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Study of the impact of the work of FORUT in Sri Lanka and Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia: Building Civil Society

Synthesis Report



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Synthesis Report

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Abbreviations

ABECS	Alternative Basic Education for Children out of School
ADIC	Alcohol and Drug Information Centre
AHRI	Armauer Hansen Research Institute
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSF	Community Services Forum
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DOLSA	Department of Labour and Social Affairs
FOSDO	Federation of Organisations for Social Development
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOK	Norwegian kroner
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SC Norway	Save the Children Norway
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of Children

Executive Summary

This is the fourth and final report resulting from a study commissioned by the Evaluation Section of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹ in December 2002. The four reports, also including two country studies and an inception report addressing methodological issues, are available on www.norad.no (Evaluation). The study has been undertaken by the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research in collaboration with Chr. Michelsen Institute.

The study examines how Norwegian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contribute to strengthening civil society, along the lines set out in Norwegian guidelines for support to civil society organisations. The study addresses the contribution that two Norwegian NGOs, Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) and FORUT, make in terms of strengthening civil society in two widely different country contexts; Ethiopia and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the study assesses the impact of the work of these two Norwegian NGOs and their partners in three areas in which NGOs are believed to be in a position to make a contribution: good governance and democratisation, respect for human rights and poverty reduction. The study discusses the implications that the study findings have on NGO reporting and considers the notion that NGOs should act as change agents.

The Norwegian guidelines for support to the development work of Norwegian NGOs define civil society as the *“formal and informal networks that are active in the public sphere between the state and the family”*. Civil society is viewed as something concrete; including both formal and informal networks. This report draws on this definition in its focus on the organisations and networks that make up civil society. On the other hand, civil society is also often seen as an aspect of participation, democracy and good governance, providing a voice for the poor and an arena for strengthening their influence in the political process. This aspect refers to the value base of civil society organisations. A prominent idea in the guidelines is the notion of civil society organisations as change agents in these areas.

Civil society is weak in Ethiopia; Ethiopian NGOs hardly exist outside of the large cities. In Sri Lanka community based organisations flourish in the rural areas, and numerous civil society organisations are active in the cities. The critical role of the state, governance institutions and government policies in allowing space for civil society organisations is demonstrated in both of the country cases. The Ethiopian government is considerably more restrictive with respect to the space it allows international and national NGOs than the Sri Lankan government, which in general has allowed ample space for civil society organisations to operate.

While SC Norway’s focus in Ethiopia has changed over the years from a broad-based community approach to a child rights approach, FORUT has maintained its focus on community development. SC Norway’s work is explicitly rights based, grounded on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. FORUT’s work is aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the poor, primarily in rural communities.

Strengthening civil society

Both FORUT and SC Norway have contributed to setting up organisations that have subsequently become partners. Because civil society organisations are largely absent outside Addis Ababa, SC Norway has relied heavily on state agencies as implementing partners, FORUT’s policy has been to set up its own partner organisations. The study, in particular with regard to Sri Lanka, raises questions

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

about the appropriateness and adequacy of ongoing capacity building efforts. It suggests that more focused and strategic capacity building efforts are needed if civil society organisations are to function as change agents. Capacity building is not generically linked to activities that the organisation carries out, be it mobilisation, advocacy, service delivery or innovation. The emphasis has been on administrative capacity, which although important, is no substitute for professional capacity in these fields.

Participation in partner organisations has led to an *increase in awareness* about issues of concern to the Norwegian NGOs. This was most notably found among the children who took part in child rights groups in Addis Ababa, but was also generally noted among members of successful partner organisations in both countries. Not only did awareness increase at an individual level, but members of the organisations also noted an increased propensity to take part in collective activities of various kinds. This can be seen as one indication that values connected with membership in civil society organisations, such as *trust*, have been strengthened.

Interventions by NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs) are small-scale, scattered, low cost, and squeezed between policy objectives and demands from local stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is symptomatic that the largest and most successful programme that the study assessed was not with a civil society partner, but a state partner. To strengthen civil society in order to affect the intended changes in socio-political structures and institutions, NGOs need to work with each other. However, thus far effective network and alliance building has proved illusive (with the exception of the Save the Children alliance).

Poverty reduction

FORUT's approach to poverty reduction can be analysed in terms of the impact of its micro-credit, loan and service delivery programmes. These programmes have had a positive impact on households in terms of income-related poverty; incomes of successful participants have increased. However, inputs have been too small to enable people to escape the poverty trap. Groups that were previously marginalised and denied access to resources other than through traditional exploitative structures, have also been included in the programmes.

SC Norway's programmes have not focused on alleviating income poverty. Despite the fact that income-related poverty is a vast problem in Ethiopia (80% of the population live on less than \$1 a day), SC Norway spends only a modest share of its budget, approximately 5%, on poverty reduction. Yet, in terms of potential future earnings and access to resources (jobs, education etc.) and services, the potential impact of SC Norway's education programmes on the future prospects of children enrolled in its education programmes is wide-ranging.

Good governance and democratisation

SC Norway has engaged in advocacy on the basis of its expert status and clear mandate in the field of children's rights. Its Ethiopian partners, on the other hand, feel more comfortable with a service delivery role that does not challenge the state. They have been involved in providing policy advice and training rather than more confrontational, campaign style advocacy. During the war in Sri Lanka, FORUT found it increasingly difficult to balance an operational role with an advocacy role. As priority was given to an operational role in the North East, FORUT played down its human rights and peace advocacy role. FORUT has enabled poor, marginal and socially excluded groups to approach local governance institutions, although such participation has taken place within a traditional framework of political interaction whereby promises of resources have been exchanged for votes.

FORUT and SC Norway have contributed to good governance primarily through direct collaboration with government agencies on different projects and programmes, leading government agencies to adopt new policies and practices.

Human rights

SC Norway has a clear human rights mandate based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has adopted strategies in line with this mandate which clearly have had a direct impact on children's rights, primarily in terms of access to education, but also in terms of advocacy work at the national level on these issues. Although the promotion of human rights is one of the objectives of FORUT, the organisation does not focus explicitly on this area; it is not the dominant discourse or practice in FORUT. Yet FORUT's work has had a positive impact, primarily in terms of socio economic rights.

The value added by Norwegian NGOs: advocacy and innovation

Both country studies demonstrate the challenges and difficulties inherent in an advocacy role. Advocacy involves potential conflict and confrontation with the government, but it can also be conducted in less confrontational ways, by way of unofficial or official advisory roles, technical collaboration etc. In Ethiopia advocacy efforts have been focused on issues such as children's rights and in Sri Lanka on temperance and humanitarian issues, in both cases issues that are considered less sensitive and less politically charged. Norwegian NGOs have taken up advocacy in areas in which national and local NGOs are reluctant to do so because challenging the state may jeopardise their service delivery role. At the same time international NGOs face a number of limitations in their advocacy role.

The lessons learned from the work of SC Norway in Ethiopia suggest that policy influence could be achieved if: i) the subject matter can be couched in relatively technical terms; in the case of child rights it has the additional advantage of being based on an international mandate, ii) the approach is part of a broader alliance iii) the approach is well targeted in a specific field.

The role of SC Norway in Ethiopia in terms of developing new approaches to informal education and the corresponding role of FORUT in war-affected areas in Sri Lanka in terms of running "catch up" education classes are important innovative contributions to the education sector in both countries in contexts in which the state lacks both resources and capacity.

Reporting

NGO reporting has largely been undertaken in terms of activity and output reporting. Only recently have concerns about the more long-term impacts of interventions been placed on the agenda. The current reporting system is descriptive and focuses on deviations from the plans.

We suggest that for the purposes of annual reporting and final reports, reporting on capacity building is critical in order to assess civil society strengthening. We also suggest that a useful way of assessing whether the Norwegian NGOs and their partners are on target is by examining whether the change theory on which the NGO intervention is founded is working. This type of reporting could be done through self-assessment by the Norwegian NGOs and their partners and by ensuring adequate resources for annual and final reporting. Finally, we delineate a broad range of areas that need to be examined for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of civil society organisations.

Recommendations in brief

For NGOs

- The long term challenge is to build the capacities of national and local civil society organisations to affect change. Resources must be allocated accordingly, methods and approaches must be developed that ensure effective and mutual transfer of competence and expertise and funding arrangements must be designed to support more long-term change processes. Moreover, organisational practice should reflect the objective of capacity building and empowerment.

- As change agents, civil society organisations must outline their change theory, identify areas of intended change, the change agents that can be mobilised within that particular field, and how change can be affected, allocate resources accordingly and sustain their efforts to achieve the intended change. A critical element in comprehensive strategies for change is networking and alliance-building, also outside the traditional NGO/CBO networks, and such efforts need to be strengthened.
- NGOs and their partners are in a position to target groups that are marginal, excluded, stigmatised and vulnerable, and which are not in a position to demand government services or to pay for private services. The strengths of NGOs in delivering such services should be carefully preserved and intervention methodologies strengthened.
- NGOs must strike a balance between service delivery, advocacy, mobilisation and innovation. Sometimes these roles are mutually supportive, for example when first hand knowledge gained through service delivery on the ground backs up advocacy. Other times they compete for scarce resources. CBOs and national NGOs have been hesitant to take up advocacy, but it is critical that they receive the necessary support to build their capacities to perform this role if they intend to achieve the objectives that are stated in the guidelines.

For donors

- Guidelines at the donor level need to be translated into country contexts and local contexts and realistically assessed at these levels in order for them to become meaningful to CSOs. Donors should be responsive to feed-back coming from the field and put in place mechanisms to process this feed-back. Donors should be open and engage in frank discussions with Norwegian NGOs and their partners with respect to how their overall objectives can be realised within specific country contexts.
- The guidelines represent the Norwegian donor's "change theory" for civil society at the macro level, yet most civil society organisations operate at the micro level and affect change mainly at the individual and household level. The guidelines should address this gap between micro and macro and between individuals and communities, on the one hand, and institutions on the other. Moreover, the guidelines should be reviewed regularly with a view to assessing whether the theory is working. Such a review could take the form of a consultative process with Norwegian NGOs and their partners.

Reporting

- A generic framework for reporting on civil society strengthening should include the micro, meso and macro levels and be concerned with impact on individuals, communities, organisations and institutions.
- We suggest that in relation to the Norwegian NGOs annual reporting and final reports, reporting on capacity building designed to strengthen partnerships, networks and relationships to institutions is critical in order to assess civil society strengthening and impact.
- Another useful way of assessing whether Norwegian NGOs and their partners are on target is by examining whether the change theory on which an NGO intervention is founded is working. This type of reporting can be carried out through self-assessment by staff.

1 Introduction

This is the fourth and final report resulting from a study commissioned by the Evaluation Section of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs² in December 2002 to examine the impact of Norwegian NGOs on strengthening civil society, poverty reduction, democratisation and respect for human rights.³ The final report presents and compares findings from country studies of two Norwegian NGOs: Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia and FORUT in Sri Lanka. The final report also suggests how impact can be reported on.

According to the ToR the study should include⁴:

- An assessment of the capacity building of the Norwegian organisations with their Sri Lankan and Ethiopian partners, and how the Norwegian organisations and their partners contribute towards building civil society in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia.
- An assessment of the impact of the work of the Norwegian organisations and their partners particularly in relation to poverty reduction, democratisation and human rights, which are referred to in the guidelines⁵ for financial support.
- A presentation of an outline for a reporting system for NGOs on the impact of their work.

Monitoring and evaluating the work of NGOs has gathered momentum over the last decade, following a dramatic increase in funds channelled through NGOs during the 1990s. Yet there are substantial gaps in what we know about the more long term impact of the work of NGOs, and how impact can be measured and reported on (Kruse 1997, Roche 1999, Bye 2000). This report contributes towards filling this knowledge gap, but also stresses the difficulties inherent in assessing impact, in particular in relation to the specific roles that are associated with the work of civil society organisations as change agents; advocacy and social mobilisation.

Interventions by NGOs are small-scale, scattered and often incoherent, and frequently lacking in strategic frameworks. They are based on loose notions of the value of multiple and multilevel interventions that somehow are assumed to add up to impact in the intended field. According to one of the few theoretical contributions that have examined the problem of voluntary organisations and impact assessment “the voluntary sector could be disproportionately populated with organisations whose impacts are hard to measure...” (Kendall and Knapp 2000).

The mandate of the study required the team to cover a lot of ground and to address issues that were not obviously linked. Firstly, the question of civil society strengthening as such was addressed through an analysis of organisations, networks and institutions. Secondly, impact was assessed across several fields, instead of one particular field, for example democratisation. This requirement led to the adoption of a broad, rather than deep approach to impact assessment, focusing on both the individual, the organisational and institutional level. Thirdly, the ToR requested that the team should provide input for an impact reporting system based on the study findings. This component of the mandate required an examination of organisational practice in this area, an issue which was not linked directly to the issue of strengthening civil society and impact. In order to address reporting, rather than taking a broad view with the objective of examining reporting comprehensively, the team decided to narrow the focus by suggesting how NGOs could report on impact based on the findings of the study.

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

3 The four reports, also including two country studies and an inception report addressing methodological issues, are available on www.norad.no (Evaluation).

4 See appendix 1: Terms of Reference.

5 The Norwegian Guidelines for Support to Civil Society Organisations

A more comprehensive account of methodology as well as relations with stakeholders in the two countries is provided in appendix 2 and 3.

1.1 What is civil society?

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

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

The guidelines, in a brief discussion of civil society, indicate that there are at least two aspects that should be considered. This same duality has been pointed out on many occasions in the debate about civil society that took place in the 1990s. Civil society, in English as well as in Norwegian usage, may be a noun, i.e. a civil society is something concrete, usually an institution or an organisation, or it may refer to specific qualities, i.e. civil society is a quality of society.

In line with the former understanding of civil society, the term “civil society organisation” has been created, pointing to various kinds of social groups displaying some kind of cohesion, inner structure and organisation on the basis of some public concern (“interests they hold in common”). A large number of NGOs meet these criteria. Indeed many observers reserve the term “civil society” for these kinds of structures.

On the other hand, civil society is also often seen as an aspect of participation, democracy and good governance, providing a voice for the poor and an arena for strengthening their influence in the political process. This aspect refers to the *value* base of civil society organisations, which according to many observers sets civil society organisations apart from other organisations.

