

UNICEF's Child Rights Programmes in Latin America

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Sida Evaluation 97/21

Department for Latin America

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Sida Evaluation 97/21
Commissioned by Sida, Department for Latin America

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Registration No.: RELA-1995-0077
Date of Final Report: February 1997
Printed in Stockholm, Sweden 1997
91 586 7506 X
ISBN 1401—0402

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Note: The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of massmedia and political pressure Sida was requested by the Swedish Government in the early 1993 to extend special support to street and working children in Latin America. After discussions with UNICEF Sida decided in 1993 to contribute 50 mill SEK over a three-year period as supplementary funds to the UNICEF programmes of children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) and Child Rights (CR) in Latin America and to the International Child Development Centre (ICDC) in Florence. The funds were allocated to 11 country programmes in Latin America, and to the ICDC and based on a proposal presented by UNICEF of programmes in need of supplementary funding.

An evaluation was commissioned by Sida with the threefold purpose of assessing the use made of the Swedish funds, of gaining insights into the development of CEDC/CR work within UNICEF and of drawing lessons for future support for Child Rights in Latin America. The basis for the evaluation was to be case studies in four countries: Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua and visits to UNICEF HQ and the International Centre for Child Development (ICDC).

The evaluators have chosen a broad approach in this evaluation. The potential of UNICEF in the CEDC and Child Rights area is assessed in relation to the processes in the region. Rather than basing programmes on the usual situation analysis, it is argued that awareness, sensitivity and an impartial position in relation to ongoing political, social and cultural processes and the way that people respond and situate themselves within these are prerequisites for any action. The evaluation traces the main processes at work in the Latinamerican context.

The *modernised life* is seen to bring a life that requires much effort under harsh conditions for the great majority. The structural adjustment programmes designed to improve the performance of Latin American economies is leading to widening gaps in societies. At the same time the central government is weakening both in credibility and performance. The *decentralisation* of state authority and resources is increasingly emerging as the answer that will allow for a more responsive and closer management of public affairs as well as increased participation by people themselves. One effect of the decentralised structures is to weaken the line between the state and civil society which opens up a space for constructing as well as reformulating values such as child rights.

The process of *democratisation* after long periods of authoritarian rule has been accompanied by a process of strengthening, renewing and complementing the normative frame. Although the signing of the Convention can be viewed as more of a politically useful gesture the increased efforts made by international and national NGOs, UNICEF and other actors have started a process of increased awareness of the rights that makes it possible to demand their implementation.

The *informalization* not only of economic activities but of family relations as well is one of the responses to the modernisation processes that affect the access to traditional economic and social

resources. They also affect the material and social conditions of children in fundamental ways and give rise to responses such as child work, that may not be in line with the official view of life and childhood.

The evaluators found UNICEF in the initial stage of several changes. One of these is the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as an explicit guiding principle for UNICEF in the mission statement of the organisation and the subsequent efforts to adapt central policy guidelines. UNICEF has also initiated a process of organisational development, which will imply greater decentralisation and more responsibility and accountability for country representatives. Concomitantly to these changes UNICEF is striving to broaden its financial base by tapping private sources.

The evaluators found much discussion on the implications of the rights perspective for policy and programmes, particularly at UNICEF HQ. Both at HQ and at field offices the "centrality of the country programme" was stressed as well as the limitations imposed by the link to the government. The evaluators view UNICEF programmes at country level as pragmatic responses to the expectations of its environment. It is also suggested that the impact of policy changes at HQ may be at least equally important as the influence exerted by the regional office in spite of the informal character of the latter.

The CEDC and Child Rights programmes under study display a wide variety of work modalities and counterparts which allow UNICEF to assume a variety of roles. UNICEF supports the elaboration of new laws and policies for children, actions to eradicate harmful child labour, training of officials in the legal system and the police, training of professionals, support to public institutions, public opinion work and campaigns, and work with street and working children and children victims of abuse and armed conflict.

The main counterpart of UNICEF is government institutions where UNICEF is providing financial and technical support to agencies in charge of developing or executing policies in favour of children. UNICEF is also co-operating with different types of NGOs, sometimes acting more as a funding agency. In the area of child labour UNICEF has established close co-operation with the ILO and the IPEC programme. The closeness and the quality of the co-operation with coalitions of NGOs and other Child Rights organisations vary. The relationship to the organisations of children, notably working children, is complicated.

The ICDC was seen as doing important work in providing analysis on the interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as tools and methodology for handling and gathering information related to children's rights programmes. The impact of ICDC on policy development of policy was judged to be less important, with the exception of the area of Child Labour. In Latin America the impact of the publications of the ICDC is limited due to the almost exclusive use of the English language.

The Swedish Supplementary Funds have constituted from 8 to 50 % of the total funding for the CEDC/CR programmes under study and about 5% of the funding of the ICDC. Even when the Swedish contribution makes up the smaller part it is considered important both by UNICEF and

the evaluators as it facilitates other external funding as well as the allocation from General Resources within UNICEF. The evaluators found however the reporting system of UNICEF to be undeveloped and not very transparent from a donor perspective.

The main assessments and recommendations are:

- UNICEF holds an enormous potential for contributing to making the rights of the child a tool that will contribute to empowerment at the local level and for the children themselves. The changed normative frameworks and their implementation that UNICEF is supporting are important steps in this process.
- UNICEF has a potential in linking various actors and sectors in society and mediating between the state and civil society thus assuming a catalytic role.
- In order to accomplish this UNICEF needs to be an open and flexible organisation in touch with the various sectors and levels in society, thus stretching the limits of the agreement with the government. UNICEF needs to be (re-)connected to concrete work with children a connection that runs the risk of being lost when work is mainly directed to statutory and institutional changes.
- Impact has been achieved in the field of acceptance and spreading of the Convention, and adapting the current laws to the Convention; this impact, however, remains limited almost exclusively to the formal level, and has little bearing in the population's real life.
- The impact of the support given to central government counterparts is difficult to evaluate, but probably limited. Impact seems to be promising in the case of supporting formation and "humanisation" of police forces. It seems recommendable to gradually move support to government from the central to more decentralised levels, where there is a great potential.
- The scarcity of references to evaluations and other types of assessments as a basis for the programme development at HQ and the country offices points to a need for UNICEF to develop a more systematic approach to the knowledge base for its programmes. The ICDC may play a more important role in this context. There is a demand for more opportunities to interchange experiences for staff working with CEDC and Child Rights which point to the potential that lies in "horizontal" learning processes.
- The supplementary funding contributed by the Swedish government has been important not least as an indication of donor interest in Child Rights. However, as most programmes are co-financed there is a need to define the expectations and relationship between UNICEF and Sida in the CEDC/Child Rights area
- An open discussion should be promoted at all levels of UNICEF about the implications of the rights perspective in relation to the processes in its field of action and the consequences for policies, programming, priorities and modes of operation, and partnerships including with donors.

REPORT ON THE UNICEF CEDC/CR PROGRAMME IN LATIN AMERICA

by Benno Glauser and Eva Lithman

INTRODUCTION

Sida has taken the initiative for the present evaluation, in the interest of fulfilling its responsibility to "ensure effective use of the funds", and also of gathering information in view of decisions about future supports. In addition, Sida was motivated by its felt need to broaden its competence in the field of Child Rights.

BACKGROUND

At the request of the Swedish government Sida was early in 1993 looking for ways to support actions in favour of street and working children in South America. In September 1992 the government had similarly instructed Sida to support actions in Brazil. These special supports were prompted by the pressure of public opinion following mass media coverage on the situation of children in Brazil in the wake of the World Environmental Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

UNICEF was deemed to be the most adequate channel for the support for many reasons. Sida already had good contacts in UNICEF, Sweden being the second largest donor to UNICEF. Using UNICEF as a channel would also reduce the need for administrative resources at Sida. After contacts with the UNICEF HQ and discussions with the Funding Department, Sida received, early in 1993, project "packages" containing background material and descriptions of the CEDC component in the country programmes in Bolivia, Colombia, Central America - Subregional CEDC, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela and El Salvador. Project descriptions received also included two projects at the ICDC: An International Children's Rights Information System and a policy and programme development project on The Working Child. A document on the regional perspective was originally intended to be included in the package but does not appear to have been part of the proposal.

The "package" presented by UNICEF did not have the character of a regional programme, but rather represented a sample of the CEDC programmes in various country programmes in Latin America that needed supplementary funding. The projects also varied in content, scope and detail. There was no regional component included with the exception of the sub-regional programme in Central America. The regional perspective was represented by the ICDC projection The Working Child, which would initially be focused on the Latin American region.

The formal decision on the support for UNICEF was taken by Sida in July 1993 and was labelled "Support for a regional project for street and working children in Latinamerica through UNICEF" and consisted of support to the 11 country programmes mentioned above, including the sub-regional programme in Central America and support to the two projects at ICDC. The total amount was 50 Million SEK (ab. 7 Mill US \$) for three years.

OBJECT AND GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

The declared object was UNICEF's Programme "Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances in Latin America" (see "Terms of Reference). The goals of the evaluation are to be found in the terms of reference, on one hand, but also in the expectations both Sida and UNICEF explicated to the evaluators in the course of the process.

These were, from the part of Sida, the following: the evaluation should provide information on the implementation of the supported programme, on the cost/ effectiveness relation and on how the programme was monitored by UNICEF; on experiences relevant for learning; on the significance and the implications of UNICEF's change with regard to the policy applied in the evaluated area; on UNICEF as a channel for programme funds of the evaluated type. Finally, Sida expressed the need for a learning experience in view of its own future programming and activities in the area of Child Rights.

On the side of UNICEF, the evaluation was considered to respond mainly to Sida's interests as a sponsor. A number of conversation partners at HQ as well as in the country offices however expressed interest in the results for their own feedback and learning.

In general terms, orally formulated expectations, more than the "official" terms of reference, expressed the need to have information also on the impact of UNICEF's work in the CEDC/ Child Rights' area as well as on the adequacy of policies and programme goals with regard to Latin American reality.

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The evaluation has been carried out by three persons, Benno Glauser, Eva Lithman and Professor Riccardo Lucchini. Benno Glauser, a social analyst who lives in Paraguay, has a long-standing involvement through NGO- and grassroot level work with different social and cultural minorities, among them street and working children as well as children in general, seen from the point-of view of their rights. He has also worked as a consultant to UNICEF in several Latin American and African countries and is the author of several publications in this field. Eva Lithman, team leader, an economist working as a performance auditor at the Swedish National Audit Office. She has worked as a consultant to the Swedish Ministry of Labour, the OECD and the European Parliament. She has also worked with Child Rights issues as the official representative for Rädda Barnen in South America. Professor Lucchini of the University of Freiburg was commissioned the evaluation of the ICDC on account of his extensive academic involvement with issues related to street and working children in Latin America. The evaluators combined a large variety of formal and informal methods. Visits to HQ, country offices, counterparts, projects, informants and the field in general provided written and oral information, as well as opportunity for direct con-

tact, analysis, discussion and (partly participant) observation. The evaluation can be called participatory to some extent, for the reason that UNICEF personnel of the visited countries and levels were associated in most cases to the fact-finding and discussion process.

The basic structure, form of implementation as well as the time and budget frame of the evaluation were decided by Sida, who was also responsible for the formal steps previous to the beginning of the evaluation process as such.

After a time of preparation in Sweden, evaluation started with a visit to Innocenti (one week) in June, by one of the evaluators, accompanied by Prof. Riccardo Lucchini, who had been explicitly selected by Sida to co-evaluate Innocenti. In July, the evaluators visited UNICEF HQ in New York (two days), and subsequently visited the four selected countries Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua. The average stay in each country was 4-5 days (3,5 days of actual field work, 2,5 in the case of Bolivia). Field work was concluded with a final visit to HQ.

In each of the visited countries, the evaluators were received with an agenda prepared by the UNICEF country office. The evaluators modified and added to these agendas where necessary. The visit to each country was concluded with a final meeting during which the evaluators shared some preliminary impressions. During the final visit to HQ, the evaluators were able to expose and discuss some of their observations with the Director of Operations, the Chief of the Americas' Section, and officers from the CEDC Section and the Evaluation and Funding Departments.

SCOPE, CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

While the terms of reference limited the scope to the CEDC/CR programme funded by Sida, the need to respond to the other expectations which had been made explicit, made a broader approach necessary, including the possibility to address general questions and issues in and around UNICEF. On the other hand, the basic design preestablished by Sida (budget, time, number of countries) implied conditioning scope and depth of the evaluation to some extent and put some limitations to a fully comprehensive and exhaustive treatment of the subject.

For these reasons, the evaluators decided to concentrate on several key issues emerging from the terms of reference and expectations, as well as from the visits to the field. These key issues were: UNICEF in the Latin American field: role, impact and potential; the child labour debate and the situation around child labour; the changes and shifts of the last seven years in the CEDC/Child Rights' area; appropriation and empowerment with regard to the Convention; financial resources and funding situation; learning and capacity building in UNICEF. These are also some of the main issues addressed in the present report.

Due to the time restrictions mentioned above, the evaluators also renounced to presenting a "case study" for each of the visited countries. Another limitation concerns the selection, by Sida, of the countries to be visited. More than following criterias of representativity within the programme to be evaluated, countries where Sida's activities and interests are presently concentrated were selected.

UNICEF HQ as well as the visited country offices lent an excellent support to the evaluators and thus contributed actively for the best possible profit to be drawn from this exercise, even though the evaluation may not have responded to their felt needs or initiative.

Finally, another serious limitation concerned the Regional Office (TACRO) in Bogota: there was no availability for a formal visit by the evaluators nor were they received by the Regional Director, in spite of the regional character of the Swedish support in question and the obvious need to include, in the evaluation, regional perspectives and views which would have required a visit to TACRO. On the other hand, the evaluators had a more informal contact with the regional advisor for education, and during their visit to Nicaragua were able to meet extensively with the regional advisor for CEDC/Child Rights. In spite of the mentioned limitation, the evaluators hope that TACRO will be able to take full advantage from the outcome of this evaluation.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

A first part gives a description of relevant aspects and processes within the region and the field; this description allows to situate UNICEF in the context of the main issues and areas of its policy. A general idea about its actual impact, but also about adequacy of policies, programme goals and potential for the future can be formed.

