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Sida Review

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Evaluation of Children's Literature Programme in Middle East and North African region, 2006–2009

Final report submitted to Sida

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Acronyms

AHDR	Arab Human Development Report
AED	Arab Education Forum
AKR	Arab Knowledge Report
ALF	Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures
ARC	Arab Resource Collective
BAE	Bilateral Associate Expert
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CLP	Children Literature Programme
DCPL	Developing Palestinian Children's Literature (Palestine)
DESO	Department for Democracy and Social Development (Sida)
FWP	First Work Plan (2006–7)
HI	Host Institution
IBBY	International Board of Books for Young People
IRS	Integrated Care Society (Egypt)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOC	Ministry of Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCG	National Core Group
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PBA	Programme-based approach (Sida)
PMT	Programme Management Team
RCG	Regional Core Group
Sida	Swedish Agency for Development Cooperation
SIPU	Swedish Institute of Public Administration
SWP	Second Work Plan (2008–9)
TWP	Third Work Plan (2010–11)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNRWA	United Nations Relief Work Agency

1 Executive Summary

1. The report in hand is the outcome of an external evaluation of the Children's Literature cooperation in the Middle East and North African region (MENA) 2006–2009 funded by Sida and managed by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation (ALF) in Alexandria, Egypt.
2. The main purpose was two-fold: a result-based evaluation in order to assess to which extent the programme's objectives, purpose and expected results were achieved; and secondly to assess the capacity and ownership aspects of the ALF as an implementing partner of the programme.
3. An external evaluation team linked to Nordic Consulting Group was commissioned to undertake a 50 working days study with 12 days fieldwork in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. The Host Institution (HI) in Palestine was interviewed by phone, while the team was unable to interview the partner in Syria. The team reviewed more than 500 project documents and interviewed 77 different stakeholders; ALF, the host institutions, governments, partners, embassies and civil society actors.

1.1 Brief background

4. The overall goal of the Children Literature Programme (CLP) was to strengthen the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and emotional development of children in the MENA region. The expected results centred on three levels; developing a holistic approach for promoting Children Literature (CL), building capacity for CL at the national levels in the five targeted countries and facilitating exchange on a regional level between the HIs and partners. In the current work plan (2010–11), a fourth result on increasing the visibility and support for the programme within the Arab countries and the Euromed region was included.
5. The roots of the CLP go back to the early 1990s when Swedish/Jordanian publisher Mona Henning (founder of Dar Al-Mona) started distributing children's books translated from Swedish to Arabic to Tamer Institute for Community Education in Ramallah. After the self-rule arrangements in the West Bank and Gaza in 1994/95, the newly established Palestinian Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education came onboard the project. The Swedish NGO Diakonia continued to provide economic and pedagogic assistance to the partners, while Tamer trained librarians and teachers and organised workshops for writers, illustrators and painters. Later UNRWA joined, and the CLP activities of trainings of teachers, national reading campaigns, story telling, and book competitions spread to all the Palestinian areas.
6. The programme was evaluated as a success in encouraging and stimulating children to read for fun and express their opinions and experiences through stories (Sida evaluation 3/2004). The CLP was found relevant because it gave Palestinian children, who were living under occupation and harsh conditions, a space and place to venture feelings and traumas through reading and writing.
7. Based on the Palestinian experience, Sida wanted to expand the CLP to the rest of the Arab region (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria). The Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria was chosen as the implementing regional agency in 2006. The total budget for the whole period 2006–11 was 29.6 million SEK (3.7 million USD) including the costs for the external evaluation paid by Sida.
8. According to the TOR, this evaluation would serve as a base for Sweden's decision on future cooperation in the CL sector after the end of the current agreement (June 2011). The evaluation was asked to give recommendations for how a possible future Swedish support to children's literature shall be designed in order to achieve an enhanced impact if Sweden decides to continue to support

this area. Finally, the lessons learned could be inputs to the forthcoming Sida regional cooperation strategy, commencing in 2011.