A broad definition of civil society was adopted for the guidelines. Yet when referring to the specific roles and activities which civil society organisations may engage in, the guidelines refer to civil society as:

- a momentum or agent of change in achieving national and international development objectives
- being in a position to provide a voice to the vulnerable
- groups and organisations that work as advocates, lobbyists, path-finders, “sounding boards” and partners in the development process.

This notion of civil society organisations as change agents can be contrasted with the neo-liberal view of civil society as alternative agents in public service delivery. This change agent role is important because it drives a lot of donor interest and efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in this regard. In this study we consider these different roles and focus on the contribution made by civil society organisations to broader processes of change and the implications of the various roles for impact and impact assessment.

2 A conceptual framework for impact assessment

This chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of the contribution that civil society makes towards overall development objectives and the relationship between this conceptual framework and the generic framework for impact assessment that has been applied in this study.

Impact assessment has been defined as “the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people’s lives brought about by a given action or series of actions” (Roche 1999:21). The idea of long-term, lasting or sustainable change is common to most definitions of impact assessment. Change is usually measured at an individual level; in people’s lives, using social, economic or political indicators. However, the ToR for this study is concerned with changes and impact related to strengthening civil society, as well as impact in specific fields; human rights, democratisation and poverty reduction. We therefore need to broaden the focus and to examine changes not only in people’s lives, as they are expressed at the individual, household or community level, but also changes in organisations, networks and institutions. If building or strengthening civil society is the objective, then impact should be assessed in the organisations and networks that make up civil society. Moreover, when examining the impact of the work of civil society such impact should be traced at the level of changes in economic, political and social institutions, since the counterparts of civil society change agents are governance institutions and economic institutions. Of course, the ultimate objective of all institutional change is to affect positive changes in the quality of lives of people.

Civil society is a complex and multifaceted concept. Furthermore, the ToR requires that the study examine both how Norwegian NGOs contribute to strengthening civil society as well as the impact that NGO activities have. Firstly, for the purpose of assessing how civil society could be strengthened, we break the concept down into civil society structures and civil society values. Secondly, a number of different roles that civil society organisations play as change agents are presented. It follows from this framework that impact in any given field depends on a combination of the “strength” of civil society as well as on the specific role that civil society organisations play.

2.1 Factors that influence impact

The “structure” of civil society

We suggest that the concept of civil society has two dimensions. Firstly, it is often used to refer to organisations and networks that can be identified in the space between the state and the market, and between the state and the family. In this arena, Norwegian NGOs link up with civil society organisations and networks in a variety of organisational arrangements that are grouped together under the notion of “partnership”.

The impact of the work of Norwegian NGOs depends on the *capacity* of their partner organisations and their networks to implement activities that are in line with the objectives of the Norwegian NGO. Networks refer to linkages and alliances between civil society organisations and between civil society organisations and governance and market institutions. Taken together, organisations and their networks could be called the civil society “structure”. *“Strengthening civil society” entails building the capacities of the people who make up these organisations and networks.*

The value base of civil society organisations

Secondly, as discussed in the introduction, civil society is often associated with values. In the donor discourse it is assumed that civil society organisations are change agents for broadening and

deepening democracy, improving the human rights performance of governments, and alleviating poverty. These assumptions are based on the idea that civil society organisations work for the public good by contributing to the public discourse and influencing public policies. They go beyond working for the economic self-interests of individuals and communities. In contrast to businesses that make profit their bottom-line, civil society organisations are about values.

Civil society organisations (CSO) are also believed to be value-based due to characteristics of their organisational culture, which, it is argued, is based on trust, solidarity, social cohesion and inclusion. Therefore membership in civil society organisations is considered to be a good thing per se, because it advances such values among its members. The assumption is that “greater trust facilitates better social, economic, psychological and/or political outcomes” (Kendall and Knapp 2000: 127).

The role of civil society organisations

Civil society organisations are involved in a wide variety of activities that can be linked to the distinct roles that they play as development actors. In other words the contribution that organisations make towards broader development objectives is a result of these specific roles. Impact as well as how to assess and report on it, will vary depending on the type of role in which the organisation is involved. Different *roles* lead to different types of *activities*, which in turn impact on different fields.

- Civil society organisations *deliver services* that involve some public or collective character (health, education, personal social services, cultural services). They are also expected to provide services that are different from services provided by government- and business in one or more of these aspects: quality, equity, cost or specialisation (Chinnock and Salamon 2003). This role is performed by most CSOs engaged in poverty reduction.
- *Advocacy* has emerged as a central NGO role over the last decade. Advocacy involves mobilising people to affect policy change as well as broader social change. From the community level to the international level, civil society organisations are expected to raise issues that are of concern to their respective constituencies as well as to the general public. Advocacy is the preferred strategy for CSOs active in the good governance and human rights field.
- *Social mobilisation* has been described as “the processes through which attempts are made to challenge and change established ways of doing things, or the practices of governance regimes” (Healey et al.1999: 20). This notion of “changing established ways of doing things” is inherent to the vision of many NGOs and also to the change agent notion that figures in the guidelines for support to Norwegian NGOs. The notion of mobilisation is closely linked to the concepts of participation and empowerment.
- Another role often attributed to civil society organisations is *innovation*. Civil society organisations are thought to be small, flexible and adaptable, and in a position to try out new solutions and address newly arisen problems (Chinnock and Salamon 2003). Moreover, inherent to the concept of the “value added” by international NGOs is the notion that they add something new to the manner in which interventions are executed or that they contribute towards new forms of interventions.

We have examined these three dimensions of civil society – structure, values and roles – by using the *impact chain* to trace broad areas of impact along the three dimensions.

2.2 Impact chain

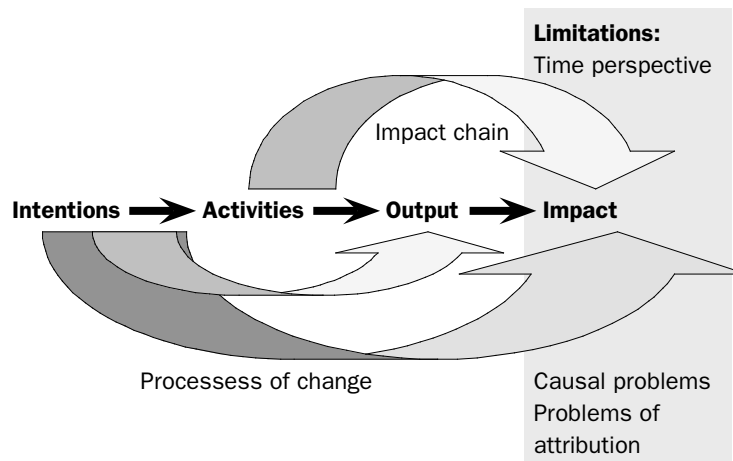
In order to analyse the impact of the interventions of civil society organisations we have used a model that lays out what could be called a chain of impact. As with any other model, the impact chain is a gross simplification of reality⁶, but it still offers a useful way of thinking about NGO interventions and impact.

Civil society organisations’ intentions to create impact, the activities that they implement as well as the outputs, outcomes and impact that are intended to result from the interventions constitute the impact chain. The different components that make up the impact chain and the linkages between them are part

6 One discussion that has been raised relates to the issue of linear chains of cause and effect. This line of questioning has suggested that circular processes may be a better way of representing reality.

of broader change processes taking place in any organisation, community, institution or society at any given point in time. Therefore it is difficult to know what kind of impact one specific NOG-intervention actually has and to gauge which activities cause which results (attribution).

Figure 2.1 The impact chain



From intentions to activities

This linkage focuses on the actors that are involved in translating policies into practice. It has been argued that a lack of impact in terms of achieving the intentions, or stated goals, sometimes simply follows from a mismatch between discourse and practice (Lewis 2001). In other words, activities do not match intentions. Further, within the field of organisational theory, it is often pointed out that organisations tend to have multiple and often vague objectives (Davies 2001). This perspective leads to questions like: What is the relationship between discourse and practice? Are activities designed to meet the objectives of the organisation? How are activities decided on if there are multiple objectives? What kinds of barriers exist to implementation?

From activities to process of change

Having been designed to achieve a certain type of impact, activities are as a rule based on an assumption, idea or theory about the change mechanism. Change mechanisms can be viewed as “toolkits” for social change. What is the change theory? What are the mechanisms through which activities are meant to lead to processes of change? What are the views of different people in the organisation regarding the change theory? Whose action is involved in establishing and sustaining the change mechanisms? These questions lead us to focus on the actors, stakeholders, duty holders or change agents that have to be inspired, motivated and mobilised for change to be affected.

From output and outcome to “wider societal impact”

Outputs are the tangible, and often also quantifiable, results of agency interventions, in the form of goods and services that have been produced. In the case of civil society organisations outputs are the number of wells, kilometres of roads and number of school buildings and libraries that have been built, the amount of credit that has been disbursed, the number of organisations that have been created, number of members etc. As suggested by several evaluations and meta-evaluations, NGOs mostly report on outputs, and very little information is available about impact. The challenge involved in impact assessment is to move beyond tangible outcomes and to assess change in households, communities, organisations and institutions that coalesce to make lasting changes in people’s lives, socially, economically or politically. In contrast to output, which can be easily attributed to the intervention or activities of specific actors, the impact of any particular intervention is influenced by a range of other factors that constitute the context of the intervention. Hence, tracing impact also means to identify contextual factors that are barriers to achieving impact or that would be favourable in relation to the intended impact.

The importance of context

A careful analysis of contextual constraints and opportunities is needed to realistically assess the contributions that NGOs make in any specific country context. Over time the space open to civil society organisations continuously changes, as a result of regime changes, wars or natural disasters, changes in local governance institutions, economic development etc. A contextual analysis allows NGOs to seize opportunities and to capitalise on change processes, to work with and to contribute to broader local and national processes of change.

2.3 A civil society impact assessment framework

The table below combines the concepts of *structure, values and roles* from a theoretical understanding of civil society organisations with the *impact chain* for tracing impact.

Table 2.1 Civil society and impact assessment: a framework

	INTENTIONS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	IMPACT: DEMO- CRATISATION HUMAN RIGHTS POVERTY- REDUCTION
STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS					
STRUCTURE	- empower and strengthen organisations	- creation of organisations - financial support - training programmes	- new organisations formed - increased knowledge and capacity in some technical subjects, but lack of relational and mobilisational capacity	- structure for service delivery well developed, less so for advocacy and mobilisation	- service delivery tailored to needs of local communities, marginal and vulnerable groups
VALUES	- promote participation	- participation at various levels in the project cycle - formation of groups	- participatory process established	- sense of community ownership - increased trust among community members	- increased social capital (inclusion) for “mutually beneficial collective action”
ROLE AS CHANGE AGENT					
ADVOCACY	- influence public policies	- campaigns - advice - collaboration	- increased interaction with governance institutions - awareness about CRC	- adoption of new practices by government agencies	- changes in government policies with respect to child rights, humanitarian access
INNOVATION	- improve access to basic education	- building schools - organisation of parents	- new curricula - cost sharing in education	- increased access to education - improved quality of education	- increased literacy levels - improved quality of human resources

ROLE AS CHANGE AGENT					
MOBILISATION	- empowerment	- group formation - training - provision of credit and material inputs	- increased knowledge and awareness on issues	- increased organisational capacity – skills, knowledge - increase in participatory capacity gaps: linkages, alliances	- strengthening of democratic practise within organisations - access of marginal groups to political processes
SERVICE DELIVERY	- improve living conditions - access to basic services	- infrastructure - loans - education - health	- no. of roads, wells, schools	- access to cheaper loans - improved access to basic services - improved capacity for implementing service delivery - new collaborative arrangements between NGOs and public administration	- improved health - improvements in literacy rates - increased incomes - participatory practices adopted by public service - changes in public administrative practices

The table above illustrates how such a framework may be used to provide an overall picture of the output, outcomes and impact of the interventions of civil society organisations. The table summarises the impact chain of civil society strengthening (structure and values) as well as the impact in the areas of democratisation, human rights and poverty reduction resulting from the different roles that civil society actors play. The ToR specify civil society strengthening as an objective in itself as well as a means towards achieving impact. Impact can be found in organisational and institutional change, as well as in long lasting changes in people's lives. Changes in organisational structures and institutions are key to the objectives of democratisation (more accessible, accountable and responsive institutions, or even the formation of new institutions); human rights (regime changes, changes in legislation, changes in the practices of the police and the army); and poverty reduction (changes in socio-economic structures and institutions). Advocacy and social mobilisation are the ways in which civil society actors are believed to be in a position to affect institutional changes.

Moreover, the impact of any particular intervention can be measured along a number of dimensions. For example the impact of the provision of loans to small groups can be assessed according to several indicators: social cohesion-conflict in the village, household incomes, school attendance rates, cohesion of small groups as a building block for civil society organisations, increased self-esteem among members etc. Each of these dimensions is part of a much longer impact chain that can be described in detail, depending on the objective or criteria against which impact is assessed.

The methodology applied in the study has been further explained in appendix 2, and in the inception report.

3 Ethiopia country study

Redd Barna or Save the Children Norway (SC Norway) is one of the largest development-related NGOs in Norway. It was established as early as 1948 as an independent foundation primarily concerned with organising domestic voluntary efforts within child welfare. International development issues were gradually put on the agenda from the 1960s onwards. Ethiopia has been an important arena for SC Norway in this regard. An early initiative involved the establishment in Addis Ababa of the Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI) for leprosy research in 1969. The real transition of SC Norway from a domestic welfare organisation to an international development actor, however, is closely related to the first large Sahelian famine of 1973-74. In 1975 SC Norway organised a major emergency relief fund-raising campaign in Norway under the slogan “*Ethiopia starves!*” In 1978 the organisation was allocated the proceeds from the annual telethon of the Norwegian broadcasting system, allowing it to expand its international operations. In the 1980s SC Norway became a major development organisation in Ethiopia, operating a number of large rural development projects.

3.1 SC Norway: Profile and focus

Save the Children Norway evolved further through the 1990s. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 was espoused as a fundamental document and gave rise to a renewed effort within Norway as well as abroad within children’s rights advocacy. In 1990 SC Norway again became the beneficiary of the Norwegian telethon, enabling it to address a broad set of child welfare issues both domestically and abroad. The emphasis on children’s rights gave rise to new strategies for rights-based approaches to development in this period, replacing the concern with basic needs and community development that had dominated the development discourse in the 1970s and 1980s.