The second part presents and discusses processes of change in UNICEF, the position and role of the organisation, as well as the modalities of work in the CEDC and Child Rights area, the use of funds and learning processes.

In the third chapter some conclusions are drawn and general recommendations are proposed for UNICEF as well as for Sida.

The evaluation of the ICDC in Florence is contained in a separate report.

UNICEF IN THE FIELD - APPRECIATION OF THE IMPACT AND POTENTIAL OF UNICEF WORK

GENERAL REMARKS

To be "out there", immersed in the everyday life of Latin America, makes one aware of an intense, transforming reality. While a certain, small percentage of the population is well off, the great majority struggle for survival in one way or another, often in extremely demanding circumstances. For a growing segment of the population, the situation is outright alarming and desperate.

Very powerful processes are at work with everybody, also children and youth. These processes not only are not understood by the people themselves, but are beyond their capacity to respond. The sensitive, committed observer comes away with a sense of great urgency in the face of unconditional needs and demands.

UNICEF, within this field in Latin America, is unquestionably doing hard and difficult work. In spite of this, an evaluation like the present is an opportunity to question the impact of all the efforts. And the ultimate, decisive standard against which to make an assessment and to measure the performance of an entity like UNICEF must be the concrete situation "out there" in the real world, in which UNICEF has received and taken on the responsibility of responding through specific programs and actions. Other criteria like internal coherence, fulfilment of mandate and programme goals, quality of management etc. can give indirect hints about how the entity is doing. But only by a hard look at the field situation in general, and at UNICEF's relationship to and actions within this field, can one evaluate what impact UNICEF has had and what it is contributing now. Such a scrutiny also should help to indicate where UNICEF's contribution will be most needed in the future.

This chapter is devoted to observations on the reality of the Latin American region as a whole, to establish the context in which UNICEF is an actor, and against which the record of UNICEF should be judged. Little special reference is made to particular countries, even if the points mentioned are not to the same degree representative of all particular situations and processes.

Without pretending to be a comprehensive "situation analysis" - the elaboration of which should be a permanent task for the actors in the field, like the UNICEF country offices - this chapter offers first, some general aspects relevant to UNICEF work and context, followed subsequently by the presentation and analysis of several relevant ongoing processes in the field, which touch on areas of present day UNICEF work, but which are also examined in the perspective of UNICEF's potential and possible future work.

Usually, situation analysis concentrates on showing up "problems" and situations which "should not be" as they are. The present look at the life situation in Latin America tries not only to isolate and describe "problems" which have to be subsequently dealt with in one way or another, but also

proposes to have a look at the direction processes may take as well as the potential of what is happening. This, even before putting a positive or negative value on them.

Although not value free - there is a basic identification with the interests of life and survival - such an approach makes it possible to look at what happens with greater openness and curiosity, and also to grasp the potential of new developments which point to a future yet beyond our understanding. As an example of this, the "wild" and spontaneous informal economic activity (street trade, e.g.) can be viewed as a tremendous potential for survival when the formal economy fails to provide such opportunities, even if from a more formal point-of-view, faithful to the life model we aspire to, we may see it as negative. In general terms, this way of analysing the situation pretends to show something about the nature of processes, where and how they flow, where they are blocked and where they may represent a potential for troubles.

The observer who is preparing to become active, based on this kind of analysis, remains free to act subsequently with force on or against specific detected problems, or in other cases, to intervene in more delicate ways such as promoting or favouring an ongoing process. Once the direction where specific processes point to has been understood, their potential value can be assessed, and often it is recognised that there is no need to intervene forcefully or to act against such processes.

GENERAL ASPECTS RELEVANT TO UNICEF WORK AND CONTEXT

The collective goal - transformation of life culture -
loss and acquisition of resources for life and survival -
identity and cultural difference - the initiative to act
and improve living conditions.

A COLLECTIVE GOAL: Without exaggerating, it is safe to say that most Latin Americans identify themselves with a need to change, to transform themselves within a rapidly changing reality. Development towards the life culture of the Northern countries - specially the United States - and progress/ modernisation of material life circumstances provide the content of the sought- for ideal. Problems on the way to achieve such an ideal tend to be interpreted not as failures or inadequacy of the proposed life model, but as personal failures and shortcomings of the subject seeking to progress himself/herself - and contribute to a loss of self- confidence. The here described collective goal, which can be viewed as the leading collective myth of Latin Americans, constitutes a powerful drive for everyday life, both individually and collectively.

TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE CULTURE: development efforts, progress, modernisation and gradual integration into global economy are radically transforming the culture of life of the majority of Latin Americans. Life now takes place in a new, often widely unknown and also changing cultural context for which the population has not been prepared. Many people feel disorien-

tated, lose force, and the power of self-determination, as they feel subject to unknown and powerful circumstances over which they have no control.

LOSS AND ACQUISITION OF RESOURCES FOR LIFE AND SURVIVAL: Simultaneously, these transformations are bringing about a loss of important resources for problem management and self-reliant collective survival: as an example the traditional extended family loses its force and is atomised within the new urban context; family structures disintegrate as a result of extreme external economic pressure, of role changes, of changes in the conditions of work, and of exposure to a variety of risk situations; community life becomes increasingly anonymous, as a part of a process of individualisation. Efforts are undertaken to acquire new resources and means, more capable to respond to the new life situations: as the natural communities people belong to and identify with disappear, there are external efforts to build new “artificial” communities in their place; people give schooling for their children an extremely high value and go far out of their way to achieve it. With creativity and ingenuity, manifold new opportunities for survival and material progress are invented.

IDENTITY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE: There is a clear, distinct way in which a Latin American feels different from a Western European or North American. Even when this difference cannot be clearly explained, for example in terms of belonging to a specific cultural group, there is, within the transformations, a kind of basic cultural pattern which changes more slowly and which marks this difference. Such a pattern expresses itself by a mental logic and rationality which is, in some cases even radically, different from the occidental one, by a different way of seeing reality, and by differences affecting the “way of being”, attitudes, reactions, beliefs, values. Often, these differences are concealed under a kind of occidentalizing varnish, and many Latin Americans would not even agree themselves in that they are so different, as they identify ahead with a new identity. Whatever the degree of transformation, this generic difference is extremely relevant to the context of the work of an institution acting world-wide, with HQ in the North, and with personnel coming sometimes from other regions: although it is important for such an institution to perceive and build upon the elements in common, it is equally vital to take the described difference into account and to assume that it plays an important role.

Latin Americans of different countries and parts of countries, are again different from one another. The indigenous cultures finally, also a component of Latin American identity, are often not seen nor assumed as a part of one's own collective identity or national society.

THE INITIATIVE TO ACT AND IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS - While the conventional actors (international cooperation, governments, UN agencies, NGO's, social and community leaders, activists) feel in charge and feel able to bring about change within situations they presume to know sufficiently well, the majority of people living in Latin America are usually more passive, don't feel in charge and feel dependent on external elements as well as on the powerful actors in the field. They become more active however if they sense a possibility to act “as they are”, within their own plans, projects, concepts and resources.

But the experience of the last decades (authoritarian political systems and repression, exploitation by local oligarchies, by international corporations and by their own governments, loss of cultural roots through migration to towns, other displacements, wars etc.) has left most common people in Latin America with a lack of confidence in their own capabilities and has left them subdued to the hope that change, brought about by "somebody" (the next government, co-operation efforts, new economic initiatives...), may give them at least some basic security in life on an individual level.

RELEVANT PROCESSES IN THE FIELD OF UNICEF

ATTEMPTS TO CONSOLIDATE THE MODERNISED LIFE SYSTEM - BUT THE GAP WITHIN SOCIETIES WIDENS: Today, a small percentage of Latin Americans, who also concentrate economic and conventional political power, live a "modern" life as a part of the occidental cultural model of the North, while many struggle and go through great efforts to maintain themselves somewhere close to that model. A vast majority, however, while keeping up the ideal, live a life stuck somewhere on the way, or at the periphery. Their daily effort in search of the means for basic survival is embedded in crude conditions, in a violent climate of demanding hardship. While development efforts fail to decrease and level out differences in favour of more balanced conditions within the national societies, social segregation increases also in physically visible ways.

Structural adjustment programmes and the application of neoliberal policies make violent efforts to improve performance of modern Latin American economies, but even when economic macro-indicators show that the system is gaining some strength, this is achieved at the cost of widening the gap between social classes even further. Co-operation agencies and development banks have made efforts to fortify basic infrastructure (e.g. water, sanitation) and have also tried to lend compensatory support to the social infrastructure. Meanwhile, some actors in the field of co-operation have understood that strengthening democracy and the observance of human rights and rights in general, may be an even more useful way to give force to the evolving societies.

WEAKENING OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - The central state powers' image and credibility has been weakened by failures to provide economic opportunities, by open and widespread corruption, by its concentration on maintaining themselves in power, by loss of control over armed crime and organised uprisings, instability of personnel in key functions, an obvious lack of serious concern, and also a lack of knowledge of the concrete and difficult life situations affecting a majority of the population. As to the social components of the government administration, among them some traditional counterparts of UNICEF, they often show - even as there are positive exceptions - a proverbial degree of lack of motivation and inefficiency.

Bureaucracy has gradually become a powerful block not only to normal functioning, but also to urgent innovative efforts, as well as the solution of social emergencies (as one government informant put it: "everything in our service is deliberately organised in order not to function!"). Frequently, persons in government functions and who are supposed to represent their population,

cannot really be considered truly representative either of the lifestyle or life culture of the majority of their people.

This situation of increasing weakness and erosion has led to avoid of expertise, determination and efficient action, with the effect that UN agencies as supranational public institutions are gradually given an increased legitimacy to be present and to act

- at the side of government-, providing guidance, technical know-how, management expertise, sometimes even acting as a part of government function or in its place. In the case of UNICEF, the mentioned void and increased legitimacy can also explain in part the goodwill and positive expectation with which it is met. The void left by government is also filled, on the other hand, by other actors, like the development banks, whose power is sometimes seen in a less benevolent way as para- governmental, and who have become more and more active also in social areas, sometimes with a new type of unprejudiced, no nonsense approach.

DECENTRALISATION - The situation described above is met by the innovating drive of decentralisation, possibly one of the most relevant processes affecting public structures and the management of public affairs. It consists in distributing and delegating state authority and responsibility to local structures of the communal or municipal level. Decentralisation includes social areas like public health and the concerns of childhood and adolescence. While some of those affected (as in Bolivia) fear that this may be a means for the central state authority to get rid of its responsibility and that local authorities may not be, either technically or financially, up to taking over such new tasks, decentralisation can be seen in many ways as a revitalising response to situations which had been blocked when under central rule.

In a decentralised scheme, the population has an increased possibility to feel, almost touch, the problems at hand, making ownership and appropriation possible; this was not so easy in centralised structures, even if representative democracy, which ensued authoritarian systems in many countries, pretended to create a means for it. One could say that centralised state democracy was not, at least in many Latin American situations, able to work, thus creating passivity, indifference, abuse of authority etc., and that decentralisation came as an answer to such difficulties. While increasingly living in decentralised structures, people remain however aware that they also belong to a wider, formerly centralised context.

In the area of childhood, children in risk situations and Child Rights, decentralisation has a considerable potential: childhood concerns, problems with children and youth, problems of children in situations felt as unjust and abusive, violations of human and Child Rights can be dealt with in more direct ways, more speedily, with more knowledge and feeling, and with a higher degree of identification. The average citizen knows who is in charge, and the persons in charge have a higher probability of knowing the children or youth they deal with, and of understanding their context and their problems. Abuse can be denounced and rights can be claimed with public services one knows and who are closer to oneself.

Thus, decentralisation provides a space which calls for increased involvement of the community, in a sphere which favours appropriation and ownership of actions and contents and where therefore an authentic motivation to participate can emerge and will eventually result in self-empowerment. This is of great importance in the area of Child Rights, as shall be shown.

But it is also of great relevance to the relationship between the formal system of modern society and the everyday reality of the majority of population, whose cultural way of being and life may be far away from the modernised model: On the level of the decentralised state structure, this relationship can be renegotiated in more favourable terms, more closely to how people “really” are, and with a better chance for them to be an active, identified part of such a negotiation, rather than the object of development plans made by unknown, remote actors. Thus, the relationship between the own way of being and proposals of modernisation can be renegotiated and brought into a new mutual correspondence.

Likewise, the decentralised structures also provide the space for a softer and more people controlled articulation between the state and civil society. As a matter of fact, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish in such structures where state ends and the so called civic society begins. The clear delimitation disappears as another sign of this important process of change. Such a space of articulation can be increasingly important for a UNICEF which understands itself as ally of life, both at the side of the state and the civil society. It is the space where both the demand of application of Child Rights but also the sometimes disquieting existence of innovative, informal, often desperate responses people invent in order to survive, will be dealt with and defined in the first place. The possibility to actively join this new field of potentiality obliges outside actors like UNICEF to change and redefine their approach and work.

It is difficult to foresee the overall effect of this ongoing process, but its advantages in terms of real, self steered empowerment are likely to be enormous.

ACQUISITION, AWARENESS AND CLAIMING OF NEW CIVIL AND ALSO CHILD

RIGHTS - The process of democratisation after years or decades of authoritarian rule has been accompanied by a process of strengthening, renewing and complementing the normative frame for an improved conviviality. While the signing and ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child has to be viewed more as a politically useful gesture rather than the expression of a really new awareness and a strong political will by the signing governments or their national societies, the increased efforts of the last years made by international and national NGO's, UNICEF and other actors have set the process of creating public awareness going in a number of countries. It is not possible to speak of widespread, popular appropriation or even awareness though. But on the other hand, there seems to exist a favourable political and cultural climate for a growing awareness and for a demand for implementation of rights. This favourable climate could be related to a strong cultural sense of collective identity, which has sometimes shown in the emergence of important social movements, but also to a traditionally strong awareness of each persons' own human value and dignity, which is not lost even when subdued and silenced by the most adverse conditions of life.