1.2 Key findings along the TOR

9. A great number of good initiatives like training of teachers, librarians and volunteers, promotion of reading among children, storytelling, and discussion on books were found to have taken place in the five countries, with fewer results in Egypt. Thanks to the activities, the CLP has raised awareness on CL and the importance of reading for fun in the targeted communities.
10. The programme's most clearly identified achievement is bringing together writers, illustrators, publishers, and librarians and opened a space – mainly national, but also to some extent regional – for discussing children literature and reading. Many reported that they met for the first time.
11. Some multiplier effects were found due these encounters; ideas for new books were born between Lebanon and Palestine, distribution channels discovered, and joint trainings between all countries except Egypt were organised. The HIs in Jordan and Lebanon started networking more with other national partners.
12. Another achievement was the strengthening of the capacity and management of ALF host institutions, especially in Jordan. ALF applied a rigorous approach and strict formal requirements on narrative and financial reporting. While some partners reported that they learnt from this approach, others felt they wasted valuable time for implementation.
13. The largest financial support was provided to renovating and furnishing libraries with shelves, books and training of the librarians in four countries. In Egypt the identified HI also furnished a library and held a range of activities but due to the lack of governmental authorization for receiving foreign funds, the HI could not be reimbursed the costs from ALF.
14. The value-added of the ALF in the programme was found to be limited. A few synergies were found between the CLP and other ALF programs, i.e. the ALF network in Syria was utilized as an entry point for the CLP. The ALF's youthful and partly innovative approach to finding solutions to challenges was seen as bringing creativity to the CLP.
15. ALF was found to have pursued an activity-driven approach towards the implementation of the CLP. While the program was planned to first establish a foundation (joint vision, host institutions and concept papers) in each country, and then build up regional structures, the implementation mechanisms and administration of ALF were not adjusted to this approach. The Host institutions implemented a large number of projects within a very short time. This approach was found to have been unsuitable for long-term interventions aimed at *changing attitudes and behaviours towards children's democratic participation in society through reading and writing*.
16. The activity-driven approach combined with the style of management in CLP undermined the host institutions' real *ownership* of the programme; the hectic implementation prevented the institutions' ability to stop, reflect and listen to the communities in which they were working. The approach also led to *gaps in time* between the different works plans as ALF was waiting for the work plans and reports to be approved by ALF's finance and administration departments and Sida. The gap contributed to a loss of momentum in building long-term outcomes and a joint vision for the regional CLP.
17. The CLP did not build on the previous experiences of the Sida funded Palestine programme, and thus *lost out on valuable knowledge* and accumulated expertise. The work sharing between the two ALF programme specialists from Palestine and Lebanon respectively reinforced this gap.

18. For assessing the outcomes of the programme, the team found that ALF CLP to a large extent was reporting on scattered national or regional activities implemented over short periods without relating it logically to the long-term outcomes planned for. The lack of a results-based management and the change of planned CLP results for every new work plan led to challenges in systematically tracking and monitoring the results and potential outcomes.

1.3 Main conclusions and recommendations

The external team of consultants agreed on two main conclusions related to the key questions asked in the TOR;

19. The programme has obtained some good results in the short-term, but there is considerable insecurity whether these results will be sustained in the long term. ALF has applied an activity-driven approach whereby partners have implemented many activities with very short time. This has led to hastily implemented activities and less focus on building relationships with the communities in order to change attitudes related to children's social and intellectual development. There was no joint understanding between the involved partners on the objectives and key concepts in the programme. An indicator of these gaps was found in the weak ownership towards the CLP from the partners.
20. For assessing the future potentials of the Children Literature programme keeping in mind the lack of democratic space in the Middle East and the authorities' control of civil society in some of the countries. ALF is not found to be the most suitable partner for the CLP due to the following main reasons; first of all, ALF lacks a community-based approach which is a prerequisite for working with long-term development on changing society attitudes' towards children literature and reading; secondly the administration of the programme was bureaucratic and caused delays in the implementation, there was also a weak leadership/ownership from ALF, and finally, the perceptions of ALF in some MENA countries has affected the CLP's ability to establish sustainable and solid partnerships with host institutions to own and run the children literature programme.

Recommendations for Sida

21. The above main conclusions and findings result in a set of recommendations for Sida and ALF, the first ones are of immediate actions, and the second ones are strategic recommendations:
22. For the *immediate short-term recommendations*, Sida is recommended to:
23. Keep the current commitment to ALF and support the programme for the remaining period of the contract (until 2011). But, the team proposes Sida to:
24. Prepare for a *new phase* of the Children Literature and Reading programme with another regional partner in a long-term perspective (at least five years).
25. Establish an *Advisory Committee* consisting of regional activists and experts (including children) that can provide professional support and guidance to the CLP for the remaining period of the programme with ALF, and continue with the potential new partner
26. In the transition phase, ensure *sufficient time for handover* from ALF to the new partner in a practical way that includes all ALF documentation of programme. Sida should agree with ALF on the following *key deliverables*:
- a. Documentation of key achievements of CLP 2006–2011 including statistics
 - b. Identify lists of best practices from one country to another
 - c. List of all involved stakeholders and resource persons that have been involved in the CLP (writers, illustrators, publishers, librarians, teachers, directors etc)

27. Sida is recommended to *continue working with ALF* in areas of joint interests and mutual benefits (like for example the network of the newly established ALF Literature Across Borders and other relevant initiatives and activities that could support Sida's MENA strategy).
28. *For the more strategic recommendations*, Sida is advised to uphold its *strong commitment* and unique '*niche*' for promoting children social, cultural and intellectual development through literature and reading for fun. Sweden could enhance its leadership role within the children literature sector even further, especially by strengthening the link between children's rights and active participation as stakeholders with the Children Literature Programme.
29. Sida is recommended to identify a new regional partner that could handle the programme management. The new partner should receive backstopping from the Advisory Committee mentioned above. Criteria for selection of the partner could be:
 - a) Impartial and non-political;
 - b) Have experience from children literature and reading
 - c) Have experience from regional work;
 - d) Documented efficiency in programme management.
30. The new programme should set clear objectives based on:
 - *Child participation* integrated in all levels of the programme (promoting children's democratic rights in planning, designing, implementing and monitoring)
 - *Community mobilisation* and grassroot support for Children Literature and Reading
 - Building *new knowledge* on Children Literature and Reading among Arab regional partners in lines with UNESCO principles of *cultural diversity*
 - *Outreach modalities to ensure access for the poor and marginalised* (including mobile libraries)
31. In the new programme, cooperation with *national governments and UNRWA* (where relevant) concerned with children literature need to included from the beginning of the programme. Integrated in the above, support the *reading activities of the Palestinians* in the Diaspora and the refugee camps and settlements of the region. Cooperation with Diakonia, which is already working with the Palestinians in the region, could be explored.