SC Norway currently presents itself⁷ as an organisation that is primarily concerned with the situation of children in Norway as well as internationally and now engages in:

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

The SC Norway Country Strategy for Ethiopia indicates that SC Norway intends to relinquish its direct involvement in project implementation in Ethiopia, in favour of promoting its objectives through a number of national partners. These include both government agencies and non-government organisations.

The SC Norway country programme for Ethiopia is organised in a complex project portfolio that must be understood in the context of SC Norway’s history in Ethiopia, including the transition from a needs-based to a rights-based programming strategy, from self-implemented projects towards partnerships, and from substantial sectors like food security, social services and economic development towards an emphasis on child participation and child rights.

The report from the Ethiopia country study (*Study of the impact of the work of Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia: building civil society*) that this chapter is based on, outlines the evolution of civil society in Ethiopia and the socio-political context of NGO operations. It attempts to fit the SC Norway country programme into this context and traces out the implementation chains formed by SC Norway’s various partnerships. On the basis of project documentation, interviews with key personnel in the partner organisations, field visits and focus-group discussions with intended beneficiaries as well as

7 Save the Children Norway’s Strategy 2002 – 2005 (Adopted by the National Assembly 2001).

members of various CBOs (including school committees, *iddir* burial societies, Child Rights Clubs) and community leaders, the country study maps outcomes and effects of the SC Norway programme and discusses possible impacts arising from them.

3.2 The Ethiopian setting

SC Norway has gone through several transformations with regard to both outlook and operational strategies⁸ since its arrival in Ethiopia in 1969, driven by the organisational evolution of SC Norway in Norway and partly in response to changes in the political environment in Ethiopia.

SC Norway became hesitantly involved in the famine relief work in 1973/74 but later built up a significant capacity to handle food security issues, including transport and distribution of famine relief, particularly in conjunction with the 1984 – 85 famine. It also became increasingly involved in a number of broadly formulated post-famine community development programmes at several locations in Ethiopia. The underlying outlook at that time was that the welfare of children could best be safe-guarded in healthy families living in viable local communities. Hence, the best response to the needs of children was broad-based community development programmes implemented directly by SC Norway. In the process SC Norway burgeoned to become one of the largest development organisations in Ethiopia, with a local staff exceeding 600 people. This was not an unusual strategy at the time, partly governed by the distrustful and tense relationship between Western NGOs and Ethiopia's Marxist military government, and partly by the emphasis on community development and basic needs in the development discourse of the period.

The new government that installed itself in 1991 was well aware of the independent capacity of the international NGOs to implement projects outside the purview of government and quickly set out to curb the independence of the international NGOs, with a number of directives issued to tie NGO activities to government policy at all levels, followed by the creation of an increasingly detailed regulatory environment throughout the 1990s.

SC Norway worked to narrow and sharpen the focus of its programmes throughout the 1990s on the basis of UNCRC of 1989 and in the light of the increasing importance of a rights-based approach in the international development discourse. From the middle of the decade SC Norway scaled down its own capacity to implement projects in Ethiopia and has attached increasing importance to influencing child welfare issues through advocacy campaigns and by supporting the work of partners. By the end of the decade, SC Norway stopped the direct implementation of project activities in Ethiopia and now relies on partnerships with government agencies as well as a number of local NGOs.

3.3 SC Norway in Ethiopia

SC Norway's budget in Ethiopia in 2003 amounted to approximately USD 3.5 million⁹, funding activities in a limited number of specific sectors, corresponding to the strategic objectives set out in the strategic plan. Approximately 15% of the total budget is spent on running the SC Norway representation in Ethiopia, with another 25% of its operational budget reserved for emergency relief activities. The remaining non-emergency programme budget was distributed among the following sectors in 2003:

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

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

9 MacDonald, N: *Ethiopia Strategic Plan 2002-2005, Mid-term Evaluation*, Addis Ababa, December 2003.

The SC Norway country programme for Ethiopia is composed of 28 different projects involving a total of 22 different partners. It is important to note that SC Norway does not see its role in Ethiopia as limited to supporting partner NGOs. On the contrary, SC Norway is explicit that it will pursue the objectives of child welfare on the basis of the UNCRC through pragmatic partnerships with any organisation, including government agencies, as long as the collaboration can be seen to benefit children and promote the rights of children.

3.4 Partnerships

SC Norway pursues its objectives in three sets of partnerships. The most important distinguishing factor is the composition of each partnership, with a subsequent tendency towards a functional specialisation as well. An overview of partners can be found in annex 4.

There are partnerships within the *Save the Children Alliance*, basically for the purpose of *promoting the UNCRC* and to facilitate the practical implementation of Ethiopia's ratification of the UNCRC. The Alliance regularly monitors the situation of children and lobbies for interventions in favour of children. The most tangible expression of these efforts is an alternative NGO-produced periodic report on the implementation of the UNCRC in Ethiopia.

The Alliance uses its good relations with Ethiopian authorities to lobby for changes in the enabling environment for the implementation of the CRC in Ethiopia, including legal reforms, the formulation of a national Plan of Action for children and the creation of an ombudsman function. Active interest from the Alliance, however, may involve criticism of government efforts, and Ethiopian NGOs have been reluctant to criticise government policy and (in)action. This partly reflects the stringent enabling environment for local NGOs in Ethiopia, but also their preference for a non-confrontational style of advocacy. None the less, the result is the somewhat curious situation that international NGOs are better placed than local organisations to advocate domestic issues.

The second set of partnerships is with *government agencies*, with an emphasis on promoting *primary education* and initiatives against Harmful Traditional Practices. These activities have as their background SC Norway's experience from a broad-based community development programme in North Gonder, Amhara Regional State in the mid/late 1990s.

Within education SC Norway has invested a lot of effort in a pilot project that is commonly referred to as ABECS: *Alternative Basic Education for Children out of School*, one of several alternative education models developed by NGOs in Ethiopia. The ABECS model is formulated as a low-cost and flexible alternative for the first cycle of primary education. In contrast to other non-formal education programmes, children who complete the ABECS programme are accepted into the second cycle of the formal schools and have the option of continuing their education, on equal footing with the primary schools of the Ministry of Education.

The pilot phase has proved the ABECS model to be a viable and efficient approach to expanding primary education and providing it close enough to allow children to live at home. The issue of distance is particularly important with regard to girls' education. Shorter distances have contributed to increased overall enrolment and retention rates as well as gender equity in enrolment.

All in all, the ABECS pilot projects seem to have been a resounding success and ABECS is now promoted by the regional education authorities as the preferred model for non-formal education throughout Amhara Regional State. SC Norway supports scaling-up projects, involving reprinting of ABECS books and teaching materials, training of ABECS instructors, and professional back-up of ABECS instructor supervision. The reputation and achievements of the ABECS model could quickly be affected if the quality of the education provided at the ABECS centres deteriorates due to quick expansion.

SC Norway has established partnerships with government institutions to counter *violence and sexual abuse against children*. One project allows the operation of a special unit to care for sexually violated children at one of Addis Ababa's hospitals. A second project involves the Department of Labour and

Social Affairs (DOLSA) in Gondar and is directed at a number of traditional practices that are harmful to children. With some regional variation, these Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) include the abduction of young girls, child marriage, female genital mutilation, uvulectomy and the excision of milk teeth.

The DOLSA programme involves the transmission of a series of locally produced weekly radio programmes. DOLSA field workers organise radio listening groups for women, distribute radio sets and encourage the women to discuss the issues raised in the programmes. The popular DOLSA radio programmes are strongly rooted in the local contexts and include songs, poetry, drama presentations, quiz programmes, letters from the public and local news, in addition to discussions on HTP, violation of children's rights and HIV/AIDS. There can be no doubt about the efficiency of this method of information dissemination in a society where oral traditions are strong. Messages on the radio, primarily known as the government communication channel, carry the additional authority of the government talking to the people. These effects are obviously reinforced when DOLSA field workers organise discussion sessions with groups specifically put together for the purpose of listening to the radio.

SC Norway and DOLSA report that the HTP programme has had a significant impact, quoting dramatic figures on the number of known HTP practitioners that have voluntarily stopped their practices as a result of the programme. Additionally, a number of child marriages have been stopped by CRC clubs. These spectacular results have been treated with caution by SC Norway, who awaits further evaluation of the intervention¹⁰. Even though the project has been highly effective in spreading new information, the final impact in terms of behavioural changes needs careful and independent verification.

The third set of partnerships is established between SC Norway and some *10 local NGOs* that have all come into being since 1991. The budgets involved in partnerships with government agencies are typically much larger than for the NGOs. However, the main issue is the qualitative difference between the two types of partnerships.

In the case of government agencies SC Norway has to map its own priorities and goals onto established public policies, or attempt to change these policies through advocacy and lobbying work. A partnership with a local NGO is shaped by the interests and concerns of SC Norway. There can be no doubt that SC Norway exerts a greater influence over NGO partners than over government agencies. A recent evaluation of SC Norway's cooperation with partners in Ethiopia¹¹ stresses that local NGOs enter into the partnerships on terms set by SC Norway, and that the partnership is limited to formal cooperation on clearly specified projects. Some partners actually claim that SC Norway partnerships are donor driven in the sense that they promote SC Norway's strategic objectives at the expense of objectives pursued by local NGOs', such as poverty alleviation, food security and health.

SC Norway's close collaboration with Ethiopian NGOs will continue to be important, partly to maintain a capacity to intervene in the many issues that constitute the bulk of NGO gap filling and service delivery activities, but more importantly to foster the capacity of Ethiopian NGOs to engage in rights-based advocacy.

One implication of SC Norway's partnership strategy at the expense of direct implementation has been increased distance to the communities that it intends to reach. SC Norway can no longer intervene directly in a particular situation, but must do so through a partner. The implementation chain between SC Norway strategies and funds on the one hand, and project outcomes and impacts in local communities on the other, has become very long. SC Norway has little control over what happens in these long chains of partly overlapping interests. None the less, unless its partners perform, SC Norway will fail.

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

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

3.5 Capacity building

SC Norway partnerships are pragmatic arrangements aimed at reaching as many children as possible. SC Norway successes in Ethiopia have largely been achieved in close cooperation with government agencies. SC Norway programming does not depend on a thriving civil society. Put simply, SC Norway does not have an explicit strategy to strengthen civil society in Ethiopia, except in the sense that increased acceptance of the UNCRC is an important qualitative aspect of society.

SC Norway maintains a number of partnerships with local NGOs because of their contributions in reaching SC Norway's specific policy goals, not to support the development of local NGOs for their own sake. Agreements are for short time periods and for specific activities, to the extent that local NGOs may be seen as virtual sub-contractors hired to implement parts of SC Norway's programme. SC Norway has none the less started a process whereby the capacities of its partners are being reviewed with a view to strengthening them beyond the infrastructure support, training and annual budget grants provided so far.

SC Norway staff cuts in connection with the decision to abandon direct implementation have paradoxically made a significant contribution to the capacity of the Ethiopian NGO sector since many senior and highly experienced SC Norway staff subsequently founded NGOs that initially depended on SC Norway budget grants; they are now highly conscious of the need to diversify sources of income and to consolidate their independent profile as genuinely Ethiopian NGOs.

The local NGOs have on their part given a lot of attention to various forms of community-level organisation. The *iddir* burial societies have attracted particular attention as well-organised, and effective voluntary organisations. SC Norway's partner NGOs have invested considerable effort in *iddirs*, with the aim of encouraging them to take responsibility for a range of new challenges facing contemporary Ethiopia, such as HIV/AIDS orphans. Progress has been slow, because the efforts involve engaging in well-established democratic processes in the internal governance of the *iddirs*, where many members are apprehensive of added financial commitments.

SC Norway relies on a long chain of delegation to ensure that the intentions and goals expressed in its global strategy are transformed into outcomes in local communities and impact on the children SC Norway wants to reach. This is not a chain of command, but rather a series of partly overlapping interests that seems to have worked as long as service delivery has been the main item to be passed along the impact chain. The impact chain with regard to child rights' advocacy has proved less effective. While local NGOs are still reluctant to engage in active advocacy, SC Norway, through the Save the Children Alliance in Ethiopia, has become a civil society actor in its own right, engaging actively in surveillance ("watchdog") and lobbying functions that are normally associated with a dynamic civil society. This must be seen as a short-term and temporary strategy that is difficult to sustain. Under the circumstances alternatives are not easy to identify.

3.6 Poverty reduction

The SC Norway country programme in Ethiopia is clearly linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and its sophisticated analysis of the many complex interrelationships across and between sectors that create poverty. The impact on poverty must primarily be assessed in terms of the outcomes of the ABECS programme, which absorbs the bulk of the country programme budget and which by all accounts has been a successful intervention. The impact of the ABECS programme may go well beyond the amount of money put into it. On the other hand, it will take a while before the impact of better primary education becomes evident.

At the other side of the spectrum only 5% of SC Norway's annual budget is classified as relating to poverty in the sense of increasing incomes. Outcomes here are more uncertain and the impact more difficult to trace. "Income poverty" is a massive problem in Ethiopia, with over 80% of the population living on less than \$1 a day.¹² From this perspective SC Norway's efforts are rather modest. Most of SC Norway's budget contributions in this area go to a food security project in Northern Ethiopia;

12 UNDP: Human Development Report 2003, p.200.

a micro-finance project in Addis Ababa also receives support. Although outcomes at the level of individual beneficiaries may be positive, SC Norway's own annual report laconically states that "*there is no significant change in the poverty level of the country*".

3.7 Democratisation and good governance

The current Ethiopian government has characterised the gap-filling functions of the NGOs as "*simplistic welfare activities*" that have not contributed significantly to the social transformations necessary for genuine development to take place. Yet, the government has jealously guarded its hegemonic control over the political processes at all levels and has only granted miniscule parts of the political space to organisations with alternative views. Opportunities for articulating alternative points of view have been restricted to non-controversial fields, like children's rights or the situation of women. Beyond this, the government is sensitive to criticism and has been prepared to suppress, with the means available to it, the diversity of views that would normally feed a democratic process within other more contentious fields.