Giving the population better access to legal resources by promoting awareness of their rights, creating new laws related to people's needs, and - as one UNICEF official put it - creating a demand for the application of the laws, constitutes yet another potential for action within the present Latin American context. And, as the experiences with “defensorias” (services on communal level, for Child Rights related complaints, but also for preventive and promotional work; Rädde Barnen has made important groundbreaking work in this area) have shown, people identify rapidly with the possibility to denounce situations they feel as being unjust, even before knowing

about codified rights nor their concrete content. This shows that the population picks up the general idea of finding an ally and defender, and subsequently fills it up with claims related to their needs.

Thus, in spite of the fact that neither codified Human Rights nor Child Rights respond to all their needs, and much less still to a life in which needs and felt rights evolve constantly in a rapidly changing reality, there is a possibility for people to reinterpret, renew, translate and create their own rights within spaces they manage themselves. Such a conception may contradict a more static view of rights - e.g. when conceived as a codified universal body which has to be enforced world-wide - but on the other hand it is the only way for appropriation of Child Rights in other worlds and cultures to be a realistic proposal. And if this spontaneous appropriation by the population is given a chance and is promoted, its vitalising and empowering effect is probably considerable.

Again, the possibility to profit from such a process presupposes something: the acceptance of cultural equality and of the legitimacy of interpreting and creating values, translated to rights, from within each culture. The new, Child Rights and Convention related policies within UNICEF bear, from this point of view, an enormous potential for justice and empowerment also on a collective level: an attitude open to the need of constant reinterpretation and innovation of the understanding of rights provides a way to establish a respectful and equitable relationship also to other cultural worlds and ways of conceiving childhood and rules of conviviality.

INFORMALIZATION OF LIFE - NEW ESCAPES AND RESPONSES - Many people have failed on an individual and also collective level to live up to the demands of a modern type life, usually by failure to access the amount of economic income needed to stay connected to the system and to pay for its commodities - better housing, water from the tap, monthly rates for domestic utilities, schooling fees for the children, access to basic health, etc. - At the same time, the gradual loss of their own, traditional resources like access to land, own subsistence crops, and of their traditional culture of life has increased the difficulty to assure the bare essential for a day-to-day survival.

It is in this situation that the will to live, to preserve an elementary sense of dignity and the hope to get to some basic degree of individual security in life has made people create new responses. Such responses or ways have not only been created consciously, but have evolved spontaneously as escapes and often the only way out of situations of hardship. Thus, an impressive variety of new opportunities to produce some income are found or invented in the informal economy; "wild" illegal neighbourhoods appear and grow at the periphery of capital towns and big cities. Families make markets or other public spaces their home. Adults take over jobs formerly reserved to street children, women accompany their children to work. In changed roles, children bring up their younger siblings, jobless fathers stay at home...

More specifically in the field of childhood and youth, many children work - sometimes as a contribution to family income, sometimes because they are told to cover their own needs like school fees; sometimes they accompany their parents. Quite often also, because a traditional, more balanced way to take part in and learn informally the adults' work has been lost, they are told to go out to work, in order not to stay idle. Some children work in rural areas along with their families,

as it was always done. Others again work in formal settings, very often brazenly exploited, in factories or industries, doing hazardous jobs; or used and abused by adults in their enterprises of the most diverse and often illegal types, suffering situations of violence, and of physical and sexual exploitation. Many girls, but also boys from the countryside are sent to urban families as “criadas/os”, where they work as unpaid domestic help, sometimes exposed to exploitation and abuse without possibilities to defend themselves, in slavery like conditions they cannot abandon, and almost always growing up without the necessary affective support.

Often, families break up; mothers constitute the more stable element, fathers (stepfathers) come and go; children leave their homes as they cannot get along with the stepfathers. Maltreatment within the families, also against children, is but another instance of violence as a response to frustration and to the failure of responding to the exigencies of a changed life and to progress. Many children grow up almost by themselves, more in public spaces than in a home, not so close to their parents or families, and, instead of attending school, learning life by themselves like urban “gatherers and hunters”. Thus, and this by no means is an exhaustive list, new ways of growing up emerge, without regard to whether they are ethically and legally in tune with what the formal system and the minoritarian mainstream of society believes is right and just.

Within these new ways of growing up and new ways of socialisation, it is difficult to differentiate between right and wrong. Usually, it is clearer what is very wrong, in the extreme situations of abuse, maltreatment and exploitation. But beyond, the difficulty of judging right and wrong arises not only from the factual, numerically important existence of such situations, but also from the high degree of identification, self-confidence and sense of personal and collective value which children manage to draw from them.

We may not like these new ways, but are we really able to make the model (income for all, health for all, schools for all, playful childhood for all etc.) work?

With a realistic look at schools in Latin America today, one discovers that they are important to children not because they can learn something, as adults still hope, but as a sort of ritual one has to go through in order to improve the chances to get somewhere better in life; in second place, as a very important place for socialisation, where one socially belongs. The real learning, however, seems to take place within an informal model of self-education, anywhere.

Often adults, in the eyes of children, not only “fail” to comply with the modern life model, but also fail to speak about the future and to address the real problems of collective survival - as an example, the destruction of nature is but one topic which can be felt but is not truly addressed. Thus, children and adolescents, who may not know but sense what is going on and where the really important issues are, lose trust in the adults. Some escape into their own virtual realities, others simply lose contact as they grow older, trying to accommodate the often felt lack of future prospects in their own new ways and daily lives. Others become violent, some against themselves, many against others, against other children, other adults. This is a difficult topic to describe, as this less material, more spiritual aspects of the crisis of childhood and youth, and of their societies, has not yet been truly addressed by those engaged in improving life conditions. Among others, UNICEF is also challenged to start thinking about this.

The increasing informalization of forms of growing up and living, or, as some would say, of distorting the ways one should grow up and live, is a fact which must be faced. It may have more

positive, life preserving sides to it than can be seen at a first glance. Picking up its positive aspects with a sense of genuine curiosity and confidence could help to stay in touch with this growth and to prevent further polarisation and segregation of societies. Thus, it might be promising to continue and intensify work in the area where life "grows" new forms, by respectful accompaniment, learning, and promoting what seems promising and good. The alternative, limiting oneself to fighting, morally judging, condemning, or to proposing "eradication" of such phenomena and thus disavowing entire sectors of childhood and societies, might, on the other hand, contribute to make them go further out of touch and control.

This area could then constitute yet another instance where - both in decentralised structures and in the domain of Child Rights - the possibility of modernised life can be renegotiated within the more realistic life possibilities people have.

APPRECIATION

Even if the material conditions and limitations of the evaluation make it extremely difficult to reach conclusions about UNICEF's place, impact and potential in the described field, the evaluators nevertheless would like to share a number of more summary appreciations:

- UNICEF has an enormous, growing importance and potential, but it also is limited by its formal agreements in each country, with regard to its freedom of movement and decision. Such limitations have to be kept in mind by the critical observer. It then depends largely on the ability of each particular office to make the best use of the space given and to stretch it as far as possible. In the described processes in the Latin American region it seems however inevitable that this actual frame be gradually modified, in order to allow more flexibility and to provide room both for UNICEF's own direct actions as well as for supporting (morally, politically, financially, technically) actions of others who can do what UNICEF cannot. Such a modification of the formal frame is also advisable in view of the changes in roles and relationship between state and civil society and with the potential of a stronger role for UNICEF in the articulation between them.
- at least as far as the area of CEDC and Child Rights is concerned, the actual policy and programming definitions and goals point into the right direction, taking into account the need, the potential and the climate favourable for work based on implementation of a normative frame of reference (Human Rights, laws). Impact has been achieved in the field of acceptance and spreading of the Convention, and adapting the current laws to the Convention; this impact, however, remains limited almost exclusively to the formal level, and has little bearing in the population's real life. There is a tremendous potential for UNICEF to contribute to people's empowerment by applying a less static view of Child Rights, which allows people to formulate rights from within their reality and based on their own ways to develop conceptions about life and conviviality.
- the impact of the support given to central government counterparts is difficult to evaluate, but probably limited. Impact seems to be promising in the case of supporting formation and "humanisation" of police forces. It seems recommendable to gradually move support to government from the central to more decentralised levels, where there is a great potential.

- UNICEF has an expertise as a public, mass media communicator; impact however is more difficult to measure, but seems to be more short term.
- the growing influence of the Convention on programming has brought about a certain diminution of UNICEF's attention to and support of grassroots work done with children themselves (NGOs, community initiatives, children's movements/ organisations). This change has been perceived critically by many. For UNICEF, it means less contact and commitment with the actual social reality, and with the ways the population deals with it. It also diminishes the opportunity for UNICEF to have an impact in the field of innovative, spontaneous responses. There is even an observed tendency to back away and condemn them. In order to fulfil its role within the actual processes adequately, UNICEF should endeavour to recover or maintain its previous commitment; this should by no means mean abandoning or diminishing the importance of the newer, Child Rights oriented work.
- most external observers and informants in the region want a more open and accessible UNICEF; a UNICEF which fully exploits its potential; a UNICEF which facilitates and favours ongoing processes and acts as a platform of exchange of information and experiences; a UNICEF which favours the emergence of people's own projects over the application of brought-in models.
- statements by UNICEF have a tremendous importance and impact. As recent experiences in the area of child labour have shown, it is important for the institution as well as for its personnel to be aware of their important rank and the enormous impact related to it, when making public statements. For the same reasons, it is also recommendable to qualify statements as to who they represent.
- little has been done to develop indicators of impact, for all types of work by UNICEF in the evaluated field.

THE CEDC/CR PROGRAMMES

In the present chapter we shall discuss some aspects of UNICEF as a child rights organisation from the perspective of the programme being evaluated. We shall comment on the features of UNICEF policy and work modalities that have caught our attention and those that we think hold particular interest and potential. We will explicitly deal with the issue of Child Labour as it is one of the current important issues in LA and because it will allow us to discuss the role of UNICEF. The International Child Development Center will be dealt with briefly from the perspective of its contribution to policy development and its visibility in the country offices visited.. We shall also comment on the use of financial and human resources and on the processes of learning.

This evaluation has been carried out at a time when UNICEF is undergoing important changes in policy, organisation and funding. The orientation of policy to incorporate a child rights perspective is occurring at the same time that UNICEF is implementing a comprehensive programme of organisational development, the Management Excellence Programme, the main principles of which appear to be decentralization, increased local level accountability and development of human resources. The programme also purports to enhance the capacity for learning in UNICEF. "We are in a learning mode" as formulated by an official at UNICEF HQ. UNICEF is exploring new sources for funding and is increasingly relying on private sources. These changes are bound to imply continued changes in UNICEF programming, priorities and modes of operation.

FROM NEEDS TO RIGHTS

UNICEF involved itself rather late in the preparatory stage of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 1986 the Executive Board decided to actively engage UNICEF in the drafting process along with the group of NGOs engaged in promoting the Convention. After the adoption of the Convention by the UN General Assembly in 1989 UNICEF supported its ratification, collaborating in many countries with local and international NGOs. The following year UNICEF organised the World Summit Meeting in favour of Children and the formulation of the decade development goals under the heading of First Call for Children. The Summit was characterised by one UNICEF official as a "lost opportunity" to advance the rights perspective in policies related to children. Subsequently UNICEF has actively supported the governments in the formulation and the follow-up of these goals in national plans of action.

Although UNICEF has assisted the State Parties in their reporting on the implementation of the Convention it took until the adoption of a Mission statement in January of 1996 for the Executive Board of UNICEF to adopt the Convention as guiding principles for its own work:

"UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential."

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress."

The Convention is gradually influencing policy guidelines and the definition of programme priorities and work modalities at UNICEF HQ. An ambitious process is under way to revise programme guidelines for situation analysis, evaluation and education. New guidelines for CEDC were adopted by the Board in June of 1996.

The aim is to turn UNICEF into a Child Rights organisation. The introduction of the rights perspective is referred to at HQ as a major intellectual shift (casually as a "change of sex") in the organisation. As a Child Rights organisation UNICEF is to advocate globally for the rights of all children and locally to protect the rights of the poorest of the poor. In practice the shift towards a Child Rights perspective is viewed as not necessarily implying much change in the actual work of UNICEF, but rather in the rationale for what is being done.

At HQ we encountered much enthusiasm and commitment in relation to this reorientation of UNICEF but also some scepticism and a certain wariness of turning UNICEF into a human rights organisation. We met with two basic attitudes, one emphasising the important changes associated with the introduction of a rights perspective and another considering the rights talk as a lot of "hot air" with little consequence for the work done.

UNICEF is faced with the challenge to reconcile the approach of the World Summit with that of the Convention. This has created extensive internal discussions between "the goals and the rights people" and of the implications of work aimed at fulfilling needs vs claiming rights. The issue of needs vs rights is solved by stating that "we are working for the needs, therefore we are working for the rights", thus using both concepts in the formulation of practical policies.¹

The Convention of the Rights of the Child defines rights for children that are understood to be universal in its application. At UNICEF HQ Child Rights as a universal concept appears to be unproblematic although there is a recognition of the cultural diversity in the way that children and their rights are perceived, referred to as the "diversity issue". The way to handle this situation is by undertaking actions aimed at generating "societal acceptance for the concept of childhood in the Convention".

At TACRO (the regional office) the rights perspective is clear and much of the work coming out of the regional office is related to the Convention. Revising national legislation in line with the

¹ This was also one of the topics of the global seminar in 1994 "Monitoring the Rights for Children" the report from which was published by ICDC in Florence.

requirements of the Convention is seen as the base for changing the status of children from that of minors to citizens with rights that can be claimed. A demand must therefore be created for these rights the violation or non-implementation of which can be used to put the responsible parties to shame. This is also the thinking underpinning the actions in the field of education.

However the regional level in UNICEF policy making is not well defined. We have found that TACRO is exerting influence in several informal ways, through the publication of policy papers, regional surveys and by providing fora for exchange between country representatives and the officers in charge of the CEDC/CR programmes, the so called focal points. The regional office is also assuming some responsibility for programmes that cover several countries such as the area-based Proandes programme. The project on child labour is another example although the coordination is non formal. The posts as regional advisors although not vested with any formal authority allow for substantial input into the direction and content of country programmes.