Recommendations for ALF

32. Reduce the administrative and financial procedures related to planning and reporting for the activities in order to *reduce transaction costs*.
33. Give more importance to *regional activities*, especially those that will lead to *joint understanding* and discussions on key concepts and objectives of children literature and reading.
34. Finalise and update the *website* (the design and materials), and find mechanisms to encourage the partners to put materials on the website, new ideas and methods that make the website more interactive and that contributes to opening a debate and dialogue between partners in different countries on their experiences, concepts and vision.
35. If time and budget allows in the remaining period, focus on initiatives that may succeed easily and achieve quick results in some countries (how the book reach the children, how to encourage the child to read, work with the 4 million books with 7000 titles in the National Book Project in Egypt) and in particular it could support publications targeting children aged 8–13 since this age group lacks adequate and high-quality Arabic books.

2 Introduction

This is an evaluation of the Children Literature Programme (CLP) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional programme handled by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF) funded by Sida since 2006. The report has seven chapters; the first chapter sums up main findings, conclusions and recommendations. Chapter two provides a brief of the purpose, scope and methodology of the evaluation. Chapter three gives a brief context of the conceptual frame of children literature in the Arab world, Sida's role in this and previous evaluation of the Swedish funded CLP. Chapter four outlines the findings on two levels, program and institutional. Chapter five assesses the program from the evaluation criteria of the TOR; relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, while chapters six discusses key lessons learnt in the CLP. Chapter seven is an Arabic translation of the Summary.

2.1 Purpose and scope of evaluation

According to the Terms of Reference, the main purpose is two-fold:

1. To make a result-based evaluation in order to assess to which extent the programme's objectives, purpose and expected results have been achieved.
2. To assess the capacity and ownership aspects of the ALF as implementing partner of the programme; assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The evaluation focuses on the whole period of Sida support for ALF, 2006–9, and draws on experiences from the earlier phases of the CL in Palestine where necessary. As the evaluation came towards the end of the Second Work Plan (2008–9) the main focus is on evaluating the efforts of the two first work plans, and makes comments for the future related to the Third Work Plan (TWP) 2010–11 approved by Sida.

2.2 Approach and Methodology

Main methodological tools utilized in this evaluation are desk studies, interviews with programme management and partners, embassies and government, focus group discussions with beneficiaries (mainly partner institutions, teachers, librarians, writers etc) and cross-checking interviews with similar initiatives outside the funding of the programme. There were no activities to observe during the field survey. In total 77 people were interviewed.

The evaluation went through three phases: inception, field and analysis/reporting phase. The team was provided with 50 working days divided between two consultants with a total budget of SEK 340.744 (around 45.000 USD).

The *inception phase* kicked off with a start-up meeting where the team leader interviewed the former Bilateral Associate Expert (BAE) who was stationed at ALF for 2 years, and the Programme Officer in charge of the Children Literature programme in Sida before the Evaluation Team (ET) commenced with a desk study of the available project material as well as secondary literature related to the cultural context in the MENA region. Based on that, the TOR was operationalised into an Inception report with key lines of enquiry, interview guides and a draft field programme. The Inception was presented for Sida in Stockholm in the presence of three former programme officers who had all worked at the Swedish Embassy in Cairo at different times, the current regional programme officer based in Cairo (who happened to be in Stockholm), and a programme officer from the Embassy in Jordan.

The Inception seminar was an excellent way of ensuring that the institutional memory of the whole programme was retained. The ALF staff in Alexandria was also given an opportunity to comment on the inception and a revised draft was submitted ahead of the field survey.

The *field survey* in the MENA region lasted for 12 days. At the start up of the field phase, the inception report was discussed with both the Swedish Embassy and ALF programme management team, before in-depth interviews were conducted with ALF programme team and head of finance and administration. The ALF top management was interviewed by phone. Furthermore the team interviewed different organizations and resource persons that had been involved with the programme in Egypt, before it moved on to Jordan and Lebanon. Originally Syria was planned, but immediately before the field survey, the Syrian Host Institution announced that it withdrew from the programme and the cooperation with ALF, and the team was informed that it could not visit Syria. Thus plans were rapidly re-shifted and a schedule was organised in Lebanon with the HI and partners there.

Focus group discussions were held with librarians, teacher, writers, illustrators and publishers in Jordan (as it was not possible to gather sufficient people for focus groups in the other two countries). Most of the interviews were held in Arabic without translators.

Attempts were made at meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture (MoC) in the different countries, but succeeded only in Jordan and partly in Egypt with a journalist associated with the MoC. In order to assess the challenges involved in working regionally the team interviewed other regional bodies local or international such as the Arab Resource Centre in Beirut, the Swedish NGO Diakonia in Cairo, and the Arab Thought Forum in Amman. A good dialogue was retained with the Swedish Embassies in Egypt as the focal point for the regional programme, in addition to interviews with the Swedish Ambassadors in both Egypt and Jordan. Communication with the Swedish Embassy in Syria was only via the phone.