The government keeps tight control over Ethiopian NGOs by means of a detailed and vigilantly enforced schedule of regulations. It has on several occasions shown that it is prepared to use these regulations to de-register NGOs. Ethiopian NGOs do not have the financial or organisational capacity to confront the government on any issue, with a few notable exceptions, where the maintenance of a high international profile has been an important part of a confrontational strategy. More usually, advocacy work is carried out within the parameters laid down by the government, involving professional support of and technical advice on the implementation of government policy rather than competition over views, values and political alternatives.

4 Sri Lanka country study

FORUT¹³'s popular base is with the Norwegian temperance organisation, IOGT, and its youth organisation Juvente. FORUT's Sri Lanka programme is by far its largest programme. In 2003 its budget was Rs. 375 million¹⁴ (NOK 24.6 million/US\$ 3.6 million), which is nearly the same amount that SC Norway spends in Ethiopia.

FORUT's policy document of 1998 states that FORUT's vision is to: "enhance the quality of life of the people by *empowering* them through their participation". Further, FORUT's mission is "to improve the living conditions of the people by acting as *a catalyst in building and strengthening local groups/ organisations* in order to improve the socio-economic situation of the marginalised, fight alcohol and drug problems, promote peace and harmony among communities while providing humanitarian assistance in times of need."¹⁵ In the 2003 policy document, the basic approach remains the same, but with somewhat more emphasis on advocacy and political awareness, as well as on peace and human rights. FORUT's approach to achieving its vision and mission is integrated community development based on social mobilisation, participation and empowerment.

Unlike Ethiopia, Sri Lanka is a parliamentary democracy with regular change of governments. Sri Lanka is also a middle-income country with high levels of literacy and social policies still in place that reflect its legacy as a model third world welfare state. The estimated number of community based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs in Sri Lanka varies between 20 000 – 30 000. The wide variation in estimates reflects, among other factors, the small and informal character of the majority of CBOs and NGOs in Sri Lanka. There are exceptions to this pattern with organisations such as Sarvodaya, Sewa Lanka and the Federation of Thrift and Credit Cooperative Societies operating throughout the island.

Effective links between rural-based CBOs addressing socio-economic issues and Colombo-based NGOs, often involved in peace, democratisation and human rights issues, have not been formed. Furthermore, advocacy on socio-economic issues has remained absent from the national agenda (Fernando 2003, Cleary 1997). One of the reasons is that mobilisation around socio-economic issues in Sri Lanka has been in the form of violent, mass uprisings that have been directed at challenging the legitimacy of the state and the system of governance.

NGO-government relations were marked by relative indifference until the 1970s, ambivalence in the 1980s and open confrontation in the 1990s when the NGO Commission was established to enquire into the conduct of NGOs, an act that was widely seen as an attack by the government on one of the largest NGOs in Sri Lanka and its leader (Wickremasinghe 2001). Yet, since the 1980s, the government and NGOs have collaborated on several development and welfare programmes, most notably on the implementation of the Janasaviya programme, which was introduced with World Bank funding in 1991 to work in the areas of savings- and credit and nutrition.

Within this context, FORUT works on socio-economic issues, through a mainly rural, participatory, community-development approach, delivering micro-credit, loans and infrastructure. This approach is implemented through a two-tiered organisational structure, whereby organisations are formed in villages (CBOs) and become federated into umbrella organisations, called Federations by FORUT. The idea is that the Federations should represent the interests of their CBO members.

13 FORUT's full name in Norwegian is "Solidaritetsaksjon for utvikling" (Solidarity and Action for Development)

14 Figures from FORUT's annual reports.

15 Policy Document, FORUT Sri Lanka 1998.

Following discussions with the research team and based on the ToR, FORUT staff selected two districts for the study, one in the war-affected North (Vavuniya) and one in the South of Sri Lanka (Hambantota). These two intervention sites constitute between 10 – 15% of FORUT's total budget in Sri Lanka. A mix of methodologies was used for the field work: 1) participatory workshops with key stakeholders of the project interventions in the two districts 2) a survey of all of the 47 member organisations of FORUT's partners in the two districts 3) case studies of a selected number of CBOs.¹⁶ FORUT has worked in the project areas and with the partners that were selected for this study for a decade. An overview of FORUT's Sri Lanka programme can be found in appendix 5.

4.1 Strengthening of village-based organisations

FORUT has supported the formation of self-help groups and CBOs as the basic building block in its approach to strengthening civil society. As these CBOs see it, their primary purpose is to request material or financial support for infrastructure development activities in the villages, either from FORUT, from other donors or from local governance institutions. Our findings indicate that members of the CBOs see themselves as recipients of aid to be distributed between their members, rather than as participants in local change processes.

- *Self-help groups* have reinforced bonds of solidarity and trust between people in the villages who already knew each other as neighbours, relatives or friends before they joined the groups. Members of the groups feel a strong sense of belonging to the small groups that are formed for the purpose of collective savings in order to access loans from FORUT's credit programmes.
- FORUT's interventions have led to a strengthening of *CBOs*. Membership in CBOs has offered an additional arena for collective action in the village which in turn has contributed to increased social cohesion and the formation of social capital in the village.

Strengthening of village based organisations is a substantial achievement in itself. Support in this field has contributed to improved social cohesion, solidarity and improvement in socio-economic conditions. In conflict affected areas these objectives are particularly important, as CBOs provide arenas for people to come together, rebuild lost relationships and strengthen mutual trust and confidence. The density of organisations is less in the conflict affected areas and the potential for international NGOs to make a contribution towards rebuilding lives and organisations is significant. Yet the space for civil society organisations to operate is more restricted as traditions of independent organisation have become weakened as a result of the war.

4.2 Limited networks and alliances beyond the village

CBO members demonstrate a strong allegiance to their self-help groups and CBOs. This strong sense of belonging and ownership does not apply to the organisations formed to represent several CBOs, in FORUT terminology, the Federations. These Federations operate more as conduits for channelling funds and other resources from donors to the individual CBOs (for savings- and credit programmes, agriculture, or for local infrastructure needs), than as voices or advocates for the members.

The role of the Federations has not been clearly defined, and different stakeholders have different expectations. From FORUT's point of view, the partners should be membership organisations for the CBOs that they represent, but they have also been assigned a secondary task as financial and management monitoring bodies, a task that in fact has tended to dominate their work. On the other hand their members see them primarily as service delivery organisations, providing a range of services in a timely manner.

With the exception of collaboration on collective activities between CBOs based in the same village, the formation of effective networks and alliances between FORUT partners and other civil society organisations for the purpose of influencing, changing or monitoring policies and practices of governance institutions has been limited. However, there are a number of important issues and problems that impact on the lives of villagers that cannot be addressed at the village level.

¹⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of methodology see www.norad.no: Study of the Impact of Norwegian NGOs on civil society: FORUT (Sri Lanka) and Save the Children (Ethiopia): Some methodological issues.

These issues range from agricultural policies, to lack of transportation facilities and unemployment, to mention a few. Although partners have taken part in wider political campaigns in Hambantota, this is not as yet a core activity.

4.3 Capacity building: strengthening civil society structures

NGOs are often expected to perform well in terms of capacity building and strengthening of human resources. In line with this assumption FORUT's interventions in both Vavuniya and Hambantota have laid the foundation for building civil society organisations in local communities. FORUT has also provided training to build the awareness and capacities of CBO members and their leaders.

However, the current approach is inadequate in terms of achieving FORUT's very ambitious policy objectives related to affecting changes in power structures and relationships, which are also in line with the Norwegian guidelines for support to civil society. Resources spent on capacity building have not been adequate. Capacity building efforts are not aligned with FORUT's overall objectives. A series of organisational practices are in place that counteracts the objectives of capacity building

Many of the training programmes are primarily confined to "technical" subjects, such as imparting knowledge and skills in book-keeping, accounts, integrated pest management, intensive farming practices, etc. As for the advocacy and social mobilisation role, leadership-and strategic capacities have not been built and partners are not in a position to effectively aggregate demands and interests from the communities to the Federations, let alone to governance institutions.

FORUT's emphasis has been on strengthening the capacities of its partners to access funding from other funding agencies. In practice this is what financial sustainability entails for service delivery organisations as there are no other income sources that can replace donor funding that can be raised at the national level. Attempts at various income generating activities to meet funding needs have been marginal. Only under the best of circumstances do micro-credit projects become sustainable. The only organisations that are potentially viable without donor funding are organisations based primarily on voluntary work and voluntary contributions.

4.4 Poverty reduction: positive impact

FORUT and its partners have been able to reach poor, remote and marginalised communities through their community development work and social mobilisation work in communities in poor areas. The ability to work with such socially marginal and excluded groups is often thought to be a comparative advantage of NGO interventions. FORUT has fulfilled this role.

FORUT's interventions in the field of poverty reduction are threefold: 1) savings and credit programmes implemented through self-help groups or CBOs 2) agricultural loans to farmers and 3) provision of services such as health, education, infrastructure delivered to both poor and conflict-affected communities.

In both Hambantota and Vavuniya, savings and credit schemes served several purposes. They provided *additional* household income, served as safety nets in times of crises, and provided an alternative to much more expensive credit provided by middlemen. Agricultural loan schemes have helped farmers increase incomes, ensure food security and enhance the stability of household economies. Overall, these schemes make a positive impact. Though small in absolute terms, they make a critical contribution to family welfare. Nevertheless, there are question marks related to the success of the programmes in including the poorest groups.

In a context in which the State has failed to provide adequate and satisfactory services particularly in rural areas, services provided by FORUT have no doubt filled gaps in service delivery and improved the social welfare of poor families. For example, financial support extended to CBOs to construct drinking water wells and toilets has improved water and sanitation conditions in the villages. Children's libraries supported by FORUT have provided rural children with access to books and information otherwise available only in urban centres.

However, in terms of enabling people to access skills, education, loans, services and resources from a range of institutions outside the FORUT network, hence increasing people's freedom of choice and action in line with recent definitions of poverty reduction, FORUT's impact has been more modest. Members of the FORUT network see FORUT's contribution primarily in terms of providing them with access to resources that are provided by FORUT itself.

4.5 Democratisation and good governance: too much to expect?

Civil society organisations are expected to contribute to democratisation and good governance through advocacy and mobilisation of the population in various forms. How has FORUT performed in terms of advocacy? Has FORUT or its partner organisations taken part in public policy dialogue processes? Has FORUT assisted and supported poor, marginalised and socially excluded groups to do so? Have people been mobilised and empowered to challenge unfair, unjust or repressive political institutions and structures?

With regard to advocacy, international NGOs, including FORUT, have worked to ensure the rights of the war-affected population in the North-East through the Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies. FORUT and other international NGOs advocated for peace and human rights issues through the London based NGO forum on Sri Lanka. The Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC), started and supported by FORUT, has advocated and advised on temperance issues. Nevertheless, at present FORUT's involvement in advocacy is modest.

At the local level, interactions that take place between FORUT's partners and institutions of administrative and political power fall within traditional modes of interaction. The CBOs have not contributed to any fundamental changes in the relationship between village communities and local governance institutions. Engagement with local power holders takes place within a framework of patron-client politics whereby resources are allocated to the village in return for votes. The types of requests made by the CBOs are for resources to the villages, typically small infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, successful CBOs have strengthened the hand of some village communities.

Further, through membership in FORUT's partner organisations, groups that were previously marginal to such interactions have been able to enter into such exchange relationships because their CBOs are seen as attractive vote banks. As for the more challenging notion that civil society organisations should enable voters to keep politicians accountable, for example with respect to election promises that are routinely broken, this is not happening. Again, several successful CBOs ensured us they had been able to raise the issue of broken promises with politicians, yet, we found scant evidence of such complaints having been successfully launched.

FORUT has made a clear policy commitment to work closely with national and local government structures in the planning and implementation of its work. By co-producing services with government agencies, FORUT could also make a contribution to good governance. FORUT and its partners have contributed towards improved coverage in the provision of services and also to the adoption of new practices by state institutions, one example being the adoption of participatory approaches in development projects. In this three-way relationship, it is the under-funded government agencies that provide the technical expertise, FORUT provides the funding, while FORUT's partners conduct needs assessments and mobilise people for participation in community development projects.

5 Comparing Ethiopia and Sri Lanka studies

While SC Norway's approach in Ethiopia has evolved over the years from a broad-based community approach towards a child rights approach, FORUT has maintained its focus on community development. While SC Norway works on the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, FORUT's approach is intended to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poor. These differences in approach have far reaching implications for the potential impact of their interventions.

5.1 Context as constraint

The critical role of the state, governance institutions and government policies in terms of allowing space for civil society organisations is amply demonstrated in both of the country cases. The Ethiopian state is considerably more restrictive with respect to the space it allows for international NGOs and NGOs than the Sri Lankan state which allows civil society organisations freedom to operate. The Ethiopian state has in general been unsympathetic to independent institutions and tends to see them as part of a vague and undefined political opposition. Similarly, the Sri Lankan state has also restricted the work of international NGOs at times and has tried to control national NGOs that have become particularly powerful.

Decentralisation in Ethiopia has allowed space for civil society organisations to engage with local governance structures. Ethiopian NGOs are consolidating their operations through networking and active alliances with local authorities on the basis of various public service delivery activities.

In Sri Lanka, in the absence of effective local governance institutions, there is no institutional counterpart at the local level to serve as an arena for action and as a focal point for demands from civil society organisations. Further, the pervasive role and influence of political parties at the national, local and village level has meant that there is little space for effective civil society action.

In both studies natural disaster and conflicts emerge as important factors in explaining impact. The impact of natural and man-made disasters such as droughts, floods and wars, seriously unravel the impact of the work of NGOs. The Ethiopian famines are an extreme example of how disasters impact on the work of NGOs. As well as making a dramatic impact on income levels, the war and droughts in Sri Lanka have led to the disintegration of organisations.

5.2 The dominant role of service delivery

Service delivery is the core activity of both SC Norway and FORUT and their partners. The majority of SC Norway services are delivered in partnership with the Ethiopian government, while FORUT delivers services through its civil society partners. Services are produced in close collaboration with regional and district level government structures as well as with civil society organisations. Having worked in the two countries for decades, both NGOs have developed long-standing relationships with local institutions, enabling them to respond to local needs and requests. While FORUT's partners have engaged in delivering a broad range of services, in the case of SC Norway's partners, the services delivered are circumscribed by strict regulations. For example, Ethiopian NGOs are not allowed to engage in income generating activities, such as micro-credit programmes.

