

## Executive Summary

### Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation was carried in accordance with articles 7 and 8 of the EC Humanitarian Aid Regulation to assess the partnership between DG ECHO and SC-UK. It is focused principally on the inter-related capacity of the two partners to answer the needs of children, in the field of protection/rights and humanitarian assistance.

It looks at the coherence in the policies of the two partners, reciprocity in their methods of working, and the extent to which the partnership provides a basis for effective and efficient emergency response in line with funding decisions of the Commission and required standards of project management. As a measure of the partnership's success, the evaluation looks at the quality of emergency work carried out in three countries: Pakistan, Liberia and Sudan.

It considers how this work has been buttressed with funds from other donors, and how it has been sustained beyond the emergency into the phase of recovery. The evaluation has paid special attention to lessons learned from activities of the partnership. A number of recommendations are made as to how the partnership might be further strengthened and how the outcomes of its work can be yet more enhanced.

### Coherence between partner's policies

SC-UK's mission is to *fight for the rights of children and deliver immediate and lasting improvement in children's lives world wide*. It was founded in 1919 and has a long history in humanitarian aid. SC-UK's work is organized around four thematic areas of intervention: *livelihoods and nutrition, health, child protection and education*. Other themes are brought into its work as supporting strategies and provide foci for special attention. Examples are *HIV/AIDS* and problems of children affected by war.

Close correspondence between thematic issues of concern to SC-UK and some of DG ECHO's core sectors make for strong coherence between DG ECHO's and SC-UK's policies on emergency response. There is a high degree of similarity between the ways the two partners set priorities for intervention across the emergency cycle, and this facilitates rapid agreement on project objectives. In recent times, SC-UK has implemented projects in the sectors of health, nutrition, livelihoods, shelter, NFI, and child protection with DG ECHO funds. It is a partner with capacity for large scale response, and one of the few with special surge capacity provided from an emergency response team at headquarters. SC-UK also brings to the partnership with DG ECHO a commitment to post emergency work and a capacity for LRRD.

### Organization of SC-UK and relations with DG ECHO

Recently, SC-UK has undergone a restructuring that has devolved programme management to its country offices. Good modalities have been put in place to monitor the work done by country offices, to ensure sound programme planning, and to maintain standards of financial management. Further support is however needed to strengthen

country performance on project design and monitoring in order to ensure good accountability to donors such as DG ECHO. Some difficulties are also arising in meeting DG ECHO's administrative requirements. Here too there is need for more training, but there is also need for the partnership to look for solutions to special problems arising from tendering requirements when, for example, agricultural inputs are bought locally.

To improve coordination between DG ECHO and SC-UK, SC-UK should further clarify where responsibilities now lie within its organization for the signing of contracts, for reporting and for submission of proposals. It is important, too, that DG ECHO knows who the liaison persons are at SC –UK in the emergency response team.

### **DG ECHO's framework for funding, and the partnership in the field**

In Sudan, Pakistan and Liberia, SC-UK found the EU funding decisions appropriate to needs, and the length of project cycles well adjusted to the speed at which emergencies evolved. Work on child protection would be enhanced if DG ECHO could take a longer term perspective to allow for the time it takes to train communities and create protective structures. Such an investment is important as a measure for preventing countries like Liberia from plunging into a further cycle of violence. Further regional initiatives in child protection are also justified to track the risks of children moving across borders and to assist with cross border tracing and reintegration.

### **SC-UK's human resources and capacity for emergency response**

In Pakistan, Liberia and Sudan, SC-UK has technically qualified and experienced staff for all sectors. Most staff have some opportunity for in-service training, though there were some junior staff who had poorer supervision and needed better training. Project planning would benefit if staff had better access to SC-UK's pool of institutional knowledge, and SC-UK should strengthen systems to facilitate this.

It should also encourage lesson learning from the outcomes of projects and encourage a more analytical approach to project reporting and evaluation. The creation of SC-UK's emergency response team in London has greatly increased its capacity to backstop within-country responses. In both Pakistan and Liberia, SC-UK is putting emergency preparedness plans into place, but it has to find the right balance between reliance on local partners and maintaining surge capacity within its own organization.

