approaches that have policy implications.

Specific objectives related to the implications for programming, policy, capacity building, cooperation and participation (annexe 2). Each of these objectives is addressed in the last section on conclusions and recommendations.

### ii)      Methodology

*Structure of the evaluation*

The structure of the evaluation was aimed at working through consultants at country level with a solid knowledge of the local context but independent of Save the Children Norway (Country Team Leader – CTL) while balancing the consultant with a staff member of SCN as a Country Representative (CR). The exception to this was in Uganda and Sri Lanka which conducted the evaluation as a peer review in which a senior Programme Manager from Uganda evaluated the CACD programme in Sri Lanka and vice versa.

An overall thematic evaluation coordinator (TEC) took responsibility for maintaining contact with Country Team Leaders aiming to ensure consistency across the evaluation. The TEC reported to the CACD Thematic Adviser at SCN Oslo. A diagram of the structure is below:
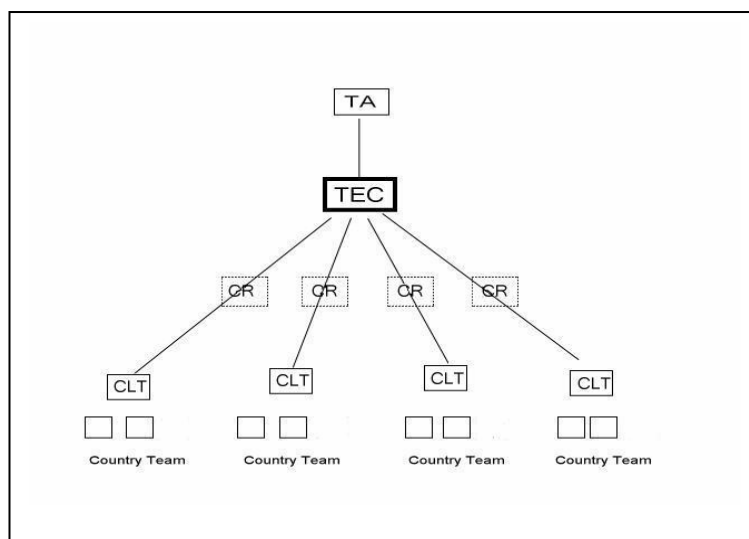


| | |
|---|---|
| TA | Thematic Adviser |
| TEC | Thematic Evaluation Coordinator |
| CR | Country Representative |
| CLT | Country Team Leader |

Due to illness, the postholder for the TEC in CACD was replaced shortly after the Madrid meeting by two persons as a job-share. One of the two person TEC team, Maggie Brown, also held the role of Country Team Leader for the evaluation in Angola, which was felt to be very useful in terms of a thorough understanding of the issues and process of the evaluation as well as the complexities of applying a single framework.

*Concurrent evaluations*
SCN conducted three thematic evaluations concurrently:
Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Disaster (CACD)
Children Affected by Violence and Sexual Abuse (CVSA)
The work of the StandBy Team (a mobile team based in Oslo providing child protection technical support in emergencies)

The three TECs were present in the Madrid coordination meeting (see 1.2.3) and the TECs of CACD and CVSA met a number of times in addition to the formal coordination meeting. The TEC for CACD also met the StandBy Team evaluator during a visit to Oslo.

*Coordination meetings*
The evaluation was launched through a large coordination meeting in Madrid in September 2003 led by the TEC and Thematic Advisers from SCN Oslo. Two evaluations were launched concurrently: CACD and Children Affected by Violence and Sexual Abuse (CVSA) and the two evaluations used a similar framework, differing only in the specific Key Quality Elements used to assess the quality of programmes.

In addition to the Madrid meeting, the TEC visited each country included in the CACD evaluation, prior to the start of the fieldwork (with the exception of Uganda in which the visit took place after the fieldwork and report had been written). The objective of the visits was for the TEC to better understand the context of the armed conflict and to share ideas from the global evaluation with the Country Team Leaders, team members and Country Representative.

*Child Participation*
Child participation was intended to be a major element of the evaluation. Children are the most important stakeholders in deciding about the effectiveness, relevance and impact of programmes. Methods of child participation were discussed in each of the country visits by the TEC but a number of barriers to effective participation emerged in practice. This element probably needs to be planned differently in the future.

In Uganda, 103 participated in the evaluation through focus group discussions and being involved as respondents. All were formerly abducted children and most were living as displaced persons at the time of the evaluation. Within this group, 28 children aged 10-18 years and with an almost equal number of girls as boys participated in a retreat weekend. The group included three child-mothers. In the retreat, children discussed their ideas on the programmes supported by SCN as well as their hopes and fears for the future. This was the most extensive participatory

work with children in the evaluation and their voices show through clearly in the report.

In Angola, two children, a girl aged 16 and a boy of 14 years, were integrated as assistants into the evaluation team as well as 37 children participating in focus groups as respondents. The Junior Assistants helped children to feel at ease as they participated in focus groups and guided their understanding of the questions under debate. Both spoke the local language as did the adult leading the groups. but had there been more time could have shared their knowledge

The team of Utz K'Aslemal, one of SCN's partners in Guatemala, organized a fairly extensive piece of work with children, including children as interviewers. The project has already trained child 'multipliers' of psychosocial training and these children were trained through three methodology workshops on the meaning of an evaluation and how to undertake the interviews of other children, teachers and parents. Over a period of three days and covering three communities in different municipalities, the children conducted interviews using a formula drawn up by adult staff members of the project.

The team in Kosovo consulted children in schools and foster homes by using games and exercises. Fifty children participated in an exercise entitled 'My Home, My School' which were drawings used to assess children's perception of safety in going to school: a major expressed concern of parents. Unfortunately an innovative photography exercise in which children were to have taken photos of aspects of their environment they felt were most important did not take place as the person nominated to lead the exercise was not available.

The South Eastern Europe evaluation team chose to work with a child reference group from the adolescents who participate in the Clubs. They were already sensitised to the issues and able to contribute ideas to how the evaluation should be conducted.

In Sri Lanka a large child study covering the lives of 100,000 children was made in 2000 and the evaluation draws on the report 'Our Dream of a Place Where Peace Prevails' as well as on focus group work with children during the present evaluation. In Norway teams held focus group discussions with children.

In all, the conclusion of the work to engage children in the evaluation is that there is most likely to be effective child participation when this is already a strength in all phases of the project cycle: planning, implementation/monitoring/analysis, reporting and evaluation.

*The framework*
The TECs of the evaluations on CACD and CVSA designed a framework that all Country Team Leaders followed with the aim of collecting comparable information and facilitating collation. The framework is attached in Annexe 2.

*Summary of methodologies used in the Global Evaluation*
The present report is based on the following:

- The country evaluation reports
- Discussions with Country Team Leaders and members during visits to each country/territory
- International literature on children affected by armed conflict
- Meetings with key staff at SCN Headquarters in Oslo in September 2004
- Discussions with a limited number of key professionals in the field of CAAC