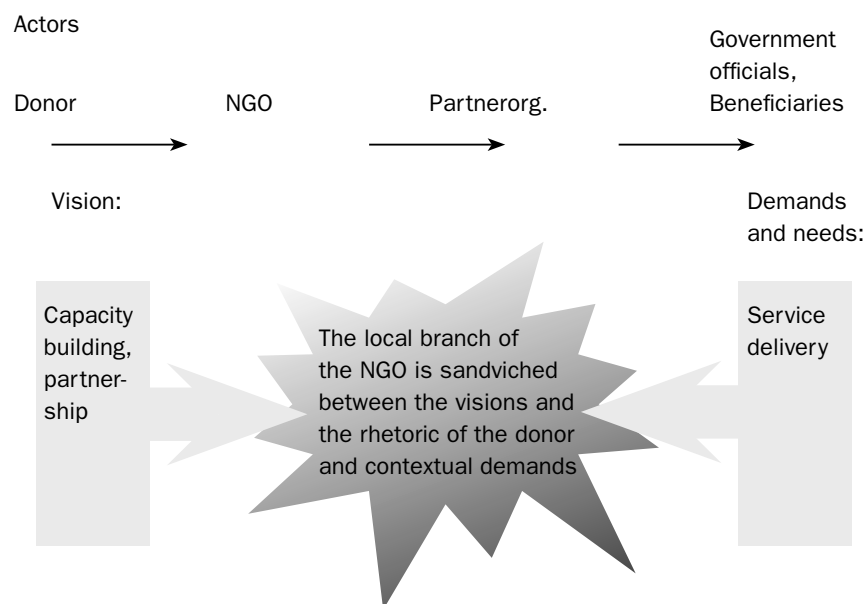
Both the Sri Lankan and the Ethiopian government subscribe to neo-liberal policies that assign a sub-contracting role for NGOs in service delivery. In both cases, the government expects the organisations to engage in gap-filling targeted at vulnerable and marginal groups (children, internally displaced people and the destitute). International NGOs operating in Ethiopia have since the days of the Dergue

government been assigned roles in service delivery gap-filling, which was uncontroversial in an era when basic needs and community development dominated the development discourse. The international NGOs commanded skills and resources that were in high demand, particularly since the government had limited access to financial resources for development and was primarily preoccupied with security issues. Although the technical skills, flexibility and innovative approaches of the international NGOs are still in demand, these organisations are now more interested in rights-based approaches, increasingly leaving the gap-filling role to Ethiopian NGOs.

In Sri Lanka the national government as well as local politicians and public service delivery agencies expect FORUT to fill gaps in service delivery. In the war-affected areas of the North, this is clearly within FORUT's mandate, while in the South FORUT intends to scale down its service delivery component over time and instead work to to empower and mobilise people to make their voices heard. However, FORUT's traditional community development approach has made the transition from service delivery to mobilisation and advocacy difficult, because stakeholders continue to expect services.

Furthermore, both FORUT's and SC Norway's partner organisations in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia expect the Norwegian NGOs to provide a variety of services and view their partnership in these terms. FORUT's partners continued to expect resources to fill gaps in service delivery while placing low priority on capacity building programmes. Although SC Norway has moved away from broad-based service delivery in its partnership policies and now invites co-operation only within specific fields of activity and for limited periods of time, SC Norway is none the less embarking on a project to strengthen the capacities of partners to meet demands for public service delivery independent of SC Norway funding.

Figure 5.1 Sandwiched between the vision of donors and contextual demands



The almost self-evident implication of the pull towards service delivery is that less attention and focus and fewer resources are provided for the benefit of strengthening the social mobilisation role and advocacy role of civil society organisations.

5.3 The challenge of advocacy and mobilisation

Both country studies demonstrate the challenges and difficulties inherent in an advocacy role. Advocacy involves potential conflict and confrontation with the government, but it can also be conducted in less confrontational ways, by way of unofficial or official advisory roles, technical collaboration etc. In Ethiopia advocacy efforts have been focused on issues such as children's rights

and in Sri Lanka on temperance and humanitarian issues, in both cases issues that are considered less sensitive and less politically charged.

SC Norway has engaged in advocacy on the basis of its expert status and clear mandate in the field of children's rights. Its Ethiopian partners, on the other hand, feel more comfortable with a service delivery role that does not challenge the state, and have been involved in providing policy advice and training rather than more confrontational, campaign style advocacy. The Ethiopian report warns against a backlash in the long term if international NGOs continue to play a high-profile advocacy role. International NGOs operating in Sri Lanka in the mid-90s were prevented from gathering, threatened and some had their offices attacked as both the government and vocal nationalist groups went on the offensive against what they perceived as undue influence and interference by international NGOs. In this environment FORUT found it increasingly difficult to balance an operational role with an advocacy role. As priority was given to an operational role in the North East, FORUT played down its human rights and peace advocacy role.

A distinction is often drawn between urban, elite based NGOs that work for human rights and democracy and rural-based, grassroots CBOs that mobilise people around socio-economic issues. It could be argued that SC Norway, at least in terms of its advocacy work, represents the first approach, while FORUT represents the latter. Elite, urban-based civil society organisations working for democratisation and human rights can be characterised as outward looking and working for the public good, while small self-help groups and CBOs are inward looking, self-centred and characterised by strong bonding social capital, and are primarily concerned with pursuing the interests of their members.

5.4 Innovation

SC Norway in Ethiopia has been significantly more innovative than FORUT in Sri Lanka, both in terms of product innovations as well as organisational innovations. In both cases innovation has taken place in collaboration with government agencies. SC Norway has in a sense been fortunate to find an open slot ("informal education") in a large national education programme which has allowed considerable leeway for independent trials while maintaining close ties with a national framework. SC Norway's new approach to education has been developed by technical staff intimately familiar with the Ethiopian education establishment, which has no doubt been key to the programme's success.

In Sri Lanka, institutional innovations have been developed in the relief and rehabilitation context of Vavuniya due in part to the efforts of the area's longstanding District Secretary. Government agencies have adopted approaches and methods that have then been carried out by NGOs, which have been organised into a consortium. This consortium, in which FORUT has played an active role, is in itself an institutional innovation. Another innovation supported by FORUT is the establishment of a service-centre enabling job-seekers to access information about the national labour market.

5.5 Partnership: who sets the agenda?

Three partnership models have been observed in both country cases:

- Partnerships with government institutions. In Ethiopia SC Norway has entered into alliances with the Government both at the national and at the regional level to achieve outreach in the absence of strong civil society organisations. This approach offers great potential for scaling-up NGO initiatives. FORUT has not entered into formal partnerships with government institutions, but collaborates with government institutions at the district level in the provision of services.
- Partnerships with organisations established by FORUT and SC Norway. Both FORUT and SC Norway have initiated organisations that have become partners because no suitable partners were found among existing organisations. As indicated in the Ethiopian country study, several NGOs that work on children's rights have emanated from the "old" SC Norway, whose staff was dramatically scaled back from 600, to less than 40.
- Partnerships with existing NGOs or CBOs are the most prevalent kind of NGO partnership. Agreements are formulated between two independent organisations to work towards achieving a common objective.

The predominance of organisations established by FORUT among FORUT's partners would indicate that FORUT has had more influence and control over its partners than SC Norway. Therefore, one would expect the objectives and interests of the FORUT partners to be more compatible with FORUT's vision and mission than SC Norway's partners with SC Norway's vision and mission. Nevertheless, the Ethiopia case study argues that partnerships are indeed shaped by the interests and concerns of SC Norway.

As demonstrated by the two country cases, the long implementation chain that the local partner becomes a part of also restricts the influence that the Norwegian NGOs have in terms of shaping the partner's outlook. The partners tend to request a broad range of services and resources from the Norwegian NGO, while the Norwegian NGOs are driven by more specific policy objectives, expressed both by the organisations themselves and Norwegian aid policy. In Sri Lanka the partners show little interest in capacity building for purposes of civil society strengthening, but are keen on capacity building in technical fields, such as agriculture and health. In this sense, tension is evident between the interests of the partner organisations and the interests of the Norwegian NGO.

There is no doubt that the civil society strengthening agenda is a donor driven agenda that in many respects is at odds with the priorities of partner organisations, but which they have had to adapt to in order to access donor funding. Within this context civil society organisations must be encouraged to set their own agenda and one cannot expect all of them to be captured by the development discourse in vogue.

5.6 Sustainability in practice: diversifying the donor base

Civil society organisations cannot be held responsible for the general "state of affairs" in the field in which they work, irrespective of whether the issue at stake is poverty, human rights or democratisation. Nor can they be held accountable for what happens after they pull out. What they are required to answer for is how their interventions have helped bring about lasting or sustainable change through building human resources, organisations, networks and institutions and by contributing to the financial viability of their partners.

Organisational sustainability is closely linked to funding and capacity building. While the country studies reveal gaps in capacity building efforts, attempts at building capacity aimed at diversifying the donor base of the partners¹⁷ come across as relatively successful as a funding strategy. A related discussion about how to make *programmes or projects* sustainable is slightly different, but relevant in particular in relation to the Ethiopian case where the ABECs programme could become sustainable if the programme is taken over and run in collaboration between local government and community organisations.

Civil society organisations in the West are heavily reliant on government funding. In the absence of this option (except in cases of sub-contracting of services), donors replace governments as funding agencies for civil society organisations. In terms of *financial* sustainability a distinction can be drawn between three types of situations characterised by varying degrees of vulnerability and dependency:

- dependence on one foreign donor - vulnerable
- dependence on multiple foreign donors – less vulnerable, but still not sustainable
- accessing resources and services from local or national sources, private or public – sustainable.

Both the Sri Lankan and Ethiopian partner organisations have primarily focused on expanding their links with potential donors in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation. They have been relatively successful in doing so. Partner organisations in both countries are well aware of the need and pressure to diversify their donor base. FORUT has also encouraged income generating activities among its partners, but such activities have only marginally contributed to the income of the partner organisations. Other options such as private donations and government funding are hard to come by. In Ethiopia, for a variety of reasons, income generation by civil society organisations is not yet allowed.

17 In the context of FORUT's work, the term *partners* refers to the Federations and not the CBOs.

6 Reporting on change

6.1 Norad's reporting requirements

This section describes the reporting formats that Norwegian NGOs are required by Norad to use.

Norad requires organisations to report in three ways:

- annual reports
- final reports
- summary of evaluations carried out by the Norwegian NGOs themselves

Firstly, for the purpose of annual reporting the present reporting system requires funding recipients to report on outputs, as opposed to activities. The following requirements have been stipulated for annual reporting:

- 1) Disbursement of resources by the NGO under the agreement with Norad, on a country and thematic basis.
- 2) Country reports should report deviations on a project and programme level, as well as provide an assessment of the extent to which results have been achieved.
- 3) An overview of the assessments or evaluations that were carried out during the year and their main conclusions and recommendations.

Overall, the focus of annual reporting is on *deviations* from intended results, and explanations as to why the deviations have occurred.

Secondly, Norad has developed ten questions for final reporting from the Norwegian NGOs. The questions focus on 1) achievement of goals 2) sustainability 3) relationship to national plans and priorities as defined by the Government, and 4) how the interventions have contributed towards achieving Norway's development policy objectives. The organisations are required to report in the form of outputs. Of the ten questions, only one specifically addresses the role of the Norwegian NGOs as civil society organisations, by posing the question: "Which concrete measures were implemented to strengthen the role of civil society in the development process?" The requirement from Norad that NGOs should report on 1) overall profile 2) main trends and 3) overall results, means that it is up to each and every organisation to aggregate and synthesise information in these areas. Norad expects final report to touch on impact to a limited extent only.

Thirdly, evaluations are defined as the prime instrument for impact assessments, according to the Handbook of the Department for Rights, Change Agents and Civil Society (ASN 2003).

Reporting by FORUT and SC Norway

FORUT works on a two-tiered reporting system whereby field staff sends report to the head office on a quarterly, six monthly and annual basis, as well as providing third quarter reports for the purpose of budget revisions. Moreover, the head office in Colombo submits annual reports to Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹⁸. There are monthly policy meetings in Colombo bringing together head quarter staff and project coordinators for the purpose of maintaining effective communication and coordination. Furthermore, staff from head office who go for field visits need to file reports to head office upon their return.

18 In addition to FORUT's reporting system, FORUT's partner also has an accounting system in place, where expenses are broken down according to activities and staff expenses.

The analytical reports from the field staff to Colombo are done by the field staff themselves based on their impressions of progress and setbacks in the field. The reporting format is comprehensive and covers progress achieved according to plans, achievement of results (both mainly at the level of output), an assessment of external conditions and risks that affected the project, measures implemented to ensure administrative/technical and financial sustainability (training, action plans, financial inputs), sustainability after exit of donor (capacity building, sustainability of micro-credit programmes), links to national plans and priorities (construction of houses, renovation and repair of infrastructure, participation in campaign for free and fair elections etc.) and to Norwegian development policy objectives (transformative leadership of CBOs linked to good governance, micro finance linked to reduction in indebtedness, land cultivation for food security, action programme against HIV/AIDS etc.). The reports reflect the comprehensiveness and broadness of FORUT's interventions. They demonstrate that almost any activity can be linked to national and Norwegian development objectives. In addition, they indicate that field progress is satisfactory, but they do not give any indications as to where problems have arisen or which interventions are going really well.

The categories for financial reporting are project administration, organisational capacity and management development (hereunder group mobilisation, advocacy, organisational collaboration and capacity building) education, awareness and skills development, income generation, health activities, resource management, infrastructure, temperance and monitoring and evaluation. The categories reflect FORUT's main areas of intervention and offer a useful way of monitoring whether expenditure is in accordance with FORUT's priorities. This format could in fact enable FORUT to report in a meaningful way on the distribution of funding between the roles of mobilisation, advocacy and service delivery.