We have noted a substantial shift in the policy of the regional office in relation to CEDC and Child Rights. The previous advisor was much concerned with developing and promoting discussion on methodologies of work, for example with respect to situation analysis and evaluation, focusing on the reality of children in difficult circumstances. The present regional advisor is an influential legal expert providing sought for technical assistance to the country offices and the statutory revisions under way in many countries. Much of the work done by the previous regional advisor is being overlooked and seemingly forgotten. The two approaches represented by the regional advisors we view as complementary rather than mutually excluding. They should be allowed to coexist as action in favour of children needs to be based both on knowledge of their situation and on a legal recognition of children as social subjects with civil and human rights that can be claimed.

In some country offices we encountered less conceptual clarity or very universalistic positions in spite of the fact that it was also recognised that there might be little appropriation of the concept of children's rights among the population at large.

In relation to the Rights of the Child and the issue of child labour we have also observed the inherent difficulty in embracing a global, universalist approach while recognising and responding to the diversity of regional as well as local realities and perceptions. This tension may be difficult to avoid in international organisations, however it may be expected that the issue be approached and recognised with a view to exploring the consequences for the organisation. This is also dealt with in the previous chapter.

THE ICDC

The work of the ICDC is commented on more extensively in a separate report. In the field the presence of the Centre is not really felt although the publications are received at the UNICEF country offices. The fact that most publications are written in English limits their use and diffusion. The child labour project is known although more connected to the regional office than to the Centre. In 1996 a sub-regional seminar was organised in Costa Rica by the ICDC, the sub-

regional office in Guatemala and the Instituto de Derechos Humanos in Costa Rica for UNICEF staff and officials working with national statistics from each country. The seminar concerned the gathering of information and the developing of indicators on the situation of children from a rights perspective. The seminar represents the outcome of work to develop methodology to improve the generation of information on Child Rights with the support of the centre in Florence. The seminar may be seen as a continuation of the earlier work on situation analysis but adapted to a Rights approach. This seminar was partly funded from the Swedish Supplementary Funds.

To assess the influence of the work of ICDC on the development of UNICEF policy is not easy as the effects are likely to be seen in the long term. There does not appear as a direct link, with the possible exception of project work and personal participation in policy discussions and networking in the area of child labour.

CEDC: PROTECTION RIGHTS

In June 1996 the Executive Board of UNICEF revised the ten-year old policy for CEDC. The new policy was the result of a year and a half of intense consultation and drafting activities. In Latin America the draft was discussed at a meeting in Costa Rica in December of 1995 with regional focal points, thus giving staff at the country offices an opportunity to contribute to the policy paper. However, there was not much reference made to this policy in the country offices visited.

The new CEDC policy is formulated as the right to protection and the need for special protection measures for children in difficult situations. The policy is formulated in general terms and constitutes a conceptual umbrella with recommendations of a general nature for the formulation of policy in specific areas, such as child labour, and country programming. It also presupposes the review of sectorial policies to include children in special disadvantage. The policy for education is being reformulated with a view to "mainstreaming" that is taking into account the rights of children in need of special protection. A similar review is envisaged in the health sector.

To have this policy adopted by the Executive Board was considered a great achievement by many officers at HQ. However its importance as a steering document may be limited, unless followed by more concrete proposals. In order to further develop UNICEF policy and work in this area a technical support group involving outside experts has been created. This is viewed as a work model that may be extended also to the regional and the country offices.

The adoption by the Board of Unicef of the Convention as guiding principles and the new guidelines for CEDC incorporating a rights perspective represent both the starting point for a change in the policy and programmes of UNICEF and the confirmation of a process already under way in the country programmes. This "centrality of the country programme" has been stressed both at HQ and in country offices.

COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

The four offices visited were in different stages of the five-year programming cycle. The Executive Board has recently approved country programme recommendations for Peru and Nicaragua. Bolivia was in the process of formulating a new programme proposal and reviewing its situation analysis. Colombia was in the middle of its cycle and also in the process of redefining its priorities and mode of operation partly as a result of the appointment of a new representative.

The special projects and actions connected with Child Rights are mainly associated with the CEDC-programme in all countries except Bolivia (where it is connected to Education). The new programme guidelines for Peru and Nicaragua are somewhat more focused on Child Rights.

One of the characteristic features of the programmes is the multiplicity of approaches, work modalities and roles that UNICEF is assuming.

UNICEF is supporting, and initiating advocacy work, statutory changes, policy development and institutional change, capacity building, service delivery and factfinding. The programmes by and large reflect an activist approach which partly may be explained by the need for UNICEF to show results to its donors. In all countries UNICEF has supported or is supporting the revision of national legislation to bring it in harmony with the Convention. There are also proposals for legislative changes and actions that are geared to the eradication of child labour.

UNICEF has a wide range of partners, although mainly institutions of the central government. In Bolivia and Peru there is also cooperation with the Catholic Church. In Nicaragua and Bolivia UNICEF appears to be cooperating with a greater variety of institutions thus making it easier to act as a uniting force for actions in favour of the rights of the child.

In Colombia UNICEF supports the ICBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar). In Peru UNICEF is providing technical assistance to INABIF in addition to channelling funds from the IDB for a Street Educator Programme. These agencies are considered to be highly politicised and inefficient which raises questions about the impact of this type of support as well as the responsibility of UNICEF for modifying the institutions of the state.

UNICEF is also collaborating directly or indirectly with local governments to make them responsive to the needs and rights of children and allowing young people some political space (for example Coljuventud in Colombia). In the current process of decentralisation and increased local responsibility for social programmes the municipality and the local community emerge as an important space of action in favour of children (see p. 11).

The relationship of UNICEF to NGOs and coalitions of NGOs is a more complex matter. Our impression is that it is influenced by the attitude towards civil society on the part of government. It may however be useful to recall that the NGO sector comprises a wide variety of organisations. We have found that UNICEF is cooperating with the following types of NGOs:

1. NGOs as technical support, as professionals or experts, that may execute programmes in cooperation with public institutions. The role of the NGO becomes one of consultancy rather than advocacy or service delivery, i e: Restrepo Barco and FES in Colombia.
2. NGOs that are "operative" and executing programmes of its own often working directly with children and adolescents, i e La Sonrisa Verde in Nicaragua, ENDA in Bolivia.
3. NGOs that are local and international Child Rights organisations, mainly concerned with advocacy and policy development and active in the same field as UNICEF. In both Bolivia and Nicaragua UNICEF is actively supporting the coalitions of Child Rights NGOs. UNICEF cooperates with members of ISCA (the International Save the Children Alliance). The relation to the regional office of R  dda Barnen for South America is however marked by a certain competitiveness which has also been commented upon by persons outside the two organisations.
4. NGOs that are children's own organisations. In Nicaragua some support is given to the national movement of working children for "approved" activities. In Peru there is an outright antagonistic attitude towards Manthoc, the organisation of working children.

The programmes for CEDC and CR contain a variety of approaches and it has not been possible within the scope of this evaluation to enter into the design and the merits of each project. However we would like to bring forth some experiences, or rather areas of work, that we have found interesting.

Advocacy and work on public opinion: In Colombia UNICEF is supporting the publication of a bulletin on violations on the rights of the child by the Defensor del Pueblo. This bulletin appears as a strong and independent voice to denounce the violations and crimes committed against children in the context of the armed violence in the country. Campaigns against child abuse in Peru and Colombia are used as a way to make visible violations of children's rights. In Bolivia a newspaper supplement on Children is published (cofunded).

New institutions for protecting the rights of children: In Peru the Children's Defence Centres (supported by the statute on children and adolescents and promoted by R  dda Barnen) is an interesting example of the creation of institutions on a local level that will make visible violations of children's rights in the context where they occur.

Support to working children: In Peru the programme of the National Police geared to working children, the Colibri programme, is recognised as a successful programme also outside UNICEF. In a few years it has organised a large number of working children. In Nicaragua UNICEF is giving support to an NGO for providing education for working children. The (conditional) support to the National Movement of Working Children has been mentioned above.

Professional development: In Bolivia and Peru training on Child Rights is provided for professionals in the judicial system and the police.

Violence: In Colombia UNICEF is supporting programmes geared to young people that have taken part in armed conflicts. In Peru there is support for networks for the care of victims of abuse.

A characteristic of UNICEF operations in the Child Rights area is an *indirect* mode of operation in the sense that it cooperates or supports the actions of other organisations, be they public or private. This may also explain a certain lack of interest in developing new modalities of work that we have found. Possibly this indicates that UNICEF could assume an important role as a catalyst and as a facilitator for the innovative work of others. One way to accomplish this may be by providing and supporting fora for discussion and the exchange of experiences.

Although reflecting the general policies and priorities of UNICEF the content and mode of intervention in the five-year country programmes are mainly conditioned by the situation and by the position that UNICEF is able to and allowed to establish in each country under its agreement with the government. This also appears to influence to a certain degree the attitude and mode of cooperation with NGOs and other parts of civil society.

CHILD LABOUR

In the following we shall briefly describe and comment on some of the features of UNICEF work related to child labour. The reason is that Swedish funds were explicitly directed to the project Child labour and education at the ICDC, and that actions concerning child labour appear in all programmes under study.

During the past three years UNICEF has become increasingly engaged in the area of child labour and has actively sought the collaboration with other international organisations such as ILO and UNESCO and with major NGOs. The cooperation with the ILO has also been formalised in a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations.

The child labour project at ICDC started in 1993 with the objective of linking child labour to school attendance. Five case studies have been completed: in Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and Ecuador. The project also comprises policy studies and the testing of models of intervention with economic incentives for the children to attend school instead of working. A summary of the findings in the five country studies is being published in Spanish and in English. The ICDC has published several documents, many funded from other sources. However the documents in English have little impact in Latin America.

At HQ a Task Force on Child Labour is preparing a policy paper and the thematic content on child labour in the 1997 issue of *The State of the World's Children*, the annual publication of UNICEF.

UNICEF has not adopted an official stand in relation to child labour although in practice there is a policy advocated by the regional office which has also been published as a regional policy paper. This is perceived in country offices as official UNICEF policy. All offices visited collaborate

with the government, the ILO and the IPEC programme in support of legislative changes and actions to eradicate child labour, directed at children working in hazardous conditions, as in the coal mines and in agriculture in Colombia, the informal sector in Bolivia and in gold mining and brick-making in Peru.

The offices support and participate in fora for debate, such as the Latin American Forum taking place in Bolivia in 1995 and a Latinamerican seminar on child labour in Bogota in the fall of 1996. UNICEF in Peru has also started a magazine "realidad & utopia" the first issue of which is dedicated to the issue of child labour. This may signify that UNICEF is engaging itself more actively to influence public opinion also in this area. A consultant working for UNICEF is also undertaking outright lobbying activities geared to Parliamentarians.

In Latin America a heated debate on child labour and on public policy has ensued. A consequence of this is a deterioration of the debate and also of the relation between UNICEF and other organisations, not least those of working children. In Peru UNICEF openly opposes Manthoc, a widely recognised organisation of working children. When a national movement of working children was created in April this year, UNICEF contributed to spreading the notion that the children were manipulated. In Nicaragua UNICEF has supported the Movement of working children but has also attempted to censure posters as they were considered to advocate for children's right to work. The formulation was Si al trabajo! No a la explotacion! (yes to work, no to exploitation).

We have chosen to bring forth these examples as an illustration both of the power of UNICEF to influence the debate in a particular question and the challenge and difficulty in promoting official policies while respecting the right to participation and association of the children and adolescents concerned although they may .

LEARNING

In a general sense learning always takes place in an organisation and is expressed as radical or incremental changes in policies and work modalities. It may also be true as stated by an official at HQ that "UNICEF has great capacity for learning - and equally for forgetting".

At HQ there is a preoccupation with the development of and a search for procedures and modalities that will facilitate institutional learning and the generation and dissemination of knowledge and experiences.

The concern at HQ about developing evaluation methods that will allow for people to assess the impact of programmes on their lives does not appear to be matched by a similar interest in the field offices. Assessments and evaluations are not a prominent feature of UNICEF operations with the exception of the mid-term reviews of country programmes. This may be related to the indirect mode of operating that we have referred to above. Particularly in the CEDC and Child rights area UNICEF is not primarily responsible for operations which means that the ownership and responsibility for the processes and activities and their impact are lodged with actors outside

UNICEF. It is perhaps significant that the IDB rather than UNICEF has undertaken thematic evaluations of projects for street children to guide its work in this area.

UNICEF can assume an important role jointly with others in the development of tools for collecting and assessing information on the situation of children and the impact of actions and policies such as the sub-regional seminar in Costa Rica in 1996.

An important part of learning occurs through informal contacts and networks with persons inside and outside UNICEF. The transfer of international staff between countries and regions has been mentioned as a way to transfer experiences between the various fields of UNICEF.

The need for training to implement the new policies was stressed at HQ. At field offices the felt need is more related to opportunities for discussion and exchange with colleagues in the region, thus forms that would support processes of "horizontal" learning in the organisation.

One of the reasons for the creation of the ICDC was to institutionalise learning processes. The original idea was to allow officials to analyse and compile their experiences. It appears this is just being done to a limited extent. Rather the importance of the centre is the commission and publication of a vast number of studies related to Child Rights, the impact of economic and social policies on children and topics related to children in difficult circumstances. The publication of the content of Global seminars at the ICDC is used to disseminate the debate on central issues. Currently there are discussions about giving the ICDC a more prominent role for training and capacity building.

USE OF RESOURCES

Financial resources . The programme expenditure for the UNICEF programmes in the Americas and the Caribbean was US\$ 91 Mill in 1995, whereof 63 % was covered by Supplementary Funding. In the 1992-96 period Sweden contributed almost 20 % of Supplementary Funding to the region.

The Swedish special contribution of SEK 50 million, around US\$ 7 Mill, for three years appears as a relatively modest financial contribution but has been significant at least in the first years as funding for the CEDC programmes has mainly depended on Supplementary Funding. The following is an estimation of the Swedish contribution to the CEDC/CR programmes:

Colombia, about 50 % in 1996 (due to the delay in programme execution)
 Bolivia in 1993-96, about 50 %
 Peru in 1993-1996, about 21 %
 Nicaragua, 1994-1996, 8 %.