Interviews with the HI and former programme specialist based in Palestine were made by phone.

A presentation of the preliminary findings was held with ALF and a Sida/Embassy representative in Alexandria on the last day of the field survey. This was important for validation and verification of findings and to identify gaps in the team understanding of the programme.

The analysis and report phase took place in Oslo/Cairo, the home base of the ET. For the analytical framework applied to the evaluation, in the below table the main evaluation questions were outlined, along with the methods utilized for gathering information as well as sources of information.

Table 1 Analytical framework in inception report

Evaluation criteria	Main evaluation questions	Methodology	Sources
A. Programme outcomes:			
Programme Effectiveness	To which extent have the results and objectives been achieved?	Critical reading of the reports, comparisons btw goals set and results achieved	ALF narrative reports from Ruwwad Tanmiyya
<i>National (HI) level</i>	Awareness raising; Production and distribution of good quality books; Training of teachers/librarians	Study travel reports of programme Interviews HI, members of NCG Email interviews Interviews with national authorities/MOE	Muntada el-ijtima'e Alwan wa awtar Tamer, ASSABIL Ministeries UNRWA, Education Departments

Evaluation criteria	Main evaluation questions	Methodology	Sources
	Assess the distribution of books supported by programme and through 101 books	Study criteria and selection of books supported Interviews – FGD with writers, producers and publishers Interviews external experts	ALF criteria Distributors Book critics Bibliotheca Alexandrina
	Assess effect/quality of training of librarians, teachers, educationalists etc.	Focus group discussions with teachers and librarians Interviews Librarians' associations	List of names trained to be provided by HI External resource persons
<i>Regional level</i>	Extent of achievements of planned regional results: – Networking in MENA region – University cooperation – Develop regional strategy, regional core group	Focus group discussion with university teachers and/or researchers Consultation with other institutions working in Arab region	List of names of people who have been trained to be provided by HI External agencies working regionally like Diakonia, ARC etc
Institutional effectiveness			
<i>National (HI) level</i>	Are selected HIs in a position to influence national authorities for developing CL programme? How has programme disseminated information through CL website?	In-depth interviews with HI Assessment of position of HI in host countries Contextual analysis	Host institutions Ministries Cultural resource persons (external to programme)
<i>Regional level</i>	How realistic is it to establish a regional programme before capacity is built on the national levels? How has programme disseminated information through CL website?	Contextual analysis of regional (lack) of cooperation Interviews Consultations with external regional actors (outside programme)	AHDR, Arab Knowledge Report 2009 Research on Arab region External experts, NGOs Researchers and thinkers
Learning Internal – external communication	To which extent has programme learnt from Palestinian experience? How has the internal and external communication functioned in programme?	In-depth interviews Try and establish 'success criteria' of the Palestinian experience based on existing documents Study travel reports, communication btw ALF – HIs	Tamer institute, current and former directors Issakson study, 2004 External evaluation of Diakonia programme, 2008
Relevance	Assess the relevance of CL programme in relation to Swedish policies Value-added of regional programme to objectives on national level?	Critical review of Swedish policies compared to contextual analysis of situation for Children's Literature in MENA	Sweden's development coop. with MENA region Perspectives on Poverty Policy on Culture and Media Policy for int'l dev. Coop. with civil society Policy for Capacity Dev.
B. Institutional issues			
Appropriateness of ALF as regional lead agency	– How was ALF identified? How was the decision taken internally in Sida?	Study internal Sida documents to establish decision-making process	Embassy /Sida former staff Sida MENA strategy EU policies

Evaluation criteria	Main evaluation questions	Methodology	Sources
Effectiveness	– To what extent has ALF been able to achieve the objectives of the programme? ALF Ownership to programme	Interviews ALF leaders Study ALF organisational structure and role of CL	ALF management Sida Embassy
Efficiency	Has the programme activities been implemented in a timely and cost-efficient manner?	Study ALF organisational structure, administrative routines and systems, audited accounts 2007–9 Interviews ALF head of admin, auditor	ALF financial & administrative manual Sida guidelines for narrative and financial reporting
<i>Capacity-building</i> <i>Competence</i>	Has ALF been able to build capacity among HI, NCGs? Assess ALF strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats vis-à-vis CLP	Research of available documentation from HI Interviews HI – NCGs Interviews PMT staff	Narrative reports from programme, HI reports Concept notes HIs Travel reports PMT directors/staff
Sustainability	– To which extent will the activities (and outcomes if any) be sustained after Sida funding?	Desk studies HI reports Interviews/FGDS Website	Host institutions Teachers – librarians – book stores
Synergies spin off effects	– Extent of synergies developed btw CLP and other ALF programs?	Interviews ALF Brief desk study of ALF annual reports, web sites, media reports	ALF director Andreu Claret ALF PM Gemma Auberell ALF website, news
<i>ALF level</i>	– Has ALF been able to make use of its regional networks to create new partnerships and networking opportunities for the HI?		
<i>Partner level</i>	– Has the ALF been able to make use of its communication tools to disseminate achievements of the programme on a wider scale?	Interviews HI, partners in NCGs regional	
<i>Embassies/ others donors</i>	Have there been any joint initiatives with other Swedish/ donors?	Interviews Desk studies travel reports, minutes of meetings	Swedish Embassy Cairo Swedish Embassy Amman