The reporting system put into practice by SC Norway in Ethiopia reflects the dual structure of the programme of activities that are supported in the Ethiopia country programme. The centre-piece of this system is the SC Norway-Ethiopia Annual Report which pulls together quarterly and biannual reports from activities carried out by the numerous partners as well as activities that are the direct responsibility of the SC Norway office in Addis Ababa. The Annual Report is comprehensive in its detailing of activities under a number of headings, such as management issues, human resources development, networking, information and regional cooperation, as well as in its discussion of monitoring and evaluation, research and documentation. The level of budget utilisation and factors that hinder or promote the smooth implementation of agreed plans constitute an important part of the Annual Report. A separate Summary of the Annual Report, with an emphasis on reports and illustrations of progress in relations to SC Norway overall objectives, is prepared and distributed as a public-relations booklet.

The Annual report relies on a rather intensive follow-up of partners by SC Norway programme coordinators and financial staff. Partners' plans are organised on a quarterly basis and both financial and narrative progress reports are supervised by SC Norway staff who visit the partners every quarter to assess progress and discuss difficulties and delays. This is a rather open-ended procedure that is well adjusted to the particular situation of the individual partner and the specifics of the partnership agreement. The personal contact between SC Norway programme co-ordinators and management staff in the partner organisations also allows swift corrective measures to be taken, to avoid mismanagement of resources or to address unexpected challenges and new situations.

In parallel with the supervision and quarterly narrative reporting of progress that is the main purpose of the field visits by the programme co-ordinators, all accounts at the level of partner organisations as well as the SC Norway office in Addis Ababa are subject to financial auditing by independent auditors who report directly to SC Norway in Oslo.

The SC Norway reporting system is designed to take into account the requirements and demands put on the Ethiopian partner organisations (particularly the Ethiopian NGOs) by the regulations governing NGO operations in Ethiopia, including SC Norway operations. The reporting system also meets the various internal demands of SC Norway, particularly with regard to measuring progress towards achieving SC Norway programme objectives. It is important to note, however, that the reporting system does not exclusively rely on standardised categories and accountancy items, but depends equally on the strong involvements of programme co-ordinators, whose jobs primarily seem to focus on issues not captured by the standard categories, such as extraordinary local events and deviance

from agreed patterns. This strong human factor in the reporting system gives it a high degree of flexibility in terms of extracting new information out of it, e.g. in terms of reporting on issues like social mobilisation and advocacy.

6.2 Approaches to reporting by civil society organisations

In a review of the experience with performance assessment in Britain, Kendall and Knapp (2000) suggest that there are particular difficulties involved in measuring the contribution of CSOs as change agents, because the interventions that they deliver, in particular advocacy and social mobilisation, are intangible. Hence they conclude that “performance measurement may have to rely on indirect measures of actual effects, or subjective impressions of impact, or even simply (but un-informatively) measures of resources allocated to this activity” (Kendall and Knapp 2000: 112), and that it may be necessary to go beyond models developed in the for-profit sector and in the public sector. Kendall and Knapp point out that the impact of advocacy, for example, is enormously difficult to measure. They suggest using input (for example the proportion of an organisation’s budget spent on advocacy or the proportion of paid staff that works on advocacy) or outcome indicators (frequency of various activities) rather than impact indicators. Moreover, interventions are often contested by different stakeholders. Care’s impact manual, for example, stresses that one of the problems encountered in developing indicators is that different stakeholders; partners, participants, donors, and policy makers have diverging conceptions as to what constitutes impact (Care 1999).

Addressing some of these difficulties, Anheier has developed a framework for reporting on the strength of civil society organisations along four dimensions, structure, value, space and impact, which can be applied at the micro, meso and macro levels. Based on the example of an organisation operating in the human rights field, “For the structure dimension, growth in annual revenue was selected as an indicator; for the values dimension, the indicator measures how committed members are to the goals of the organisation; for the space dimension¹⁹, the indicator measures the degree of acceptance of the organisation by international governmental agencies in the field of human rights; and in the impact dimension, the number of successfully handled human rights cases serves as an indicator for achievement” (Anheier 2004: 82). The strength of the model is that it allows for comparison along the four dimensions and at each level over time and space.

NGOs themselves have carried out comparative work on impact assessment, in particular in the environmental field, where the concept has been systematically developed, as well as in the micro-credit field (Imp-Act²⁰). Oxfam’s and NOVIB’s initiative taken in the late 1990s to examine impact assessment in the context of development work resulted in the standard work on impact assessment for NGOs: *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies* (1999). This work takes a participatory approach to impact assessment and reporting, and advocates that stakeholders should be involved at all levels of the project cycle. It also addresses the issue of assessing the impact of advocacy and suggests indicators like heightened awareness about an issue, contribution to the debate or a change in the discourse, changes in public opinion, changes in policy and implementation of changes in policy, eventually leading to changes in people lives, as indicators. Through an organisation-wide process Care reviewed its impact assessment practices in the late 1990s, and in line with its overall objective defined impact as “sustainable improvements in the overall livelihood security of poor households”. Through this process Care identified 80 indicators that could be applied to measure impact in relation to its overall objective, employing mainly economic and social indicators.

The Department for International Development (DFIDs) “Civil Society Challenge Fund” was set up to “build up people’s understanding of their rights” and explicitly excludes service delivery and welfare activities. DFID emphasises a participatory approach at all levels of the project cycle (Information and Civil Society Department 2002: 24). For Project Completion Reports, DFID requires that the NGO should report specifically on how the *partnership* worked and on the *developmental value* and *effectiveness* of the project strategy. DFID also requires that the NGO should carry out a performance assessment that covers equity, social inclusion and the strengthening of social capital; participation of

19 The space dimension corresponds to context.

20 See the Imp-Act website. www.ids.ac.uk/impact/

the poor; enhancement of the rights of the poor; influence and advocacy. Hence, unlike Norad, DFID specifically underscores reporting in the areas in which NGOs are presumed to make a particular contribution, social mobilisation and advocacy. DFID also requires the NGOs to report on the innovative and value-added aspects of their work in terms of how the intervention contributes to current knowledge and practice. The last two topics that are necessary to meet DFID's reporting requirements are also included in Norad's reporting requirements, i.e. how the project has contributed to poverty reduction and how it has contributed to DFID's country and target strategies. CSOs also have to rate their achievements on a scale from 1 to 5 in the annual report, in terms of goals, purpose, sustainability and inputs. In this way DFID aims to develop a quantitative assessment of the extent to which civil society organisations achieve their objectives.

Like DFID, CIDA's policy is to include stakeholders in all stage of the project cycle, including reporting. Reporting should provide sufficient detail to inform target audiences, providing assessment of value added in terms of poverty reduction, sustainability, CIDA's priorities and the needs of beneficiaries. CIDA also requires civil society organisations to report on the role of partners and stakeholders.

USAID has developed a fairly comprehensive assessment system for the capacity to perform advocacy work that is used to assess its civil society partner organisations. This is an instructive and interesting attempt at measuring progress in the advocacy field using outcome indicators. It is also worth looking at because it arose out of dissatisfaction with a previous system that attempted to measure the success or impact of advocacy strategies. The USAID advocacy assessment system focuses on the organisational and institutional capacity of the change agents. This advocacy index was introduced in 1999 in order to measure the degree to which partner organisations had developed and improved on their advocacy skills, replacing a previous performance measure based on quantitative measures, such as the "number of CSOs that could demonstrate that policies were changed because of their input" (Hirschmann 2002: 22). One of the reasons cited for the change was the difficulties inherent in demonstrating a causal link between advocacy efforts and the actual policy change. Such difficulties are likely to be exacerbated as a result of a bias in reporting whereby agencies are likely to systematically overrate the importance of their own contribution in terms of any particular policy change. In the case of USAID, the new system of reporting means that civil society partners are assessed by a review board according to several criteria designed to measure institutional strength.

Stakeholder based assessments

As this brief review suggests stakeholder perspectives as well as the stakeholders themselves are increasingly becoming involved in reporting both as a result of a general trend towards participatory approaches in the development field, the intangible nature of the interventions, and due to the absence of baseline data and control cases that often characterise CSO interventions. As well as being asked or consulted in impact assessment processes, stakeholders also play an active role in developing and reporting on indicators. Participatory processes assess the impact that activities have had on beneficiary lives and communities and on stakeholders in the organisations or institutions that have been targeted by the intervention.

A similar shift has occurred in the field of performance measurement in the public, private and voluntary sector in many OECD countries in a move away from financial and quantitative indicators towards more process-oriented approaches which incorporate soft, qualitative and non-financial measures (Hailey and Sorgenfrei 2003). The concern about stakeholder perspectives also finds a parallel in the increasing use of user surveys in assessing and reporting on the usefulness of services in Norway.

6.3 Reporting on civil society strengthening and impact

Reporting should throw light on two main areas:

- Has the intended impact of a particular intervention been achieved, and has there been any unintended impact?
- Is the civil society organisation heading in the right direction?

Drawing on the findings of the two country studies we focus on the question of *what* reporting should be focused on, or what one should be looking for when reporting on the intended impact of the work of Norwegian NGOs. Reporting also involves a whole range of other issues such as how reporting should be carried out, by whom and so on, which are outside the scope of this report.

This study has assessed the impact of a series of interventions in several fields, both at the individual/community, organisational and institutional levels, and at the micro, meso and macro levels using different methodologies, against assumptions in the Norwegian guidelines for support to civil society organisations. Based on the findings of this study, we suggest that reporting to donors should include some of the components outlined below. The table is applicable to the fields of democratisation, human rights and poverty reduction. In order to measure change, specific indicators could be developed for each of the areas.

Table 6.1 Framework for reporting on strengthening civil society at three levels and based on three units of analysis

<i>Level/unit</i>	<i>Individual/communities</i>	<i>Organisations</i>	<i>Institutions</i>
<i>Micro level</i>	- competence - collective action - volunteering	- empowering partnerships - income/funding relationships	- arenas and access for marginal groups - collaboration in project/programme implementation
<i>Meso level</i>	awareness about and mobilisation around issues	networks	- responsive service delivery
<i>Macro level</i>	understanding of policy processes	- alliances - strategic framework/national strategy for change	- policy formulation - policy pressure

The scheme outlined above classifies the various components that make up civil society and identifies critical areas for strengthening civil society at each level, based on the assumption that CSOs should be change agents. These categories should not be treated as being water-tight. For example, alliances can be built at all levels.

Micro level:

- At the micro level an active and informed citizenry can be supported. Change in this area can be expressed in the form of an increase in collective action and volunteering.
- Civil society organisations can be strengthened as a result of empowering partnerships, founded on inputs from the international NGO in the form of capacity building and organisational practices based on equality and respect, at the same time building the skills and knowledge of people.
- If improved access to local governance and market institutions for the target group can be achieved, this would be an indicator of more long-lasting changes in institutional relationships.
- What is more commonly found, however, is collaboration between the project or programme as such, and local governance institutions, which leads to the adoption of new approaches and practices by these institutions.

Meso level:

- At the meso-level the need for networks that focus on common issues and concerns is critical for building the strength of civil society beyond local communities. By identifying issues, raising awareness about them and developing strategies for voicing these concerns as opportunities arise, networks enable numerous organisations to pool their resources in working towards common objectives.
- Since the responsibility for service delivery is often decentralised, one of the areas in which civil society organisations commonly engage at the sub-national level is in improving responsive service delivery, in particular with regard to health and education. The extent of their advocacy and influence in this area provides an indication of both the strength of civil society organisations and the potential for institutional change of a more lasting character. In the field of good governance and poverty reduction for example, the issue would be whether international NGO partners approach service delivery institutions feeling confident and empowered about their cause.

Macro level:

- Change can be achieved if people have the required knowledge about policy processes.
- Change requires that the small-scale, often disconnected interventions of CSOs are linked in a coherent framework or a national strategy designed to achieve change. In creating such a frame-work, the context and conditions for civil society to contribute to political and economic change need to be in place. A comprehensive framework allows groups, organisations and movements from different sectors and fields to come together in broad alliances to apply pressure on national institutions.
- Even on a smaller and less ambitious scale, CSOs can contribute to policy formulation by providing research based knowledge and experience based information for policy consultation processes, for example in the area of child rights or temperance. Moreover, policy pressure can also be applied by demonstrating alternatives, for example the usefulness and efficiency of alternative education models.

6.4 Indicators

Given the limitations inherent in impact assessment, how do we know whether an organisation is on the right track? According to Kapoor, for CSOs “an indicator is an instrument to tell us how a project/ programme is proceeding. It is a yardstick to measure results in the form of quantitative or qualitative change, success or failure” (Kapoor 1996: 4). It allows monitoring of desired levels of performance in a stable and sustainable fashion. Indicators should be expressed as a *number of something* or a *share of something*. Indicators can either be objective and expressed in terms of “how many”, “how many in relation to money spent” or coverage in relation to target group. Indicators can also be subjective, for example, when measuring information about the quality of services and “user satisfaction”, or usefulness. Both objective and subjective indicators can be quantified.

We have chosen not to enter into a discussion about all the difficulties inherent in developing indicators, but the following is a brief list of obstacles referred to in the literature:

- organisations do not have control over key variables that have a bearing on the results
- rapid changes in donor priorities have a tendency to undermine the relevance of indicators (Rondinelli 1994)
- development of indicators may exclude reporting in fields of change not covered by the indicators (Roche 1999)
- gathering information about relevant impact indicators requires a lot of resources (Kendall and Knapp 2000)
- aggregation over time and contexts is difficult as the level of specificity required to obtain meaningful information may exclude comparison across countries and time.

A fundamental rule of reporting is that organisations should be required to report on achievements against their own objectives. However, the trend towards targeting and streamlining development efforts has also reached the civil society sector. CSOs are now asked to report on how they fit in with national development plans, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, and Millennium Development Goals. The contribution of NGOs to overall development goals takes place on a small scale and is usually valued on grounds that do not show up in national statistics, for example the closeness of NGOs to the beneficiaries, their ability to reach vulnerable, marginalised and stigmatised groups and the strength of NGOs in terms of building human resources. Building partnerships requires sustained inputs of resources, human as well as financial, but the impact is difficult to measure. As this study has demonstrated, primarily CSOs have impact at the micro or community and individual level. It has proved hard to trace impact at the macro level as well as at the institutional level. It is an even bigger challenge to develop indicators at these levels that in a meaningful way capture the impact of the work of CSOs.