Other donors were UNICEF committees and the Interamerican Development Bank. The IDB is using UNICEF as a channel for funding specific programmes geared to street children and in line with its own policies.

As UNICEF is affected by cutbacks in development money from traditional sources the organisation needs to find other sources of revenue. In Latin America funding from private sources is expected to cover half of the expenses by the year 2000. Funding from UNICEF committees is also expected to become more important. In the process of decentralisation in UNICEF the country offices are expected to assume more responsibility for contacts with donors, such as are presently handled by the Funding Office at UNICEF HQ. Although there was not much display of worry for funding there is an awareness at the offices visited that they are faced with increased demand for raising funds locally. This is perceived as an additional burden that will detract energy from the real work done.

The Swedish project support to the ICDC also constitutes a minor part of the total funding of the Centre, about 5 % of the yearly total. The bulk of the funding for the Centre is provided by the Italian government. Albeit small, the Swedish contribution is judged to be important as an indication of the importance of the work done at the Centre.

Reporting. When the number of donors increase so does the requirements for reporting. This was viewed on by the country offices as both positive and negative. Positive because information was put together that would not otherwise be done, and negative because of the additional work load. It may save work if a standard reporting format could be agreed on. Also visits by donors is an additional strain for officials already under a heavy workload. In Nicaragua our visit was the fifth evaluation in the past 12 month period.

Human resources: The dedication and commitment of people is perhaps the most important asset of UNICEF. In the offices visited the CEDC programme was handled by local staff, often working on short term contracts and assuming a heavy work load in a work situation with little cooperation with officers responsible for other programme areas. In Colombia and in Nicaragua we found more of a team-spirit than in Peru and Bolivia. The situation of the officers of CEDC may also reflect the position of the CEDC and Child Rights programmes as minor programme elements in the country programmes. Most officials expressed a need for more contacts with colleagues in other offices and their appreciation of the regional Paipa (1993) and Costa Rica (1995) focal point meetings.

UNICEF employs a large number of consultants and technical experts on short or long term contracts. Some of these work in ministries and government institutions. Consultants may also be linked to the UNICEF offices on a more permanent basis or be engaged for particular projects. In the latter case the fact that they are hired by UNICEF gives them a privileged position of authority that may be misused to advance views that are not necessarily consistent with UNICEF practice or policy. The advantage for UNICEF of using staff on short-term contracts and consultants is the flexibility allowed and the liberty to access the necessary experiences and knowledge but may also hinder an investment in the professional development and even affect the independence of persons working as UNICEF officials.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

UNICEF is still in the initial stages as a Child Rights organisation. The formal adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as guidelines for UNICEF is both a confirmation of a shift in the perceptions and rationale for work on behalf of children and the starting point for rethinking and reformulating programme priorities and work modalities. Although supporting a wide variety of activities related to Child Rights there is still much discussion, and there could be more, as to the implications of the Child Rights perspective. This perspective does not as yet permeate the country programmes. They appear as rather pragmatic responses to the needs of government for technical support and the space allowed and used for developing partnerships with other sectors of society.

There is a need to develop tools for defining programme priorities and work modalities. There is a realization at UNICEF HQ and the ICDC of the need to expand the knowledge base for UNICEF actions. We have noticed what may be labelled both a "conceptual" and an information gap between HQ, the regional level and country offices. These gaps are likely to be found in any large organisation. However, if UNICEF is to develop as a professional organisation these gaps will have to be bridged.

This may be particularly urgent in the area of Child Rights where the mode of working is more indirect than in the traditional concerns with health and emergency. This implies a different relationship also because UNICEF may no longer claim an expert role, but rather a role as an equal partner although occupying a privileged position. This privileged position is also tied to a special responsibility for maintaining an open climate for discussion and also for promoting the participation of children, also when they may have opinions that do not coincide with those of UNICEF policy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Even if the material conditions and limitations of the evaluation make it extremely difficult to reach conclusions about UNICEF's place, impact and potential in the described field, the evaluators nevertheless would like to share a number of more summary appreciations as a basis for discussion:

- UNICEF has an enormous, growing importance and potential, but it also is limited by its formal agreements in each country, with regard to its freedom of movement and decision. Such limitations have to be kept in mind by the critical observer. It then depends largely on the ability of each particular office to make the best use of the space given and to stretch it as far as possible. In the described processes in the Latin American region it seems however inevitable that this actual frame be gradually modified, in order to allow more flexibility and to provide room both for UNICEF's own direct actions as well as for supporting (morally, politically, financially, technically) actions of others who can do what UNICEF cannot. Such a modification of the formal frame is also advisable in view of the changes in roles and relationship between state and civil society and with the potential of a stronger role for UNICEF in the articulation between them.
- at least as far as the area of CEDC and Child Rights is concerned, the actual policy and programming definitions and goals point into the right direction, taking into account the need, the potential and the climate favourable for work based on implementation of a normative frame of reference (Human Rights, laws). Impact has been achieved in the field of acceptance and spreading of the Convention, and adapting the current laws to the Convention; this impact, however, remains limited almost exclusively to the formal level, and has little bearing in the population's real life. There is a tremendous potential for UNICEF to contribute to people's empowerment by applying a less static view of Child Rights, which allows people to formulate rights from within their reality and based on their own ways to develop conceptions about life and conviviality.
- the impact of the support given to central government counterparts is difficult to evaluate, but probably limited. Impact seems to be promising in the case of supporting formation and "humanisation" of police forces. It seems recommendable to gradually move support to government from the central to more decentralised levels, where there is a great potential.
- UNICEF has an expertise as a public, mass media communicator; impact however is more difficult to measure, but seems to be more short term.
- the growing influence of the Convention on programming has brought about a certain diminution of UNICEF's attention to and support of grassroots work done with children themselves (NGOs, community initiatives, children's movements/ organisations). This change has been perceived critically by many. For UNICEF, it means less contact and commitment with the actual social reality, and with the ways the population deals with it. It also diminishes the opportunity for UNICEF to have an impact in the field of innovative, spontaneous responses. There is even an observed tendency to back away and condemn them. In order to fulfil its role within the actual processes adequately, UNICEF should endeavour to recover or maintain

its previous commitment; this should by no means mean abandoning or diminishing the importance of the newer, Child Rights oriented work.

- most external observers and informants in the region want a more open and accessible UNICEF; a UNICEF which fully exploits its potential; a UNICEF which facilitates and favours ongoing processes and acts as a platform of exchange of information and experiences; a UNICEF which favours the emergence of people's own projects over the application of brought-in models.
- statements by UNICEF have a tremendous importance and impact. As recent experiences in the area of Child Labour have shown, it is important for the institution as well as for its personnel to be aware of their important rank and the enormous impact related to it, when making public statements. For the same reasons, it is also recommendable to qualify statements as to who they represent.
- ICDC is engaged in interesting work on tools for the generation of information on the situation of children. So far this work has not resulted in the development of indicators of impact, for all types of work by UNICEF in the evaluated field.
- the scarcity of references to evaluations and other types of assessments as a basis for the programme development at HQ and the country offices point to a need for UNICEF to develop a more systematic approach to the knowledge base for its programmes. The ICDC may play a more important role in this context.
- the exchange of experiences between the Latin American region and other regions as well as HQ and the ICDC is hampered by the dominance of the English language. More attention should be paid to the issue of language in UNICEF work and publications.
- UNICEF is undergoing important changes in policy, organisation and funding. The orientation of policy to incorporate a child rights perspective is occurring at the same time that UNICEF is implementing a comprehensive programme of organisational development. UNICEF is becoming increasingly dependent on private sources for funding its programmes.
- an open discussion should be promoted at all levels of UNICEF about the implications of the rights perspective in relation to the processes in its field of action and the consequences for policies, programming, priorities and modes of operation, and partnerships including with donors.

REPORT ON THE ICDC

Evaluation of the International Child Development Center (ICDC) within the agreement between the Swedish Government and UNICEF²

by Professor Riccardo Lucchini

I) The objectives of the agreement between UNICEF and the Swedish Government

The main goal of the agreement between the Swedish Government and UNICEF is the promotion and the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Latin America and the Caribbean. As an important actor in this agreement, the UNICEF International Child Development Center (ICDC) is particularly committed:

A) to set up a programme of policy studies and of action-oriented research. These activities have to be accompanied by counselling and supporting activities in the field of protection of the working child. They must contribute to the elimination of the most dangerous forms of child exploitation;

B) to establish a system of information on children's rights. This system must be user-oriented. The information shall be structured in the following way: **research in progress, bibliographic materials and evaluation, individual and institutional contacts, forthcoming professional meetings and training opportunities.**

Included in the objectives of the agreement with the Swedish Government, three fields of activity of the Center have to be mentioned as well:

(1) Monitoring children's rights. In order to ensure a follow-up of the application of the Convention at both national and local levels. This activity is meant as "a measuring and social planning instrument that allows evaluation to be made of how an intervention is progressing and what impact it is having."

² The part of the report concerning the International Child Development Center (ICDC) is not strictly spoken an evaluation. The goal is above all to allow Sida (the Swedish International Development Agency) to have a more accurate image of ICDC's resources and activities within the agreement between the Swedish Government and UNICEF. The purpose is also to give SIDA a prospect which allows it to consider the advantages and disadvantages of a prolongation of the agreement with UNICEF.

(2) Decentralization of Programmes of Action. "Decentralization is especially important because it will enable politicians, public officials, NGOs and communities to become more aware of children's issues". The Center should concentrate on: "a way of increasing planning and participation at local level; methods and techniques for decentralising NPAs".

(3) Children's rights information base. Here the Center must play an important role in the following tasks: (a) "stimulating the development of internationally accepted information-handling tools and building up an organizational database on children's rights" ; (b) promoting networking arrangements that actively involve developing countries; (c) "strengthening its own database on children's rights and production and dissemination of reference tools for children's rights information".

The articles of the Convention most relevant to the agreement are the articles: 2 (protection from discrimination), 3 (the best interest of the child), 4 (mobilization of available resources), 32 (child labour), 39 (children in armed conflict and rehabilitative care).

A central question is that which touches the approach of the child **in terms of rights rather than in terms of needs**. The ICDC has developed exceptional competencies in the field of children's rights and of questions regarding the application of the Convention. As we will see later, the definition of the child in terms of rights rather than in terms of needs is not closed and is far from being closed. Moreover the two approaches **are not antithetic**.

II) The UNICEF International Child Development Center (ICDC)

The goal is not here to present the ICDC as an organ of UNICEF, but to present some of its important resources for putting into practice the agreement with Sweden.

The ICDC has been created as a center for research, training and development (1988) regarding children's rights. In this field, the Center has acquired competencies which are acknowledged not only within UNICEF, but also in the political and academic world and by intervention agencies (for instance NGOs). Thanks to these competencies, the Center plays an important role in the definition of UNICEF's intervention policies. And this particularly in the field of working children and school education. The Center is also starting studies on children victims of armed conflicts and of their social reintegration.

The terms of reference which has been given to the ICDC by UNICEF specifies that it must "strengthen the capacity of UNICEF and its cooperating institutions to respond to the evolving needs of children and to promote an emerging new global ethic for children". This mandate and the competencies the Center has developed since its foundation **have allowed ICDC to become one of the principal actors in the agreement between the Swedish Government and UNICEF**.

During the period 1994-1996, the activities of ICDC have mainly been in three fields: (a) **economic policies and the mobilization of resources for children**, (b) **the rights of the child**, (c) **decentralization, participation and local governance**.

The application of the Convention is a recent field of activity for UNICEF and the ICDC is assuming important responsibilities in this area. The Center benefits from an important degree of autonomy and thus takes on more easily the function of mediator between UNICEF's H.Q., the regional offices of UNICEF, the NGOs and the other local actors. This position of mediator **does not so much touch the technical application of the Convention, but the transmission of knowledge on the socio-economic conditions, as well as on the social and educational policies of the States**. This role of mediator is **essential for an effective application of the Convention**. Precisely, the competencies which allow ICDC to effectively take on this role have been strengthened thanks to the **Swedish contribution**.

A substantial part of the Center's activities is research and training sessions in the field involving local actors (NGOs, local authorities, researchers). **The operational identity** of the Center in the field of promotion of children rights is now well established. For the research and the seminars it organises in the countries comprised in the agreement with Sweden, the ICDC takes on local specialists. This is essential for the local and national dissemination of results in its different activities (research, monitoring, training) as well as in order to strengthen the legitimacy of its activities in the countries committed to the application of the Convention.

Regarding the change from an approach of childhood in terms of needs to an approach in terms of rights, the ICDC has played a pioneering role. Yet, the discussion on this question is far from being closed, in the Center as well. Actually, as E. Burman puts it, "in seeking to promote children's well-being and welfare across the world, there is no escape from treating the difficult path between cultural imperialism and cultural relativism"³

III) The activities of ICDC under the agreement with Sweden.

The ICDC's research activities on the socio-economic conditions of children and their families is essential for the application of the Convention. **This research function is combined with others like dissemination of information, of training and of monitoring. Therefore these activities take place in a middle and long term perspective.**

This is the reason why the ICDC is less concerned with emergency intervention which by itself is one of the important functions of UNICEF. The **complementarity** between emergency intervention and projects in a longer term seems to benefit from a growing recognition.

³ E. Burman, "Local, Global or Globalized? Child Development in International Child Rights Legislation", in: *Childhood*, 1996, Vol. 3, No 1, p. 46.

So the action-research, the participation to the Child rights information network (CRIN), the setting up of a database on children's rights, the research on the children's rights indicators and on children's work, the monitoring and training, are the principal activities/tools allowing the ICDC to conduct its action in favor of the application of the Convention.

3.1.) The activities linked to information and its dissemination.

Research of information regarding the rights of the child is not easy. And this happens in the North not less than in the South. This is how the **creation of information and their distribution has become one of ICDC's priorities**. It is important to stress that within ICDC the debate continues on the question of **what this information must be**. This debate is taking place in constant interaction with its partners from the South (NGOs, researchers, professionals).

The ICDC is contributing to the creation of information and their distribution in the following ways:

(a) Participation in the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN).