In the analysis phase, findings on the above issues were triangulated and cross-checked from the different sources (desk study, interviews, FGDS, previous knowledge with the ET). Follow-up questions and interviews were made with different stakeholders on phone or email. The draft report was submitted to Sida, ALF and all the Host Institutions for comments. In the final draft of the report factual errors were corrected based on inputs from the stakeholders. The final report was presented to Sida in accordance with the TOR and Sida's Evaluation Policy and format.

The main challenge in the *analysis phase* was to establish a causality link between the outputs produced by the programme – and to which extent this could be attributed to outcomes found on national or regional level. In order to have fully analysed if it was to the credit of the programme that for example the level of Children Literature activities in Jordan had increased, we should have analysed the other key actors involved in this and tried to assess *how much* the different programs had contributed to this change. In that case, the evaluation should have constructed a counterfactual context, i.e. what would the situation for children literature and reading in the countries surveyed looked like *without* the CLP. This was outside the current scope and budget. However since the programme interventions in each

country have been relatively limited – both in outreach and time span, and there were no institutionalized results on governmental or semi-governmental (UNRWA) level, and the team *does* make the assumption that this programme with the current administrative set-up and working modality would not be in a position to create long-term outcomes. Rather the team assumes that some of the seeds and ideas/initiatives that have been spread might lay the foundation and grow into something else. This implies that the “impact” (in the meaning of a lasting, long-term effect on the societal level) of this programme has not been fully assessed.

2.3 Limitations/obstacles

The evaluation team was unable to interview and interact directly with children who had benefitted from this programme. There were no ongoing CLP activities during the evaluation, and the programme had not created any sustained children’s groups¹ or had consultations with children regarding programme design or during the monitoring and evaluation, and thus there were no children available who would have known about the programme.

Another gap was that the team could not evaluate the activities in Syria as the Host Institution withdrew from the ALF partnership just before the evaluation started. And thus the reported activities from Syria are based on the self-reporting and assessment from the HI and ALF CLP monitoring reports, and not validation through a field survey.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that since the CLP did not engage directly with key national stakeholders like the Ministry of Education and/or Ministry of Culture in the case countries visited, team only met with some of the governmental agencies.

3 Context

3.1 Arab children literature

According to the original programme plan, the core issue in promoting children’s literature is “one of attitudes, attitudes towards children, towards reading, and towards learning. Children’s right to develop and to participate with their specific perspectives in family, cultural and social life is not acknowledged everywhere. Reading other books than pure school textbooks is often seen as a luxury with no meaning.” (2005, CL programme Plan, p. 6)

When children learn to read and write, and have access to high quality children’s literature produced for (and sometimes by) children with the aim of installing a love and passion for reading and learning, this fosters a culture of independent thinking. It is well documented, amongst others by the Arab Human Development Report, that a key challenge in Arabic societies is related to the educational systems (and supported by traditional patriarchal structures) that teaches children to be obedient and submissive and not challenge the authorities.

The recent Arab Knowledge Report (2009) states that the ultimate aim is to analyse and identify opportunities and risks inherent in the acquisition, production, creation, and deployment of “knowledge”; a primary avenue for renaissance and human development. Emphasising the triadic relationship among development, freedom, and knowledge, the Report views the upgrading of Arab knowledge perform-

¹ For both Lebanon and Jordan the HIs had activities going on that seemed to be similar to those that had previously been funded by CLP, like the storytelling hours in Lebanon.

ance as a gateway to reform the Arab development situation. The Report also discusses the general enabling environments for knowledge with a focus on freedoms as a basic requirement. Considering that creativity is a way to empower people in their quest to overcome the drawbacks and constraints. Emphasizing the relationship of freedom and knowledge update and all contribute to the enhancement of human dignity

The report considers that the principles of the previous keys for the construction of a climate of rationality and proportionality, the report seeks to gain access to the so-called critical mass, which gives hope for a rebound this.

The Children Literature programme came as a response to the basic need of knowledge, in the countries that have not yet reached the critical mass which allows it to clear up the delay in the Arab area of knowledge (Syria and Egypt only the States which lack this critical mass. Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine have sufficient knowledge of the relatively capital to enable them to participate in the knowledge society).

The programme intersects with the Arab situation in the importance of the Arab language beginning of reading, as it seeks to enhance and strengthen the culture of reading and attitude toward reading and the Arabic language to support cultural diversity, which enhances critical thinking. Article 10 in the UN Declaration on Cultural Diversity states that “due to current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods and services at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation ... aimed at enabling ... developing countries *to establish cultural industries that are viable* and competitive at national and international level”. And objective five in the same declaration is “Safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages.”

The CLP is exactly in line with the declaration as it has used a holistic approach in many activities including the production of original Arabic books of high quality, the distribution of children’s books on national and regional level in the five countries, encourage reading, capacity building, network, and university courses, conferences and studies.