Even when civil society organisations do achieve the intended impact, impact chains are both difficult and costly to trace. For example, democratisation involves complex, long-term processes that are extremely hard to capture by the use of indicators (Kapoor 1996). In most cases, impact assessments have to rely on less complicated and resource intensive approaches and methodologies, using *output* and *outcome indicators*. Evaluators will have to settle for less demanding exercises that are based on indirect or proxy indicators for impact that are measured at the output or outcome level (Kendall and Knapp 2000, Hirschman 2000). This is the way in which many NGOs approach the issue of impact reporting based on the logical framework approach (Roche 1999). In table 2 we have outlined types of outputs and outcomes that can be used as the basis for constructing indicators.

6.5 Capacity building for change

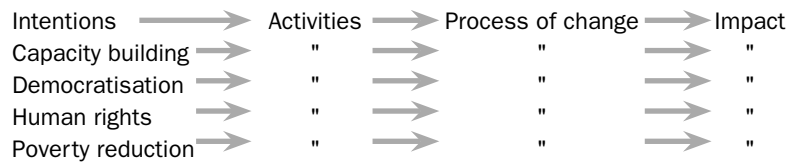
We suggest that Norwegian NGOs should report on how they contribute to strengthening civil society organisations and networks through *capacity building* of their partner organisations and their networks, which we refer to as *civil society structure* in the conceptual framework. Reporting on capacity building to achieve impact in the areas outlined in the table above should be given priority. Strengthening civil society organisations and networks is an objective in itself, and capacity building can be seen as an indicator of achievement of this objective. Capacity building is also a step in the process towards achieving change in specific fields, and can be used as an indicator for change. For example, if there is a commitment towards building organisational capacity to influence the policy on childrens' rights, capacity building can also be considered an indicator of change in this field.

Furthermore, the study findings stress the fundamental importance of capacity building measures designed to strengthen the capacity to carry out specific roles. In addition we argue that the objectives of the Norwegian NGOs and their partners often do not coincide and that the capacity of the partners is sometimes not geared towards achieving the policy objectives of the Norwegian NGO. This is an area that needs to be carefully monitored if the objectives of the Norwegian NGOs are to be achieved.

6.6 Is the change theory working?

This study has been concerned with the notion of change and the different roles that civil society organisations play as change agents. Change processes should also be reflected in NGO reporting. In the section below we outline how this could be done, as a supplement to reporting on outcomes and impact. Returning to the impact chain, we argue that it is relatively easy to report on activities and tangible outputs that flow from activities. Yet what we are primarily interested in is the change processes that flow from the activities.

Figure 6.1 From intentions to impact



NGO contributions to change may be based on change theories, for example by proposing that in order to empower people (impact), local power structures need to be changed (change theory), poor farmers have to be mobilised through the formation of small groups (change process) and provided with credit and training (activities/input). Hence, this imagined chain becomes the “theory of change”. It is important to keep in mind that several such chains of change may have to be in place for the intended change to be affected.

Based on the model above, we would argue that it is critical for civil society organisations to establish clarity and be explicit about their “change theory”, that is:

- the change mechanisms involved, and
- the actors whose actions are involved in establishing and sustaining such change processes, both as change agents and as barriers to change.

The critical question that we need to ask is: Is the change theory working? To achieve change a multitude of steps must be taken. This particular approach involves identifying 1) as many steps as possible in the theory of change and 2) the percentage of those that were actually achieved (Davies 2004: 107). Further, for each step, relevant actors should be identified and their contributions specified. By breaking the change process down into steps or phases, problems become more easily identifiable so that strategies can be adapted, reformulated or abandoned taking into account contextual difficulties that have been encountered.

The change theory approach brings us back to the roles that civil society organisations play as change agents. For example, developing and implementing an effective advocacy strategy is a much more complex process than building a road. The *number of actors* is higher, many *more steps* need to be taken in order to achieve the objective and the *timeframe* is longer. In addition, *contextual factors* become more important in terms of interfering with the intentions. Hence, advocacy involves a complex change theory as well, delineating steps to be taken and actors involved, as well as strategies for dealing with contextual barriers. It has been argued that “there are no comprehensive or “objective” theories/models of democracy or human rights against which to measure change (Kapoor 1996: 5)”. Moreover, “... the various assumed components of [democratic] consolidation – political party development, civil society strengthening, judicial reform, and media development – almost never conform to the technocratic ideal of rational sequences on which the indicator frameworks and strategic objectives of democracy promoters are built. Instead they are chaotic processes of change that go backwards and sideways as much as forward, and do not do so in a regular manner” (Carothers 2002: 15). Yet, elements of such theories can be identified with regard to NGO contributions to change processes in the areas of advocacy and social mobilisation. For example with respect to advocacy, theory prescribes that a series of steps need to be taken both in terms of organisational capacity building, building alliances, and developing new approaches to governance institutions. Both country reports point to the lack of effective advocacy strategies of this kind being developed by national NGOs.

A change theory approach would enable activists to reflect on their work and to become aware of why some interventions work and other do not: “...activists repeat activities that they believe once succeeded, without unfolding the causal mechanisms that actually promoted social change, sensing the need to act, they pick the most promising and available activity they can find” (Meyer 2002: 47).

A distinct advantage to the “change theory” approach is that staff involved in implementing a programme, be it in a Norwegian NGO or in a partner organisation, are in a position to assess relatively accurately the extent to which a theory is working or not (Baklien 2004). However, in general they are not in a position to recognise why. Another issue that arises is that stakeholders often have multiple perceptions of what change theory is.

7 Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Civil society strengthening and impact

The country studies, in particular the Sri Lanka case, raise questions about the appropriateness and adequacy of ongoing *capacity building* efforts, and suggest that more focused and strategic capacity building efforts are needed if civil society organisations are to fulfil their demanding role as change agents. Capacity building as such has not been generically linked to the objectives of the organisation, but rather has been largely focused on administrative capacity. Although administrative capacity is important, it is not a substitute for capacity building designed to understand contexts, change mechanisms and change processes. Moreover, organisational practices in the partnership relation need to reflect the objective of capacity building, so that bottom-up processes that empower organisations are encouraged at the expense of top-down processes. These bottom-up processes should also involve transparency in resource allocation and a clear framework for the partnership that provides the partner with sufficient information to be in a position to plan their interventions in long term change processes.

NGO and CBO interventions are small-scale, scattered, low-cost, and squeezed between policy objectives and demands from local stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is symptomatic that the largest and most successful programme that the study assessed was not with a civil society partner, but a state partner. To *strengthen civil society* in order to affect the intended changes in socio-political structures and institutions, NGOs need to work with each other. The SC alliance is a step in this direction. Civil society organisations in *networks and alliances* can develop strategies to achieve change in the broader areas of democratisation, poverty reduction and respect for human rights. Such alliances and networks are building blocks towards overcoming the problem of scaling up impact from the micro level to the macro level. However, thus far effective network and alliance building has proved illusive (with the exception of the SC alliance).

At the individual level, participation in the partner organisations has led to *increased awareness* of issues of concern to the Norwegian NGOs. This was most notably found among children who took part in child rights groups in Addis Ababa, and was also noted among members of successful partner organisations. Not only has awareness increased at an individual level, but members of the organisations also have an increased propensity to take part in collective activities of various kinds. This can be seen as one indication that values connected to membership in civil society organisations, such as *trust*, have been strengthened.

Nevertheless, in the absence of links between popular awareness building and participation at the micro level and changes in structures and institutions, both at the micro and macro levels, the very notion of NGOs as being particularly well placed to affect change has to be examined in the light of contextual factors, both at the national and the local levels. Under what conditions do NGOs in particular and civil society organisations in general contribute to broader societal change processes? This issue is emerging in the literature on NGOs and impact, both in the areas that have been examined in this study; democratisation, human rights and poverty reduction, as well as with respect to the role of NGOs as promoters of peace (Fowler 2004, Carothers 2002, Anderson 2003, Orjuela 2004).

Regarding *poverty reduction*, the study has demonstrated impact in terms of increased income resulting from FORUT's micro-credit programmes. Although the amount of funds involved is marginal, the extra income has allowed people to achieve significant objectives, for example by sending their children to school. Moreover, it has provided people with access to a safety net in times of crises and enabled them to avoid more exploitative structures. However, the inputs have been too small to help people to escape from poverty traps. FORUT's programmes have also included previously marginalised groups.

SC Norway's programmes have not had a focus on income poverty, yet the potential impact of the programmes on the future prospects of the children who have enrolled is wide-ranging in terms of future earnings and access to resources (jobs, education etc.) and services. In terms of a broader notion of poverty reduction, that NGOs should empower people to take charge of their own lives and to access institutions independently in order to claim their rights, SC Norway's impact is more modest. The only discernable change that has taken place in institutions is the adoption of more participatory methods and potentially the adoption of innovative products (catch up education) as a result of collaboration with CSOs.

Without doubt, NGOs and CBOs are well placed to reach marginal, vulnerable, abused, stigmatised and poor groups, sometimes using innovative approaches to solve newly arisen as well as age-old problems. Through their service delivery programmes in the social (notably health and education) and economic (micro-credit and lending programmes) fields, as well as in small-scale delivery of the infrastructure projects, NGOs work closely with beneficiaries and stakeholders, often using participatory approaches. Service delivery aimed at filling gaps in government provision tailored to the needs of specific groups is the strength of NGOs and CBOs. Moreover, interventions in both health (ill health is a major cause for descent into poverty at the household level) and education (as suggested in the discussion of SC Norway's work in Ethiopia) are closely correlated with impact on poverty.

The role of civil society organisations in promoting democratic processes and in strengthening democratic institutions has become an integral part of the *democratisation* and *good governance* agenda of donors. The civil society role is seen to be twofold: firstly to ensure the inclusion of marginal groups into mainstream political processes, often in the process creating new terms of interaction between them and political institutions, and; secondly, to make a contribution towards structural and institutional change processes towards democratisation. In such change processes, civil society has become a standard element in the donor discourse, together with elections, the rule of law, political party development and media development (Carothers 2002). Civil society is believed to play a role through *advocacy*, by entering into dialogue based on their expertise or by mobilising popular pressure. In both countries there are examples of Norwegian partner organisations, but more significantly the Norwegian NGO itself, having contributed to the public policy debate through advocacy, mostly drawing on their competence in specific and moderately sensitive fields: children's rights in Ethiopia and temperance and humanitarian issues in Sri Lanka. The idea that the constituencies or membership of these organisations should be mobilised to affect change, hence drawing in marginalised and vulnerable groups in democratic processes, has not been observed at the field level.

SC Norway has a clear *human rights* mandate based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has adopted strategies in line with this mandate. The organisation has clearly had a direct impact on children's rights, primarily in terms of access to education, but also in terms of advocacy work at the national level on these issues. FORUT, on the other hand, does not have a focus on this field. Although it is one of the objectives of the organisation, it is not the dominant discourse or practice in FORUT. Yet FORUT's work has had a positive impact, primarily in terms of socio economic rights.

Reporting on the contribution of NGOs to broader societal change processes is notoriously difficult. Reporting on impact in these areas goes beyond traditional forms of impact reporting to assessing change in organisations, networks and institutions, as well as in people's lives. NGO reporting has largely been undertaken in terms of activity and output reporting. Only recently have concerns about the more long term impact of interventions been placed on the agenda. The current system for reporting is descriptive and focuses on deviations from the plans. We suggest that for the purposes of annual reporting and final reports, reporting on capacity building, network and alliance building is critical in order to assess civil society strengthening. We also suggest that a useful way of assessing whether the Norwegian NGOs and their partners are on target is by way of examining whether the change theory on which the NGO intervention is founded, is working. This type of reporting could be done through self-assessment of the staff of the partners and the Norwegian NGOs, and inputs provided to annual and final reporting. Finally, we have delineated a broad range of areas that need to be examined for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of civil society organisations.

The types of interventions, change processes and impact that the Norwegian NGOs and their partners are engaged in are common to the work of many voluntary organisations working in different contexts. The promise that support through CSOs holds regarding democratisation, respect for human rights and poverty reduction presumes changes in institutions, policies and practices, both at the micro and macro level. The insights that have been gained in this study are therefore also applicable to the interventions of other Norwegian NGOs and their partners. The wider relevance of the findings is also backed up by recent concerns that have been voiced about the inability of NGOs to work with other civil society organisations, such as faith-based bodies, trade unions and professional associations (Fowler 2004, Orjuela 2004), the lack of impact in terms of institutional change (Fowler 2004, Orjuela 2004, Anderson 2003), and it has also been suggested that the rather mechanical linkage between the role of NGOs and broader processes of democratisation need to be examined (Fowler 2004, Carothers 2002).

7.2 Recommendations

For Norwegian NGOs

- *The long term challenge is to build the capacities of national and local civil society organisations to affect change.* As change processes are long term, they often require long-term interventions, for example in the form of long-term partnerships. The capacities of the partners to perform their roles as change agents must be built, resources must be allocated accordingly, methods and approaches developed that ensure effective and mutual transfer of competence and expertise. Funding arrangements must be examined to ensure that they are designed to support more long-term change processes. Moreover, organisational practice should reflect the objective of capacity building and empowerment. Whenever possible capacity building should specifically draw on the knowledge-base acquired by the Norwegian NGO through its work on these issues within its own national context. Capacity building also means ensuring that the relationship becomes more than a sub-contracting arrangement, and that in fact the capacities of the partners to influence the agenda and approaches of Norwegian NGOs and donors is strengthened. Local and national NGOs should not be donor-driven, nor respond uncritically to demands and requirements from stakeholders, including local communities as well as governance institutions. The very essence of civil society is its value base and its independence. Care should be taken to avoid situations whereby long-standing forms of organisation become undermined by new tasks and new demands from donor agencies.
- *NGOs must strike a balance between service delivery, advocacy, mobilisation and innovation.* Sometimes the roles are mutually supportive, as when first hand knowledge gained through service delivery on the ground backs up advocacy. At times they compete for scarce resources. It should be perfectly legitimate for NGOs to focus solely on service delivery, particularly in contexts such as Ethiopia and the war-affected areas of Sri Lanka, while keeping in mind that a focus on service delivery has not led to the socio-economic and institutional changes often associated with the work of civil society organisations.
- *It is critical that CBOs and national NGOs receive the necessary support to build their capacities to perform an advocacy role.* As demonstrated by SC Norway's advocacy on child rights in Ethiopia and FORUT's advocacy on humanitarian issues in Sri Lanka, NGOs can influence public policy when they have the relevant expertise and competence. International NGOs achievements in this area often come about as part of broader alliances. This role stems from the advantage that these NGOs are seen to have in terms of challenging and being heard by governments, yet in the long run questions inevitably arise as to the legitimacy of international NGOs in the national context.
- *NGOs and their partners are in a position to target groups that are marginalised, excluded, stigmatised and vulnerable.* These groups are not in a position to demand government services or to pay for private services. The strengths of NGOs in delivering such services should be carefully preserved and intervention methodologies strengthened. Service delivery agencies are faced with a constant trade-off between, on the one hand, equity and comprehensiveness in coverage and on the other the quality and usefulness of their services. NGOs need to ensure that sustainability concerns do not push them too far towards the low-cost end of service delivery, compromising impact as well quality in the process.