### **Achievements of projects in Pakistan, Liberia and Sudan**

Emergency relief responses were found in general to be timely, and flexibility was shown in adjusting to changing needs across different phases of the emergency. Despite some difficulties in finding the initial surge capacity for the Pakistan earthquake, the development of forward bases proceeded quickly, and assistance was delivered in time to protect people from the worst of the winter.

In both Liberia and Sudan some difficulties were encountered in making the transition from an emergency to a non-emergency phase of work. In both countries plans of work

for the immediate post emergency phase were very ambitious in terms of geographical coverage, and did not take account of the concentration of trained personnel required on the ground to implement activities. Despite ready agreement between the partners on priorities for project activities, the start up of projects has sometimes been delayed. In some cases this is because of late signing of contracts, but in others because SC-UK did not have the modalities in place to begin the work on time. In all cases, delays have detracted from optimal use of resources.

- *Distribution of emergency aid* in all three countries was found to be relevant to need, and well targeted on the most vulnerable. Nevertheless, SC-UK felt that alternatives other than seeds would have been more appropriate for the agro-pastoralist population of South Sudan. Distributions were well planned, and organized with participation of beneficiaries. Seeds and other items were of good quality and considered appropriate by beneficiaries.
- *Support with the restoration of health care* in 11 clinics in areas of refugee and IDP return in Liberia was also relevant. Clinics have been well restored and equipped, and medicines have been provided as foreseen. Training and monitoring of Ministry of Health personnel was well organized, clinic records were well maintained, and a good balance had been struck between preventative and curative work. Attempts to establish systems for disease monitoring with County Health Teams had been less successful. The decisions to pay incentives to Ministry of Health staff may make an exit strategy difficult. At present there would appear to be no other LRRD funding from the Commission apart from that of DG ECHO to support work in the health sector.
- *Child protection activities* were well focused on need in all three countries. Activities in Liberia illustrate the importance of a balance between management of children at risk and the need for preventive measures. The focus on reintegration of separated children in Sudan seemed appropriate, as did the help provided for return to normality after the earthquake in Pakistan. There is a need for better methods of monitoring the effectiveness of interventions in child protection, and attention needs to be given to the issues of sustainability. Further funding will be required in both Sudan and Liberia for reintegration of children, and in the case of Liberia, to monitor the risks to children caused by instability in the sub-region.
- Through the creation of a *livelihoods assessment forum (LAF)*, a contribution has been made to building better systems for monitoring livelihoods in South Sudan, and to ensuring better focus of emergency/development within the sector. Good progress has been made with institutionalising LAF within government structures, but sustainability is uncertain. More training and greater involvement of local government staff would strengthen the capacity and increase the coverage of LAF. To achieve real impact on livelihoods in South Sudan it is important that bridges are built between LAF and the larger institutions such as FAO that has received funds from the Commission to lead work on rural livelihoods sector during the phase of LRRD.

- *Other institution and capacity building activities* funded by DG ECHO in South Sudan have been delayed because of the late signing of the funding agreement. Care needs to be taken by both partners to ensure that institution and capacity building projects are realizable within the funding cycle. Consideration also needs to be given to the time required to create the necessary conditions on the ground for such work. Through UNDP, SC-UK has already received some further funding from the Commission to continue institution and capacity building in the livelihood sector through the phase of LRRD.

### **The benefits for children of an integrated cross-sectoral approach**

The broad strategy of intervention adopted in the three countries illustrates the point that good coordination of work in different sectors can multiply the benefits for children in emergencies. In Sudan, addressing the needs of vulnerable children simultaneously through strengthening community care structures and through livelihood support helps to ensure more sustainable systems. In Liberia and Pakistan, the community mobilization achieved through livelihood support activities has helped to create conditions for developing child welfare committees, and these in their turn have helped with the identification of the vulnerable who have needed livelihood support. For out-of-school youth, other multiplier effects have been achieved by mobilizing funds for educational and training activities. Examples are accelerated learning programmes for those wishing to complete primary education, and skills training for those formerly associated with fighting forces.