The CRIN was founded in 1995 at an international meeting with 65 participants from over 50 national, regional and international organizations. CRIN is providing a means of exchange, cooperation and capacity building in Child Rights information through a portfolio of five participatory projects, three of which are already operational:

- a database of Child Rights organisations;
- a network newsletter;
- Internet activities.

A key aim and challenge for CRIN is to promote the equal and effective participation of southern-based organisations. In March 1996, four such organisations became concretely involved in the management and development of CRIN. A two-year plan (1996-1998) has been adopted. The principal goal is to provide an active support to the information activities of its members and to involve a growing number of southern organisations.

Among the realizations of the Center essential to the production and divulgation of a credible information on the conditions of the application of children's rights, we also find:

- A bibliography on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995);
- A Glossary of Children's Rights. Basic Terms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995). The aim of the glossary is to provide a clear understanding of children's rights terminology;
- A Convention on the Rights of the Child Thesaurus (1996). It is a specific information-handling tool aimed at a finite group of users: librarians and documentalists.
- The UNICEF Innocenti Children's Rights Infobase. It is a collection of writings and bibliographic references on children's rights. The user can read or scan entire publications and book excerpts and print them.

The linking of ICDC's database to Internet is also envisaged. The Center has also to study the modalities for setting up a child labour conference on Internet.

(b) The Children's Rights Information Digest.

In order to render the information more accessible for the users directly engaged in the defense of children's rights, the ICDC develops Digests on specific themes. These Digests will be put on Internet. Three Digests will be produced yearly and the first one is foreseen for Autumn 1996. The topic chosen will correspond to discrete components of the Center's programme in Children rights as well as in training activities in this area.

(c) The Children's Rights Indicators.

"Such indicators should meet basic requirements such as validity, objectivity, sensitivity, comparability, accuracy and disaggregation, and referred to ongoing efforts within the UN system to develop appropriate indicators to measure achievements in the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights that would serve States parties in their efforts to implement and monitor children's rights".

In January of 1996 the Center published a report called "Indicators for children's rights resource file". This work introduces new elements regarding: (a) the actual status and living conditions of children, and (b) the evaluation of progress achieved over time towards the full realization of children's rights. The report establishes criteria to render these indicators operational, thus allowing an evaluation of the application of the Convention in the different countries. The ICDC has given itself among other goals: (a) to map current and future work in this area, (b) to create an institutional space and environment for integrated development of work on children's indicators, (c) to disseminate basic information now, and new information as it is produced, (d) to create a multiplier effect by organising and encouraging capacity-building internationally. The ICDC also establishes a certain number of measures which have to be taken in order to meet these goals in the future (note: See: The role of ICDC in the field of children's rights indicators. A background paper, 29.5.95).

Another important document produced by ICDC is the "Manual. Recopilacion y analisis de la informacion sobre los derechos de la infancia en Centroamerica" (25.5.96). This work is conceived to be a guide to data collection for anyone who is interested in children's rights in Central America ... The manual can be read as a continuous text of background information for trainers (p. 7). The concrete and didactic character of this manual makes it a precious tool for anyone engaged in the promotion of children's rights. As for its other fields of activities, the ICDC looks closely to the concrete application possibilities of its studies.

The contribution of the Swedish Government to the study and application of children's rights indicators by ICDC can be considered as being a priority.

3.2.) The research and publication activities.

Studies on child work and education as a means to reduce the most dangerous forms of child exploitation form the nucleus of the studies supported by the Swedish funds. The list of these publications is found in the **1994 Progress Report**, as well as in the **1995 Progress Report**.

All these studies are significant for the defense of children's rights. For reasons of space we shall only mention the report on the case studies that have been completed in five countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru). This study has the title "Better schools: less child work". In this study, one can read that "some available evidence indicates that estimations tend to exaggerate children's contribution to the family economy" and that "we have no way of knowing at present whether children's monetary contribution is vital to the very survival of poor families".

Regarding the intensity and the degree of exploitation of children by work, there are substantial differences among countries. This is the reason why ICDC does not believe in the effectiveness of a general approach on this question, but to its contextualisation and to the use of local competencies (research and intervention).

Already in 1993 "it is proposed that a next phase of this programme would concentrate especially on the problems of children and adolescents, and their families, who are working in situations such as those proscribed in Article 32 of the Convention"⁴.

In cooperation with ILO, the ICDC thus works on a question which is central to the defense of children's rights. The question of "income substitution schemes and financial incentives as a mechanism to reduce child labour and school desertion and repetition". In this question, an important point is the "testing of rapid appraisal procedures (RAP)". The RAP are above all intended for the evaluation of the most hidden forms of child work (prostitution, domestic work, forms of slavery, etc.). Actually, as one can read in an ILO document⁵, "good quality information on child workers ... is scarce. Because of this, our efforts to deal with the problem have, all too often, been limited to visible forms of child labour. And we have simply stretched existing programmes for children to incorporate child workers, rather than developing new approaches to address the child worker's special need".

The ICDC is not taking an abolitionist stand regarding child work, but stresses the necessity to promote meaningful work as well as relevant education. The regional seminars it organises currently contribute to this promotion.

IV) Final considerations

4.1.) The ICDC is a center of excellence in at least two fields:

⁴ ICDC, "Projects for Partnership Profiles", No 4, 1993, p. 2.

⁵ ILO, "Finding out about child labour (quickly)", ILO Office, Geneva, 1995, p. 1.

(a) child work and its implications for the application of rights contained in the Convention; (b) the computerisation of the information related to the Convention. With the products of action-oriented research, this information must be **user-oriented**. This is one of ICDC's priorities. One can discern two main categories of users: scientists and professionals (lawyers, politicians, etc.) and the people in fieldwork (NGO, assistance programmes, the children themselves). There is no doubt that for the first ones access to the information produced by ICDC is easier than for the second ones. Therefore the Center has to see to it that this information comes to the actors who are directly in contact with the children. The question of **how the diffusion and use of information that it is producing or collecting takes place must be a constant concern** of the Center. The impact of its activities touches several levels of intervention in favor of children as well as different actors (NGOs, assistance programmes, initiators of social and educational policies, etc.). Here comes the problem of evaluation and of its multiple impacts, and ICDC has to pay special attention to this question. To this aim it has to, among other things, actively support the setting up of local networks of information production and divulgation.

4.2.) The ICDC develops important competencies in the field of **Children's Rights Indicators**. To know these indicators is essential for the defense of children's rights. Thus, the Center must have the necessary resources for the study of these indicators, as well as their diffusion.

4.3.) The competencies of ICDC puts it in a position where it is able to rapidly become **the organ of UNICEF specialised in the field of application of the Convention**. It is actually essential to know what the States parties make out of the United Committee on the Rights of the Child. In this perspective, the ICDC intends to stress on the macroscopic aspects of the application of the Convention.

4.4.) The ICDC is a **research center** in the field of **child work**. It provides important data to set up and concretize essential policies (social and educational) for the application of the Convention. Particular attention is given to the necessary reforms regarding education in order to reduce the most harmful forms of labour. This is the reason why, in the seminars it organises, the ICDC systematically calls together some specialists in the field of child labour and some specialists in the field of education.

The ICDC also pays attention to children in the 16-18 age category for whom the educational opportunities are almost inexistant. Moreover, the ICDC wants to pay particular attention to the influence of work on the socio-affective and identity development of the child.

4.5.) **The current priorities of ICDC** are the following: (a) research on the diverse forms of child labour and the means to diminish their perverse effects; (b) work in the field of school reforms able to protect the child from the most harmful forms of labour; (c) monitoring (follow-up) in the application of the Convention; (d) intervention with children who are victims of war, as well as their social and familial reinsertion; (e) active participation to CRIN (the Child Rights Information Network).

The conclusions reached by the reporter at the end of this part on ICDC are two-fold:

a) The terms of the agreement with the Swedish Government **have been respected**. Moreover, in different fields (**CRIN, RAP, ILO**), the ICDC has developed important synergies. These synergies allow to optimise the use of the Swedish aid.

b) the agreement with the Government of Sweden **deserves a renewal** for a period which length has to be defined by the interested parties.

In addition, we would like to stress that **the conditions** under which we have worked **were excellent**. Everything has been done for the documentation and the information to be as complete as possible.

Latin America Department
Elisabet Hellsten/Elisabeth Lewin
in collaboration with Department for
Democracy and Social Development

1996-04-19

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation on UNICEFs Program "Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances in Latin America"

1 Background

According to a decision by the Government of Sweden of 3 Sept 1992 SIDA was requested to undertake programmes in favour of street children/working children in Brazil and in South America in general.

In 1993 and 1994 SIDA supported a UNICEF programme in Brazil aimed at promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at different levels of society by drafting legislation and implementing concrete actions to defend and promote the Rights of the Child. The work was to be carried out together with governmental and non-governmental organisations. Children and adolescents exposed to situations of individual and social risks should be a priority. MSEK 7,95 was allocated to the programme.

In 1993 the Government of Sweden and UNICEF signed an agreement for the period July 1993 - December 1996 regarding Swedish support to UNICEF for programmes concerning Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) in Latin America and the Caribbean and for related activities at the UNICEF International Child Development Centre in Florence, Italy. The point of departure for the programmes is the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The current SIDA support to UNICEF consists of two parts:

- Country programmes in 12 countries in Latin America.
- Support to the UNICEF International Child Development Centre in Florence, Italy.

The main objective is:

- *To promote and support at the federal, state and municipal level, the drafting of legislation and implementation of concrete actions which are aimed at defending, protecting, and promoting children in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children*

and adolescents exposed to situations of individual and social risks should be a priority.

Sida's intention was to support the development within UNICEF of the concept and strategies of CEDC on the one hand, and the implementation of programmes trying the ideas at the country level, on the other.

The programmes should be implemented in collaboration with governmental and non governmental organisations and aimed at the mobilisation of public institutions, organisations of society, the community and the family in favour of a commitment to the welfare of children in Latin America.

At the International Child Development Centre in Florence, Italy, UNICEF would start up a programme of policy studies and action-oriented research. This should be combined with professional exchange and advocacy activities aimed at protecting the working child and eliminating the more exploitative and hazardous forms of child labour, seeking thereby to promote the effective implementation of Article 32 and related provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At the Centre UNICEF should develop an effective user-oriented international children's rights information system. Regional CHILDRIGHT collaborating centres should be set up with information based on children's rights structured thematically as follows: research in progress; projects in progress; bibliographic materials and evaluations; individual and institutional contacts; forthcoming professional meetings and training opportunities.

Total amount allocated for the programmes during the period is MSEK 50 budgeted as follows:

Country Programmes:	Total (thousand SEK)
Colombia	6.025
Ecuador	7.800
El Salvador	750
Guatemala	1.900
Honduras	4.350
Nicaragua	4.300
Peru	5.375
Venezuela	3.000
Bolivia	7.200
Haiti	4.300
Panama	1.600
INNOCENTI	
Florence, Italy	3.400

TOTAL	50.000

During the period there has been a shift in the concept from "children in especially difficult circumstances" (CEDC) and their needs, to a Child Rights oriented concept which implies a broader approach.

2 Reasons for the Evaluation

- The programmes have been supported with a considerable amount of money and Sida has the responsibility to ensure the effective use of the funds.
- As the agreement expires at the end of 1996 this evaluation will constitute a basis for a decision of possible future support including the modalities of such a support.
- The need to develop a broad competence at Sida on Child Rights issues.
- Reciprocal learning for Sida and for UNICEF.

3 Scope and Focus of the evaluation

Development of concept and strategies

- The Swedish Government has given an extraordinary support to promote the work of UNICEF in the area of Child Rights. To what extent has the Swedish support had an impact on the strategies, approaches and methodology of UNICEF's work with CEDC and Child Rights?
- What is the Child Rights approach in UNICEF's conceptual thinking?
- How has the change occurred from a CEDC concept and the needs of the child to an approach based on a Child Rights concept?
 - Does a consensus exist within UNICEF about this approach?
- How does UNICEF work with the Child Rights approach and what changes at the programme level have been brought about by this shift?
- Has UNICEF succeeded in transmitting the new approach to its partners in Latin America?
- What has been the significance of the INNOCENTI for the conceptual and strategic development of the programme in Latin America?
- Has there been any impact beyond the regional Latin American level? Has there been any interchange/ crossfertilization on similar trends in other regions where UNICEF is active?

Capacity development

- Does the UNICEF staff have the adequate competence to work with the new concept?
- What kind of strategy and capacity has UNICEF developed at HQ and in the field to implement its program and make effective use of the funds?

- What capacity has been developed in national institutions and NGOs at the country level?
- Which kind of training has the UNICEF staff received? National counterparts?
- Have regional seminars been organized? Results?

Programme implementation modalities

- What have been the objectives of UNICEFs programmes at the institutional level and at the country level? What result and impact have been produced?
- Have the conditions for the application of the Rights of the Child improved at the country level, and if so, how?
- What modalities have been applied and how effective have they been? Does the programme apply a gender equality approach? Are the results sustainable? What has been the impact?
 - Adaption of legislation and its implementation
 - Advocacy aimed at public awareness/social mobilisation
 - Cooperation with NGOs, INGOs and GOs
 - Working directly with children on the streets/working children

Methodology development

- Have indicators to measure results been developed?
- Has UNICEF undertaken any external or internal evaluations? If so, what are the results? To what extent have results been disseminated?
 - Within UNICEF
 - To national counterparts
 - To other interest groups
- To what extent has learning taken place within UNICEF?
- Which kind of training has the staff received?

Financial matters

- How have the funds been utilised:
 - Amounts disbursed to each country?
 - For different purposes?
- Has it been a cost-effective use of resources?
- Does the financial budget and report system produce relevant and adequate information for the purpose of monitoring and control?
- How has the 6% overhead been used?

4 Methodology, Evaluation team and Time Plan

Before-after project A combination of formal and informal methods could be used which will permit a comparison of the time before the programme started and at the time of the evaluation. Data collection could be based on written information and interviews with key persons at the UNICEF offices (HQ, regional office and country

offices) counterparts in Latin American Countries, government institutions, NGOs and independent observers.