- *Impact can only be achieved through focused, targeted and well designed interventions that build on specific notions about how change can be affected.* If taken seriously the notion of affecting change in policies as well as in the practices of social, economic and political institutions is demanding. Civil society organisations must clearly identify areas of intended change, the change agents that can be mobilised within a particular field, and how change can be affected. Resources must be allocated accordingly and efforts sustained in order to achieve the intended change. A critical element in comprehensive strategies for change is networking and alliance-building, also outside traditional NGO/CBO networks. Such efforts need to be strengthened, but within clearly designed strategic frameworks. While recognising the difficulties inherent in working collaboratively, time and resources have to be allocated if the constraints are to be overcome.

For donors

- *Donors should be open and engage in frank discussions with Norwegian NGOs and their partners with respect to how their overall objectives can be realised within specific country contexts.* The scope for impact, the roles that civil society organisations can effectively play and the strength of civil society organisations and networks as change agents for democratisation and good governance, increased respect for human rights and poverty reduction varies tremendously depending on the country context. Therefore, deep insight and careful analysis is needed to affect change.
- *Guidelines at the donor level need to be translated into country contexts and local contexts and realistically assessed at this level in order for them to become meaningful to CSOs.* Donors should balance their need for clear and comprehensive policies, with the need felt by civil society organisations in recipient countries for charting their own course and building capacities that are useful in their own country contexts, based on contextual requirements and their own priorities. Donors should be responsive to feed-back coming from the field and put in place mechanisms to process this feed-back.
- *Policies must be in line with the need for long-term commitments, both in terms of time-frames and funding arrangements.* The objective of strengthening civil society is a long term process, in particular as it relates to the change agent notion. In order to perform their role as change agents, civil society organisations require recognition and legitimacy in their own communities or at the national level, something that requires long-term engagement with communities and constituencies to build the required trust and understanding.
- *The guidelines should address the gap between the micro and macro levels and between individuals and communities on the one hand and institutions on the other.* Moreover, the guidelines should be reviewed regularly with a view to assessing whether the theory is working. The guidelines represent the donor's "change theory" for civil society at the macro level, yet most CSOs operate at the micro level and affect change mainly at the individual and household level. Such a review could take the form of a consultative process with Norwegian NGOs and their partners.

Reporting

- A generic framework for reporting on civil society strengthening should include the micro, meso and macro levels and be concerned with organisational issues such as the nature of partnerships, strategies and frameworks, networks and alliance formation.
- We suggest that for the purposes of annual reporting and final reports, reporting on capacity building designed to strengthen the specific role/s that the organisation is engaged in is critical in order to assess civil society strengthening.
- Another useful way of assessing whether the Norwegian NGOs and their partners are on target is by way of examining whether the change theory on which the NGO intervention is founded is working. This type of reporting could be done through self-assessment by staff.

Further research

1. What is the role and potential of NGOs as change agents?

The finding that NGOs do not significantly contribute to institutional change coheres with other findings in the literature on the role of NGOs. In a comprehensive review of future challenges for NGOs, Fowler suggests that "... NGOs feature less and less as agents of structural change or offer viable alternative development models. Increasingly, NGOs act as incremental improvers within a

practical and technocratic framework that reflects a technocratic, “partnership” or “harmony” model of change employed by a lot of official agencies” (Fowler 2004). Kaldor calls the process of donor capture of potential civil society leaders “the taming of civil society”, suggesting that the entry of donors have in fact weakened civil society as agents for change (Kaldor 2003). As Anderson has demonstrated from the conflict-resolution field, interventions have to be sustained, coordinated in the form of strategic campaigns and designed to reach out to the institutional level and to key persons (Anderson 2003).

Some of the issues that need to be addressed in answering this question are:

- How can the dilemma of the “sandwich” model be resolved, how does one ensure compatibility between the objectives of the donor and the needs of the target groups?
- Networks and alliances: why has it proved so difficult for NGOs to enter into alliances with other civil society organisations, what are effective strategies in building them and under what conditions do they make a difference?
- Combining service delivery with social mobilisation and advocacy: what are the potential and limitations from an organisational perspective?

2. *What is the role that civil society has played in democratic change processes and what are the lessons that can be learned from donor support to these processes?*

On the one hand most of the donors in the OECD countries advocate a role for civil society to press for broader democratic change processes. On the other hand, the potential for NGOs to play this role is contested.

3. *How could the change theory approach be developed further and what are the implications for reporting?*

The idea of a change theory approach to reporting flows from the role of NGOs and CSOs as change agents, from an emphasis on change in the impact chain, as well as from the idea that this is something that the staff working in organisations has a good sense of. The change theory idea is inherent in the Logical Framework Approach with its emphasis on causal links.

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Appendix 1

Terms of Reference

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

1. Background

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

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

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

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

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

2. Purposes

The purpose of the study is to:

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

The study will include:

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

3. Major Issues

Capacity building: strengthening local partner organisations and civil society

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

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

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

Impact Assessment

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

Democratisation

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

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

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

Human rights

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

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

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

Poverty reduction

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

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

Impact reporting system

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

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

4. Methods

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

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

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

The approach would involve a description and assessment of:

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

5. Organisation and local research partners

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

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

6. Expected products of the study

Written reports

Four reports will be produced:

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

Seminars

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

Appendix 2 Methodology

The Ethiopia country study

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

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

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

It is necessary to emphasise one particular point in a discussion of the effects of the wider societal context on SC Norway operations in Ethiopia. SC Norway has throughout its presence in Ethiopia been registered as a foreign NGO. This has had a number of operational advantages, and at one stage, this status was an essential prerequisite for doing any work at all. However, this status also means that SC Norway has operated in Ethiopia in accordance with rules and regulations created for the specific purpose of providing government control over non-government organisations. Changes in the regulatory environment have therefore quickly translated into a new operational context for project implementation. NGOs are sometimes characterised as working “outside” politics, partly in the sense that they strive to be seen as politically neutral, but also in the sense that their activities are perceived as apolitical or outside the political process. In the case of Ethiopia, it is difficult to maintain this position. NGOs have been important development actors and the government has taken a keen interest in what national as well as international NGOs do. The regulation of NGOs is an important item on the political agenda.

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

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

The Sri Lanka country study

Since FORUT intends to follow a grassroots based, bottom-up model we selected two districts for an in-depth study of the impact of FORUT’s work, in order to assess the impact on individuals and villages, organisations and institutions locally. However, we also examine how the partners and FORUT draw on the interventions that are implemented locally in their work at the national level.

Following discussions with the research team and based on the Terms of Reference, FORUT staff selected two geographical areas in Sri Lanka for the study, one in the North (Vavuniya) and one in the South (Hambantota). Since this is not an evaluation of FORUT as such, but rather a study, or an assessment, which aims to describe the type of impact that NGOs may have and suggest ways in which impact can be reported, the interventions that we have studied are “best practice” examples of

interventions. In other words, the interventions have been chosen because they are likely to illustrate intended impacts of FORUT's interventions. Together the two selected intervention sites constitute between 10 – 15% of FORUT's total budget in Sri Lanka. They are in the middle range in terms of project size. The total budget for Hambantota in 2003 was Rs. 19 million (NOK 1.3 million/US\$ 185 000) and for Vavuniya Rs. 26 million (NOK 1.7 million/US\$ 255 000). Appendix 1 provides a geographically based listing of FORUT's project activities in Sri Lanka.

Subsequently, fieldwork was carried out in the districts of Hambantota and Vavuniya. The two districts represent two different socio-economic contexts. Hambantota is a rural, remote, comparatively less developed area in the South, while war-torn Vavuniya is situated on the frontlines of inter-ethnic conflict. A number of initiatives for rehabilitation and resettlement are ongoing in the Vavuniya district.

A mix of methodologies was used for the field work.³ The same methodological process was followed in both districts. First, participatory workshops were conducted with key stakeholders of the project interventions. These stakeholders included beneficiaries of different interventions, representatives of partner organisations, CBO leaders, collaborating agencies such as government departments, volunteer workers and FORUT staff in the two districts. The purpose of these consultation workshops was to elicit the perceptions of the stakeholders with regard to development interventions introduced and conducted by FORUT and its partners, their perceived outcomes and impacts as well as future expectations of the stakeholders.

Secondly, a survey of FORUT's partner organisations was carried out to identify and assess how FORUT interventions have contributed to partnership building, empowerment and increased participation in community-based organisations (CBOs). Altogether 47 CBOs were surveyed, including: 36 CBOs affiliated with FORUT's partner organisation in the Hambantota district, and 11 CBOs affiliated with FORUT's partner organisation in the Vavuniya district.

Finally, the CBO survey was followed by case studies of a selected number of CBOs. These qualitative case studies aimed at understanding village level processes and the dynamics influencing CBOs in terms of how they perform in relation to the potential for and challenge of realising their goals and objectives.

Appendix 3

Dialogue with stakeholders

The mandate of the study emphasised the need to disseminate the results of the study, in Ethiopia and Sri Lanka as well as in Norway.

Throughout the study the team has collaborated closely with SC Norway and FORUT in the tradition of Formative Dialogue Research, which means that we have been in continuous dialogue with the NGOs at all levels and have provided feedback about our findings.

The team has organised three public seminars, one in each of the three countries, to discuss the study findings on impact. The seminars in Ethiopia (January 2004) and Sri Lanka (December 2003) were organised in close collaboration with SC Norway and FORUT, and were well attended, demonstrating that impact assessment is a highly topical issue. Participants came from both international and national NGOs. The seminar in Norway was jointly organised with “Bistandstorget” and was attended by Norwegian NGOs.

The team plans another two open seminars in Ethiopia and Sri Lanka at the beginning of 2005 to discuss reporting in particular.

In both of the studies we have worked closely with local researchers, both senior researchers who have been involved throughout the process, as well as junior researchers who have been involved in the collection of data in the field, providing them with valuable experience working with an international team.

Finally, a presentation of the study will be held in Oslo in January 2005.

Appendix 4

SC Norway's country programme

Programme category	Government Partner	Non-Government Partner
Emergency relief	Drought Preparedness and Prevention Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famine relief in West Belessa 	
Primary education	7 projects with Amhara Regional State Bureau of Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase school enrolment • ABECS programme in Chilga • ABECS programme in Lay Armacho • Basic Education Teachers Training • Scaling-up of ABECS programmes • Quality Assurance in ABECS • Conference on Quality in Education 	Project with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RATSON
Promotion of UNCRC	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Supreme Court • Addis Ababa Police Commission • SNNPRS Police Commission 	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANPPCAN • Forum for Street Children • Mary Joy
Economic Exploitation of children		Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-purpose Community Development Project
Violence & Sexual Abuse	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addis Ababa City Government • Amhara Regional State Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs • Norwegian Volunteer Service 	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum for Street Children
HIV/AIDS prevention	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gondar Medical College • Gondar Education Media Centre 	Projects with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-purpose Community Development Project • Women and Children Tracer • Hiwot AIDS Prevention and Children Support Organisation: • Love for Children:
Disability in children		Project with Handicap National Joy Centre for Autistic Children
Poverty	Project with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESRDF in Dabat 	Project with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised Financial and Promotional Institution

Appendix 5 FORUT's country programme

	West coast	CD South	Colombo slums	Matale	Meda-wachchiya	Vavuniya	Puttalam	Vanni	Jaffna	Ruwanwella
Project villages, number and target families	28/2142	119/6000	5/1720	13/4335	36/2880	43/3284	32/1540	22/1986	72/5082	
Early childhood development, pre-schools/children in pre-schools	15/276	47/802	8/245	83/1188	16/234	29/626	28/729	12/444	62/1376	
Primary education, schools assisted/children who benefited	1/18	12/540	2/750	1/60	5/835	17/897	5/1600	10/3767	15/3450	
Rural communication, library units/members	15/4078	47/5136	12/871	9/725	32/1643	17/560	8/830		51/3398	
Vocational skills, training, training centres/beneficiaries	1/53	2/426	3/56	3/58	2/91	3/146	/441	/294		
Preventive health, health clubs/health volunteers	1/10	16/12	5/27	105/175	26/25	6/21	5/153	/108	27/98	
Housing, houses, temporary shelters	15/12	12/	38/	10/141	/101	/36		/1360	340/	
Water and water resource management, wells constructed/irrigation tanks	1/	19/1	/5	3/	4/8	18/1	33/4	30/1	195/	
Toilets, numbers/beneficiaries	20/116	226/546	8/79	187/1122	75/299	55/523	121/645	24/5608	360/1563	

Community infra-structure, community buildings/length of roads	1	14	1	1	2	3	5	3	
	54/3400	13/4000	17/2431	13/5600	7/575	4/2000	1/137	13/780	
Temperance, campaigns/ participants									
Environment, awareness programmes/ trees planted	4/650	70/6500	5/	2/2000	2/3500	275/			
Youth activities, youth sports-clubs/ youths benefited	9/320	23/3424	5/287	24/1925	8/262	9/365		9/825	
Organisational development, small groups in project villages/members	52/498	559/7229	114/887	13/5200		406/2059	116/790	263/2785	
Banking development, local banks/ beneficiaries	14/1687	37/2600	18/1054	13/6200	29/1680	21/910		68/4591	

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