The programme came also – as stated in its documents – as a response to the lack of coordinated efforts to encourage and promote the readers audience, and the lack of Arab holistic approach to development and improvement of all sectors of the book industry and reading. Therefore, it uses a holistic method by going to children’s literature, reading, and by a wide range of activities and sectors which include: the books production of high quality children, the distribution of children’s books (national and cross-borders), encourage reading, and capacity building, and build a network and university courses, conferences, and studies.

Finally, the programme took into consideration the conditions of the education system in the Arab world which suffers from many problems at different levels, within the framework of the teaching of traditional indoctrinating, centred on the teacher and the book and not the child, which seeks to preserve the children’s answers to questions pre-set, do not develop the creativity and mental critical and diversity.

Therefore, the programme represented a fundamental need in the Arab world: new replies to old questions, put new questions about the Arab context, production of new knowledge stems from the definition of the concepts of the reality of our experience of life (concepts that we live with in our daily life). And that production of new knowledge require, needs to use the minds in a new ways, innovation and creativity and promote cultural diversity.

3.2 Sida

For Sida, the overall goal of promoting children's literature is closely related to democratic development and human rights. The CL project is specifically mentioned in the MENA strategy, "Greater assistance should be provided for initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, e.g. through cultural projects and support to the media. Examples could include projects focusing on children's literature and the promotion of reading, or media programmes targeting women and young people" (MENA Strategy 2006:15)

According to the Swedish strategy for the Middle East and North Africa 2006–10, one lesson learned from experience is that "the regional approach adopted by Sida in supporting initiatives in the areas of democracy, human rights, culture and the media meets a present need, as existing formal and informal structures in the region are weak." Sweden is also sensitive to the fact that experiences, skills and ideas of other Arab countries are often "perceived as more suitable for the region than Western initiatives." (MENA:7)

Furthermore, Sida highlights four principles as cross-cutting issues when working with democratic governance; non-discrimination, openness and access, accountability, and participation, and also on encouraging understanding and respect for issues such as gender equality and the responsible exercise of official authority.

3.3 Previous evaluations

This is the first evaluation of the CLP under the ALF umbrella. However in the previous phases, where the programme was implemented in Palestine there were several studies and evaluations.

In 2003, Diakonia commissioned a feasibility study² assessing the possibilities for expanding the CL programme outside the Palestinian areas. The study supported establishing a regional resource centre in Amman, Jordan and immediately establishing cooperation with teachers and researchers at university level. Training was proposed to be based on the experiences from West Bank and Gaza, and explore the opportunities for conducting the trainings in cooperation with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

In 2004 Sida commissioned an external evaluation of the Diakonia/Sida funded programme (Issakson, 2004). This study did not agree with the conclusions of the 2003 study arguing that the time was not ready to establish a regional programme. Instead the report proposed to focus on in-service training of teachers and librarians in all UNRWA schools³ and in that way start introducing the idea to Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Issakson also recommended that Sida continue to support the capacity-building of Tamer institute.

Sida's Department for Democracy and Civil Society (DESO) did not fully agree with any of the two reports. In February 2005 Sida called for a workshop in Alexandria with representatives from institutions and programs to brainstorm on a possible regional programme in the field of children's literature. Based on the positive and numerous ideas from the workshop, two external consultants were contracted to elaborate a programme document. They visited the region for continued discussion with most of the participants of the Alexandria conference and other programs and organisations were consulted. A draft proposal was sent to all the participants of the Alexandria conference.⁴

Sida asked the two consultants to identify the most suitable regional agency that could handle the CL programme. However the two consultants concluded that no institutes or organisation filled the crite-

² "Children's Literature in the Middle East and North Africa – a pre-Study for Swedish Support", Anna Birgitta Eriksson, Varmdo, Sweden, August 2003.

³ Diakonia has continued to work with UNRWA in the region outside the ALF programme.

⁴ The proposal was further elaborated and discussed at a second meeting in Alexandria in August 22–23, 2005.

ria.⁵ Thus the choice of selecting a regional partner was left for Sida. According to the Sida Decision-making document (BD) dated April 2006, Sida took the decision that the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures would be the lead regional agency for handling the programme due to reasons of efficiency and a wish to support and revitalise the Swedish Institute in Alexandria with Sida-funded activities.⁶

In 2010, Sida conducted two evaluations related to the MENA strategy (2006–10) and as a preparation for the next strategy 2011–2015; *Strategic Poverty Analysis of the Middle East and North Africa* (MEA, 2010), and *Evaluation of the Swedish Strategy for Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa* (SIPU, 2010).

The SIPU evaluation noted that the choice of ALF as an implementing agency for the regional CL programme was not based on existing programs or ALF activities in the area of the CL – in fact, three of the five host institutions were not active in CL prior upon being included in the programme. The evaluation also questioned the logic links between Sweden's overall goal in promoting human rights and democracy and the selection of approaches and strategies for reaching these goals. Culture and arts were assessed as less effective strategies for developing democracy and good governance, as it takes decades to develop creative individuals that will be able to make a democratic difference in their societies. The evaluation recommends Sida to more directly target its regional interventions towards more narrowly defined focuses:

- *Good Governance* – Focusing on public sector reform and administrative governance;
- *Women and/or Youth* – Narrowing down the area of human rights and elaborating on links to institutional development and good governance of importance for these groups;
- *Sustainable Use of Water* – Developing the current cooperation area further; and
- *Pro-poor Economic Development* – Linking the current area more clearly to poverty reduction and to a long-term development towards democracy and human rights.