Evaluation at different organizational levels

- New York - HQ
- Colombia -Regional Office
- Country offices
- INNOCENTI Research centre in Florence

Country programmes in Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia

For the purpose of specific country case studies evaluations should be carried out in Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. They are among the countries that have received most funds. Peru and Colombia are also of special interest for Sida from the point of view of democracy and human rights aspects and Bolivia is almost a Sida programme country. Colombia is also interesting because it has both regional and national office. The evaluation should also include INNOCENTI, Florence.

Evaluation team

The team should be made up of 2-3 persons, at least one of whom should be from Latin America. Together the members should have:

- Solid knowledge and experience in co-operation, Child Rights issues and the Latin American context
- Evaluation methodology
- Knowledge of financial and administrative matters
- Excellent knowledge of Spanish and English

Time plan

- | | |
|---|---------|
| -Planning, development of methodology and instruments, reading documentation. | 1 week |
| - New York: Orientation, interviews | 2 days |
| - Bogota: Orientation, interviews | 3days |
| - Visits in 4 countries | 3 weeks |
| - Writing of the report and final interviews | 2 weeks |

Time: 7 weeks x 2 pers

Florence incl.writing report

1 week

Time: 1week x 2 pers

Total time:

2 persons evaluating Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia	7 weeks/each
Researcher and teamleader	1 week/each

5 Reporting

A written report with preliminary conclusions should be presented to Sida, UNICEF HQ, Regional Office and the country offices as well as INNOCENTI, to have their opinions of the report. Their comments should be sent to the evaluators within 2 weeks. The final report should be presented 2 weeks after receiving Sida's comments.

The report should be written in English and should be elaborated according to Sida's guidelines, "Sida evaluation reports - a standardized format". The report should be written in computer programme World Perfect 6.1 for Windows or a compatible format and the disquette should be sent to Sida. The report should be written in such a way that it could be published without any further editing.

The ambition should be that the report should be analitical, conclusive and easy to read, well structured and have a contents list.

The main report should have max 40 pages and with an executive summary of 2-3 pages. Appendices may be added.

Datum 1996 -12- 09

Dnr RELA-1995-238

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29 November 1996

COMMENTS FROM UNICEF-ICDC (FLORENCE)

ON

**THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT COMMISSIONED BY SWEDISH SIDA
ON THE UNICEF CEDC/CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMME IN LATIN AMERICA
AND AT ICDC**

Introduction

This note provides ICDC's comments on the November 1996 draft report of the evaluation team commissioned by Sida, as requested in the transmittal letter of Ms. Elisabeth Lewin, dated 8 November. It first summarizes the main points included in this draft report that relate directly to ICDC, then comments on the observations and recommendations included in the report, and concludes by relating these to the issue of a possible renewal of the agreement with the Government of Sweden. References to ICDC are included both in the main body of the draft report and in an attached "Report on the ICDC" prepared by Professor Riccardo Lucchini.

Summary of the Report's references to ICDC

1. Regarding ICDC's overall role, the supplementary report notes that "ICDC has developed exceptional competencies in the field of children's rights and questions regarding the application of the Convention." These competencies "are acknowledged not only within UNICEF, but also in the political and academic world and by intervention agencies (for instance NGOs). Thanks to these competencies, the Centre plays an important role in the definition of UNICEF's intervention policies. And this is particularly true in the field of working children and school education. The Centre is also starting studies on children victims of armed conflict and their social reintegration." The fact that ICDC's mandate includes a concern for "strengthening the capacity of UNICEF and its cooperating institutions", combined with "the competencies the Centre has developed since its foundation have allowed ICDC to become one of the principal actors in the agreement between the Swedish Government and UNICEF." (p. 28)

2. "The application of the Convention is a recent field of activity for UNICEF and the ICDC is assuming important responsibilities in this area. The Centre benefits from an important degree of autonomy and thus takes on more easily the function of mediator between UNICEF's HQ, the regional offices of UNICEF, the NGOs and other local actors.... This role of mediator is essential for an effective application of the Convention. Precisely, the competencies which allow ICDC to effectively take on this role have been strengthened thanks to the Swedish contribution". (p. 28)

3. "The operational identity of the Centre in the field of the promotion of children's rights is now well established. For the research and the seminars it organises in the countries comprised in the agreement with Sweden, the ICDC takes on local specialists. This is essential for the local and national dissemination of results in its different activities (research, monitoring, training) as well as in order to strengthen the legitimacy of its activities in the countries committed to the application of the Convention." (p.29)

4. "The ICDC is doing important work in the development of tools for handling and gathering information...related to children's rights." (p. 3) The Centre's "action-research, the participation in the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), the setting up of a database on children's rights, the research on the children's rights indicators and on children's work, the monitoring and training, are the principal activities/tools allowing the ICDC to conduct its action in favor of the application of the Convention." (p.29).

5. On the particular issue of child labour, the report notes that "there are substantial differences among countries. This is the reason why ICDC does not believe in the effectiveness of a general approach on this question, but to its contextualisation and to the use of local competencies (research and interventions)." (p.31) ICDC is giving particular attention "to the necessary reforms regarding education in order to reduce the most harmful forms of labour. This is the reason why, in the seminars it organises, the ICDC systematically calls together some specialists in the field of child labour and some specialists in the field of education." (p.32)

6. The main areas where suggestions regarding improvements are made or recommendations regarding future actions put forward are the following:

(a) In a general comment apparently regarding UNICEF's overall work in the region, it is noted: "The scarcity of references to evaluations and other types of assessments as a basis for the programme development at HQ and the country offices point to a need for UNICEF to develop a more systematic approach to the knowledge base for its programme. The ICDC may play a more important role in this context." (p.3)

(b) In a section of the general report entitled "Learning", an "official at HQ" is cited as noting "UNICEF has great capacity for learning - and equally for forgetting." It then notes that one of the reasons for establishing ICDC was to "institutionalize learning processes. The original idea was to allow officials to analyze and compile their experiences. It appears this is just being done to a limited extent." The report does suggest that the publication of the results of the Innocenti Global Seminars, one of ICDC's capacity building efforts, is a useful way "to spread the debate on central issues." (pp. 22-23)

(c) Concerning the child labour project in Latin America, it is noted that "A summary of the findings in the five country studies is being published in Spanish and English. The ICDC has published several documents, many funded from other sources. However the documents in English have little impact in Latin America." (p. 21)

(d) Regarding children's rights indicators, the report states that knowledge about such indicators is "essential for the defense of children's rights. Thus the Centre must have the necessary resources for the study of these indicators, as well as their diffusion." (p.32)

(e) While ICDC has been especially successful in reaching professionals, including scientists, lawyers and politicians, with its publications, additional effort is needed to target "people in fieldwork (NGOs, assistance programmes, the children themselves)". The issue of "how the diffusion and use of the information that it is producing or collecting takes place must be a constant concern of the Centre". (p. 32)

ICDC Comments on the Report's Observations

7. In general, the concerned ICDC staff and its Director found the observations and recommendations in the draft report to be very perceptive and useful. To a large degree, they are consistent with certain shifts in emphasis which have been reviewed with the Centre's Advisory Committee, chaired by the Executive Director, and some of these are already reflected in the policy paper on ICDC which was approved at the September 1996 UNICEF Executive Board. We are particularly pleased that the Board paper, as approved, included a strong reference regarding the importance of further strengthening ICDC's capacity to serve as the main knowledge base in UNICEF for work relating to the children's rights. As noted in the draft evaluation report, the Swedish contribution, though modest in amount, has provided important support in this regard, including in terms of international legitimacy. Accordingly, ICDC would very much welcome an opportunity to continue to collaborate with Sida in this regard -- including to help Sida itself have access to learning experiences "in view of its own future programming and activities in the area of Child Rights" (an interest cited in the report, p. 5).

8. In line with the comments in the report regarding UNICEF as a "learning" organizations, ICDC intends -- while maintaining its comparative advantage in UNICEF in terms of research and policy studies -- to shift priorities somewhat in the direction of capacity building and training, as well as information systems. The objective is both to strengthen UNICEF's own capacities (including through the mechanism of "mini-sabbaticals" to provide staff with time for analysis and writing, and to help build institutional memory) and for the staff of co-operating institutions. Since the Centre is small, it will have to be selective in terms of both themes and geographic coverage. Child rights will certainly remain on ICDC's agenda as a top priority

in this regard. Emphasis will be on the development of capacity building strategies, the training of trainers, and the development of materials (hard copy and electronically accessible) to support capacity building activities.

9. As one example of this shift, the Centre has been requested by UNICEF to coordinate a major new initiative in capacity building in the field of child labour. This project will concentrate initially on strengthening UNICEF's own approach to this expanding area of activity, but plans are also advancing for a second phase of external capacity building. Continued close collaboration with ILO is anticipated in this regard.

10. The report, if any thing, may overstate the extent to which ICDC has been able to serve as a "mediator" among various parts of UNICEF and other actors. This role has been possible in certain specific areas, including in those supported by the Sida contribution. In others, however, much work remains to be done in terms of strengthening capacities both in ICDC and elsewhere in the organization to ensure that there is a constructive interaction and synergism between the more "knowledge base" and analytical side of UNICEF's work (research, situation analyses, policy dialogues, evaluation, training, lesson-learning), on the one hand, and UNICEF's "action-oriented" and delivery-related programmes in the field. Several organizational steps have been taken recently to help facilitate ICDC's link to other parts of the organization, including HQ. The formation of the "Programme Group" (including the ICDC Director as one of its four members) is one example. Staff changes taking place in HQ, including the naming of a prominent authority on children's rights as the new Director of Evaluation, Policy and Planning, will contribute significantly to ensuring that ICDC is more closely involved in policy making and strategic evaluation work in this field in the future.

11. Although there will always be some limitations on the ability of a small Centre like ICDC directly to reach local-level field personnel (not to mention children) with its publications and other activities, the Centre is formulating a revised publications, dissemination and information management strategy that should help to ensure that ICDC's output increasingly reaches institutions and individuals, beyond academics and other professionals, who are in turn working closer to the "grass-roots" levels. Access to Internet, as noted in the report, will be just one element in this strategy. Considerable attention is also being devoted to planning for the Child Rights "Information Digests" noted briefly in the report. More than just specific published "products", this initiative is viewed as a process of information gathering, analysis, packaging and dissemination (in a variety of computer-readable forms), tailored to specific audiences, but helpful for different types of users. The first Digest, to appear shortly, is on "Ombudswork for Children" and a second will deal with "Children and Violence" (linked also to the topic of the 1997 Innocenti Global Seminar).

12. ICDC also plans to work more closely in the future with UNICEF's exceptionally capable communications and information staff (including in the National Committees) to take better advantage of their ability to convert research results and other professional analyses into materials easily accessible to "non-specialists", including journalists, NGO staff, human rights activists and youth. ICDC was pleased, in this regard, to see that several of the publications on child labour produced with Sida support, were used and cited in the chapter on child labour in the 1997 State of the World's Children report -- by far the most widely distributed, quoted and translated periodic report on children in the world.

13. Concerning translations, one misperception in the report reflects a matter of timing. Thanks importantly to the funding available from Sida, a special effort has been made on this project to produce most materials in both English and Spanish. The main research product on child labour, the five-country study, was written in Spanish and will appear within a few weeks in book form. An English translation of that book will appear around April 1997. The English summary of the study to which reference is made in the report was prepared first in order to have it available to be used (and it is cited) in the 1997 State of the World's Children report. That summary will appear in Spanish as the Preface to the main book. On the child rights information side, the main tools being developed such as the child rights thesaurus and glossary, will be published in English, French and Spanish. The guide concerning data collection and indicators on children's rights in Central America, to which reference is made on p. 31, has been prepared in Spanish. ICDC is constantly seeking support to enable it to publish in languages other than English; good translations, however, are expensive. The Spanish Committee for UNICEF has supported translations of several key ICDC publications in children's rights. The former ICDC Director, moreover, is a member of the international advisory group of the new Lima-based journal Realidad y Utopia, cited on p. 21 of the report, and that link will enable a number of ICDC publications to reach a larger Spanish-speaking audience in Latin America.

Conclusions

14. The supplementary report on ICDC concludes:

"(a) The terms of the agreement with the Swedish Government have been respected. Moreover, in different fields (CRIN, RAP, ILO) the ICDC has developed important synergies. These synergies allow to optimise the use of Swedish aid.

"(b) the agreement with the Government of Sweden deserves a renewal for a period which length has to be defined by the interested parties."

15. ICDC is very interested in the possibility that the agreement with the Government of Sweden might be renewed. Sweden is ICDC's second main donor (after Italy but before the World

Bank!), but its support has far exceeded the amount of its monetary contribution. The main donor, the Government of Italy, (which has just renewed its core support for the period 1997-1999,), has stressed the importance it attaches to the internationalization of the Centre's resource base, and it has been particularly pleased with the quality of Sweden's involvement. (This quality, it should be noted, is also reflected in the thoroughness and substance of the evaluation report on ICDC.) The contribution to the initial design of the Centre's child rights programme by Thomas Hammarberg also deserves special mention. He was a particularly active member of an external advisory group on child rights which helped devise ICDC's strategy and priorities in this area; and he continues to provide important advice on an informal basis -- a key link for ICDC to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Sweden has also participated in recent meetings of the Centre's international Advisory Committee, and the continuation of this involvement would be most welcome by both UNICEF and the Government of Italy.