Should Sida decided to move along the recommendations of the MENA strategy evaluation, there will be less room for including the CLP and the Performance Arts programs in the new strategy period. The implications of this are further discussed in chapters five and six.

4 Findings

The findings are presented along two main lines; institutional issues which include a description of programme management unit, the planned vs. actual costs and organizational issues that have an effect on effectiveness and efficiency.

The programme outcomes (description of planned vs. obtained results) are presented on three levels: programme management, national and regional level.

4.1 Institutional

4.1.1 Organisational Overview

The idea of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures came in the framework of the Barcelona process launched in 1995, while it was formally established ten years later

⁵ 2006-GJDC-6PQDL.PPM

⁶ This motivation was confirmed by several stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation.

and named after the late Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, who was assassinated by a mentally ill person in 2003.⁷ ALF is presided over by a Board of Governors from 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean, including the five countries involved in the CLP.

The vision and mission of ALF is *dialogue between the countries and cultures around the Mediterranean region*, including the EU, Balkans, Arab countries, Turkey and Israel. The Foundation's programme is focused on activities in fields essential for human and social dialogue: Education and Youth; Culture and Arts; Peace and Co-existence; Values, Religion and Spirituality; Cities and Migration; and Media.⁸ The target group is youth.

One of ALF strategies is to support civil society working for a common future of the region. In the 2009 to 2011 period ALF has over 3000 network members and three hundred projects, including 21 long-term programmes involving partners on the two shores of the Mediterranean and financing activities in over forty countries (more information on www.euromedalex.org).

ALF is partly hosted by the Swedish institute in Alexandria⁹ and partly by the Alexandria library, while the CLP office is located in a building behind the Swedish Institute.

Based on the process described in the previous chapter, Sida entered into an agreement with the Anna Lind Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (ALF) for managing the CLP. A contract was signed between Sida, represented by the Head of the Division for Culture and Media and the executive director of ALF in May 2006. In the contract the CLP was given an independent status in the organization. The contract stated that ALF would take responsibility:

1. to plan, implement and monitor the programme through a *programme management unit, with an independent status in the organisation* (my underlining), especially appointed to manage this programme
 2. to provide the necessary resources for this programme management unit as specified in the programme Plan (programme manager, deputy programme manager and web-master – part-time)
-
5. To fulfil and implement all the obligations and duties undertaken in the Final Programme Plan and this Agreement.

Sida's main role was to provide the funding, monitor the progress including attending Annual Review meetings with ALF handled by the Sida regional programme officer in the Swedish Embassy in Cairo.

According to the contract, an inception report outlining a detailed work plan and budget would be submitted to Sida after four months.

The process of setting up the programme took much more time than expected. Two children literature specialists were recruited in the end of 2006, and a programme assistant came in February 2007. Due to different views between the two specialists on the contents and methodology of the Inception report, the First Work Plan (FWP) was not submitted until mid-2007. The internal conflicts in CLP required Sida to intervene and mediate.

The two specialists were recruited with the purpose of capitalizing on resource persons from the Arab region; one had experience from the CLP in Palestine having worked with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture, while the other was a child literature and library expert, and one of the founders of ASSABIL (the host institution in Lebanon). The specialists were under the supervision of the Head of the Youth

⁷ The late foreign minister Anna Lindh died in Stockholm 11th September 2003.

⁸ Information gathered from the ALF website, www.euromedalex.org

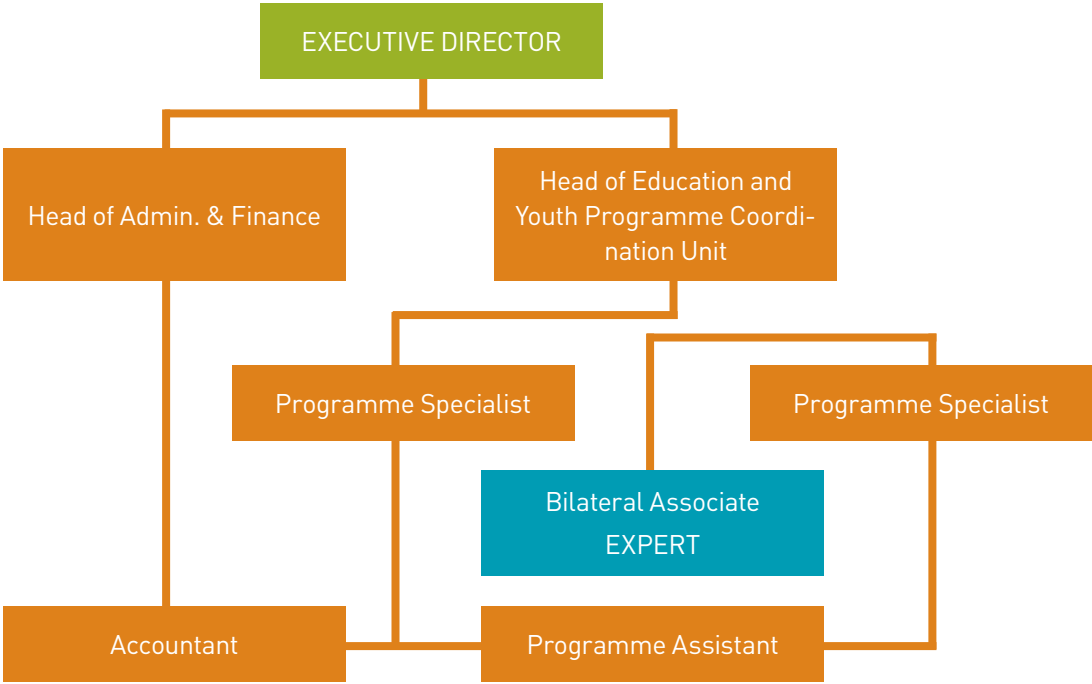
⁹ Part of ALF is located with the Swedish Institute in Alexandria (www.swedalex.com), and the director's office is located in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