16. Among the areas of current and prospective work of ICDC that might be of interest to Sida (as suggested in a number of observations in the draft report), we would cite the following:

(a) continued work on the important subject of information strategies and tools for promoting more widespread understanding of and political support for the advancement of children's rights and the implementation of the Convention; this would include the possibility of producing up to three Child Rights "Information Digests" per year, in several languages, and enable the kind of capacity building and networking initiated in Central America to be extended elsewhere; early efforts, in UNICEF and other institutions, to develop and refine child rights indicators could be supported, and ICDC could help relate this work to ongoing activities to strengthen information systems and monitoring mechanisms, including ombudswork for children; continued close collaboration with CRIN is envisaged, as an important link for ICDC to the NGO sphere;

(b) follow-up activities in the area of child labour, which might, for example, involve: (i) additional work, especially impact evaluations, on the subject of school-based financial and other incentives to reduce drop-out and repetition and thereby help protect children from some of the most harmful forms of economic exploitation; (ii) improved data gathering (e.g. testing the rapid appraisal procedures, RAP, in one or two Latin American settings), promoting better indicators and monitoring mechanisms, especially to identify and combat child labour in "invisible" sectors such as domestic service, small-scale rural enterprises, and child prostitution; (iii) extension of the child labour capacity building initiative, for which initial support for strengthening UNICEF's own capacity is anticipated from other donors, to the second phase of "external" capacity building, with ILO and NGO partners;

(c) support for policy studies, information management and dissemination, and capacity building in the area of "children and families of ethnic minorities, immigrants and indigenous groups", which was the subject of the 1996 Innocenti Global Seminar, a report on which will be available soon, including recommendations for planning and action; similar activities might also be supported in the area of "children and violence", partly as follow-up to the Graça Machel Study;

(d) support for a new project being developed by ICDC, in close co-operation with other colleagues in UNICEF, as well as a group of independent authorities on child rights, on the challenge of systematizing and disseminating key information relating to "law, policy and practice" concerning the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The first step would be to cooperate with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with the improved organization, systematization and communication of the Committee's interpretations and "doctrine" developed during their first five years of activity as the official monitoring body for the Convention; a separate note on this initiative is available.

17. ICDC looks forward to having an opportunity to discuss these and other possible areas of collaboration with Sida representatives. If a renewal of the agreement is possible, we would suggest that consideration be given to allowing ICDC to cooperate flexibly with parts of UNICEF and other partners wherever important opportunities, including for capacity building and lesson-learning, might present themselves. Alternatively, if Sida prefers to focus geographically on a few locations, we would suggest that countries in at least two regions besides Latin America be added to the agreement. This expansion would facilitate comparative policy analysis, help ensure broader impact on UNICEF and its main partners, and avoid programmatic or other recommendations that might unduly reflect the special circumstances of one region. Recognizing the long-run nature of most of the challenges reflected in the observations on ICDC in the draft report, we would also suggest that consideration be given to a three or four-year period for the proposed renewal.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to the two members of the evaluation team who participated in the review of ICDC: Eva Lithman and Riccardo Lucchini. Their questions and comments reflected both considerable knowledge of the subjects under review as well as a strong commitment to assisting UNICEF in its search for the most cost-effective means of achieving critical objectives in the field of children's rights such as those supported by this collaboration with the Government of Sweden. It was a pleasure to work with them.



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29 January 1997

Dear Ms. Lewin,

Re: UNICEF CEDC/Child Rights Programmes in Latin America - An evaluative report commissioned by SIDA

We in UNICEF were pleased to receive the SIDA financed draft report, evaluating UNICEF's Child Rights programmes in Latin America. The report will certainly be a useful tool for both SIDA and UNICEF in our common efforts to protect the rights of children in Latin America and the Caribbean. These efforts need to be constantly evaluated and improved, in order for us to meet the challenges faced by the region's children and this evaluation is a step in that direction. I trust the findings presented in this report will help us to further enhance and adjust our current child protection activities in Latin America and elsewhere.

Bearing the above in mind, we are appreciative of the opportunity to further contribute to this dialogue between SIDA and UNICEF by making a few reflections on the draft report. I understand that you have already received comments on that section of the report dealing with ICDC, thus this letter focuses on the sections dealing with programmes in Latin America and has been prepared in consultation with the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean and her team. In addition, I understand you shortly will be meeting with Mr. Emilio Garcia Mendez, Regional Child Rights Advisor, who will be able to expand on these points and also share with you some country-specific comments not addressed in this note.

For the sake of consistency, our response will comment on the major conclusions and recommendations in the same order as they are presented in the report.

Indeed, UNICEF is an organ of the United Nations that is bound by the Charter of the United Nations. As such, it operates within the framework of a 'Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement' signed between UNICEF and the Governments of the countries where we have programmes of cooperation approved by our Executive Board. This does not mean, however,

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that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other members of civil society are not consulted or have not participated in the development of the country programmes of cooperation (prepared every four - five years). Increasingly, efforts are being made to ensure that the country programme preparation process is an open and consultative one that has benefitted from dialogue with major donors, central level (and, if appropriate, local level) governments, members of civil society and other partners and allies including NGOs.

UNICEF in Latin America and elsewhere often plays the 'honest broker' role bringing together NGO's, civil society and government sectors. This has resulted in numerous steps towards reconciliation and consensus building on priority actions and interventions. A good example of this has been the broad participation and debate witnessed in several countries in the Region on proposed harmonization of legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Furthermore, UNICEF has been careful to be supportive of both the process related to the preparation of State party reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the alternative report often prepared by civil society or the NGO community. We have striven to maintain an intermediary role in both processes where this has been possible.

The perceived over-emphasis on legal reform addressed by the evaluators is a result of a need to prioritize 'first things first'. We do not expect reform of child legislation to have an immediate impact on the fulfillment of children's rights (even though that is sometimes the case with, for example, children arbitrarily deprived of liberty), but rather to provide for the necessary legal framework in which we can promote the reform of institutions working directly with children, including, for example, national child welfare institutions, the police, ombudsperson's offices, child care institutions, educational institutions, etc. By the end of 1997, we hope to see the legal reform process practically completed in Latin America, which would free financial and human resources to be dedicated to the above-mentioned institutional reform. It should be stressed, however, that these two processes are not strictly consecutive. UNICEF is already very involved in the reform of a range of child institutions in several countries that have not yet completed their legal reform process.

UNICEF is aware that even after legislative adaptations, institutional restructuring and policy reform, there are still significant gaps between law and current practice which need to be addressed by specific programmes. This understanding led the ICDC and the Regional Office (TACRO) last November to gather European, Caribbean and Latin American government officials, non-governmental representatives and parliamentarians in Florence together with UNICEF staff to discuss and compare the policy and programmatic implications of the Convention in both regions.

Furthermore, the evaluation calls for a less static view of child rights, based on people's own realities. It should be recalled that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is considered to be one of the most advanced and progressive human rights instruments, covering not only civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights. With few

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exceptions, all children's rights are directly or indirectly covered by the CRC, which makes us confident that, as a framework, the CRC is an absolutely inclusive work tool. In this context, UNICEF offices in various countries of the region have supported efforts to promote and implement Article 12 of the CRC (the child's opinion) through systematic consultation with children about issues of interest and concern to them. Some examples of these experiences are:

- In Belize last May, children had a significant role in the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child during the Children's Forum held parallel to the Conference. In Colombia, a country besieged by violence, more than 2 million children were encouraged to "vote" for the right they value most. (Most children voted for life, peace and family). In Chile, periodic "Voices of the Children" surveys have created channels of expression and participation for children that are widely covered by the media.

- With regard to the recommendation to move support from the central government to more decentralized levels, we fully agree that some strategies are more effective at sub-national levels. In effect, most new country programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean countries, approved by the Executive Board in September 1996, and the country notes reviewed by our Executive Board in January this year have strengthened capacity building interventions at the sub-national/local level. This is related not just to improved targeting, but also to strengthening the decentralization and democratization process underway in most countries of the Region. Some examples include initiatives such as "Mayors, Defenders of Children" and the establishment of municipal child rights committees. Nonetheless, support to policy formulation and revision of legislation is often best targeted at central level. This is said bearing in mind, however, that this support is particularly effective when reinforced by experiences generated by local level actions supported by UNICEF and/or other organizations.

- The report highlights the effective role of UNICEF as a mass media communicator but seems to question whether the results of advocacy and social mobilization activities are not short term in nature. It should be noted that advocacy strategies are not static, but form an on-going and reinforcing strategy for implementation of the CRC. UNICEF considers advocacy around the Convention a key strategy for mobilizing partners at central and local levels to support CRC implementation. This involves not only raising awareness for change of policies, institutional reform, etc., but also generating demand that States fulfill their obligations with regard to CRC implementation.

- On the question of whether or not the growing influence of the Convention on programming has brought about a certain diminution of UNICEF's attention to and support of grassroots work done with children themselves, we believe it is important to highlight the following:

- UNICEF's CEDC activities in Latin America have gone through a transition based on the particular regional conditions and the increased conceptual clarity gained from a process of 'trial

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and error'. This process has allowed us to determine our comparative advantages. With limited resources at our disposition, we find our protection efforts more cost-effectively invested in policy advocacy and demand mobilization than in direct administration and execution of projects in the field. However, the latter activities continue receiving UNICEF technical and financial support, and through our local counterparts our staff continue to be in close touch with the realities faced by children on an everyday basis. By maintaining this close contact, we are able to conceptualize, design and implement advocacy activities that strive to remove the structural obstacles (legal, institutional and cultural) to the fulfillment of children's rights.

- The increased importance given to the CRC and the so-called "rights approach" has developed hand-in-hand with a realization of the need to take to scale special protection measures for children in especially difficult circumstances. A number of committed NGOs and community-based organizations carry out projects with limited coverage, but with an important catalyzing effect. These projects are supported and highly valued by UNICEF, but we do believe our organization's foremost comparative advantage lies in its potential to influence large scale public policies for children. It is possible for us to build on the experience of these local level projects, whether they are supported directly by UNICEF or not. Our adoption of new and different strategies should not be seen as diminished commitment to grassroots initiatives.

- In general terms, it should be noted that this strategy shift has been encouraged by a multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF and Nordic members of the Board. In the case of many of our programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, given the limited extent of UNICEF resources and the need for building on our comparative advantage, there has been a shift from direct support for service delivery to greater emphasis on capacity building, advocacy and policy support. This shift has been welcomed by our Board members as a step towards putting our efforts in priority order and towards greater concern for the long-term sustainability of the work we undertake.

- We are somewhat concerned that perhaps UNICEF's programming transition from 'needs' to 'rights' does not seem to have been fully understood. Needs and rights are not antagonistic concepts, but two different expressions of the same reality. Through the ratification of the CRC, the 'needs' become demandable 'rights' (associated with empowerment). On the same note, the goals of the World Summit for Children reinforce the provisions of the Convention.

• While, as indicated above, UNICEF has shifted its strategic emphasis, in some countries in the Region this has left some of our traditional partners working with CEDC concerned that UNICEF is abandoning NGO efforts. This is an unfortunate misperception that will need to be addressed.

In an organization like UNICEF, which for many years has been associated almost exclusively with health and nutrition issues, the potential and benefits of the CRC and the rights perspective have to be introduced systematically through an inclusive process based on an

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interchange of experiences, training and awareness-building. The open discussion about the implications of the rights approach suggested by the evaluators has, in fact, been going on in the Latin American and Caribbean region for quite a while. A number of seminars and training workshops have been carried out and several additional activities of this kind are planned for 1997. These efforts are indeed necessary during this learning phase of child rights programming, as is the systematic exchange and documentation of experiences in this area.

In addition, as part of the Management Excellence Programme and decentralization underway in UNICEF, the recently constituted Regional Management Team composed of country Representatives, the Regional Director and other selected staff members offers another platform for discussions and identification of common regional priorities for action.

- Admittedly, many child rights issues (including child labour) have required a programmatic rethinking within UNICEF. Many Field Offices have programmes addressing a number of these issues, and many of their experiences have helped shape UNICEF's recently adopted policy on children in need of special protection measures (E/ICEF/1996/14). Moreover, the State of the World's Children 1997 addresses child labour on a broad front, articulating UNICEF's approaches and a position formed through alliances within the UN system among ILO, IPEC, key NGO partners, Bretton Woods Institutions, etc. As part of the alliance effort, at regional level, UNICEF has created an inter-agency coordinating committee for the Americas with the participation of the Regional Office of ILO/IPEC. There, a common platform for action has been drawn up. Through such international partnerships, a common understanding of hazardous and intolerable child labour has been reached that is advocated by UNICEF and echoed by others in the alliance.

- With regard to the recommendations concerning evaluations, we agree entirely. UNICEF is also acutely aware of the need to strengthen and make systematic our knowledge acquisition and exchange functions. This has been an area of concern and a priority consideration in the re-organization of the Programme Division. ICDC, as a member of the Programme Group, will contribute significantly to these efforts. We expect that these reforms will be reflected gradually in country programmes as we strengthen our capacities in these areas. In 1996, through a collaborative effort between the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and Programme Division in New York, over five hundred child rights experiences and references were identified as a first step in the process. We plan in 1997 to create a clearing-house for 'best practices' and lessons learned in child rights interventions in the Region.

- It is true that local resource mobilization efforts will require an initial investment in human and financial resources that may come at the expense of some Field Offices' capacity to get some other areas of work done. However, experience elsewhere has shown that, once mechanisms for local resource mobilization are in place, the yields are more than the initial investment. Given the current international donor climate, it is highly unrealistic to expect that UNICEF's current support services to children in the Region can be sustained without additional efforts to secure financial support for our mission.

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During the last year the implications of a child rights perspective for UNICEF have prompted several processes and discussions at all levels of the organization. A multi-sectoral child rights team, appointed by the Executive Director and comprising senior staff from Headquarters and the field, developed an initial framework for programming with a child rights approach. Following the adoption of the new Mission Statement, the above-mentioned policy on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures was adopted by the Executive Board. The new policy makes a significant contribution to the overall child rights framework in that it is entirely grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The policy moves beyond the traditional concept of "CEDC" to a child protection perspective to be reflected throughout all programmes. Its strategic focus is on mainstreaming sectoral programmes in a holistic manner, while targeting responses as required on the basis of a broadened situation analysis/assessment.

With regard to technical capacity, child rights teams as well as technical support networks addressing relevant issues have been formed in several regions. In Latin America, a technical support group with emphasis on child labour has been established. A Child Protection Network has been formed for Eastern and Southern Africa. At Headquarters, the CEDC Section has been strengthened, and added capacity within the Programme Division related to programming with a child rights perspective is foreseen.

I hope that this lengthy response will contribute in a useful way our ongoing dialogue and cooperation on child rights in Latin America. Let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Government of Sweden for having carried out this evaluation, which will be valuable in shaping our strategies and efforts in this area.

Yours sincerely,



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