and Education Programme in ALF. In addition, the CLP was supported by an accountant and a Bilateral Associate Expert (BAE) seconded from Sida. The BAE was later assigned to work especially on communications, information and the website. The BAE worked in the programme from 2007–2009.

The first ALF director (2005–7) supported the CLP, while the second director (2007–8) refused it and this led to delays in the implementation. However the third executive director (2008 –) initiated a change in the organizational structure of the organization and the Education and Youth department was removed, and a Programme Coordinator (new position) took over the supervision of the CLP. His support to the CLP has speeded up the implementation of the program.

From January 2010, there have been further organizational changes as both the two original programme specialists have left the programme. ALF has appointed an existing staff member to become programme administrator, while the programme assistant and accountant continued. As of May 2010, the programme assistant who represented the remaining institutional continuity since 2007 will leave her position.

An observation linked to the organisational structure is that it has changed with the different directors. The main changes from the first period to the current period (see figure below) is that when the programme was established it was placed under the direct supervision of the Youth and Education Unit, while after late 2008, this unit was removed and integrated in the Programme Coordination Unit for all ALF activities.



Source: ALF

Figure 1 Organisational structure CLP 2006–8

A division of labour was agreed upon between the two programme specialists; one would focus on Children Literature content, identifying and contacting partners, monitoring implementation, except for Palestine where she could not travel; and the second would focus on management issues, reporting and developing work plans as well as identifying and contacting partners, monitoring implementation in Palestine. Although probably practical, the division of labour had implications for the transfer of knowledge from the Palestinian experience to the region, and is considered one of the unintended negative consequences of the organizational structure.

Until recently, the main organisational weakness in the relationship between ALF and the programme is that there has been no clear *leadership* of the programme. The line from the programme to the Head of Programs (and earlier Youth and Education) was a *dotted* line, implying that there was no direct supervision. As will be discussed later in the report, this ambiguity was a reflection of Sida's deliberations of keeping some independence for the programme, while at the same time having ALF manages the programme. In the most recent structure from 2010, the dotted line had been replaced by a straight line, which is an indicator of ALF integrating the programme into its regular activities. Reference to the CLP was found in the current ALF strategic documents. ALF taking larger responsibility for the programme was seen as strength. Another weakness noted in the first ALF phase was the absence of a leader of the CLP as both specialists were on the same line and reporting to a more remote supervisor who was not directly engaged in the programme.

The lack of clear programme leadership affected other aspects such as the planning processes in CLP which often went on for many seminars and discussions, but without decisive leadership to synthesise and move the process forward. Many examples were referred to by the HIs and partners of seminars, workshops and meetings where ALF gathered people for discussions, but without having clear objectives and planned deliverables before starting the workshops. On several occasions, workshops were ill-prepared without providing participants with hand-outs and material etc. Several participants interviewed believed that with a stronger leadership of the programme more identifiable results could have been produced by these workshops. Some informants also pointed out that these results could have been utilised more effectively if the CLP and HIs had adopted a concerted and joint advocacy campaign for promoting children's literature with national governments and regional bodies.

On the other hand, in projects such as the 101 books exhibition the ALF was credited for having organised and administrated with good results. The CLP staff's *technical expertise and support* to the HI was found to be solid and much appreciated by the partners. The filing of documents, travel reports, monitoring of progress from visits was found to be very good and comprehensive.

Although some gaps were found in the communication between the staff in the programme, especially in the first phase of the programme, where Sida had to intervene in order to smooth issues, this can be contributed to start-up problems that gradually evaporated. The fact that all-female staffs were recruited was commented by the CLP as positive since the main target group would be young girls.¹⁰

The first recorded visits to partners in the region were conducted in mid 2007. After that there were regular visits by the specialists in order to establish contact and identify potential partners (so-called host institutions – see below). Although there were frequent field visits to Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, an annual plan of travels were not made, something which would have made it more predictable for the partners. Finally, there was no monitoring of the work of the programme specialists in the field by ALF until recently. In 2009, ALF planned to integrate the CLP in ALF and have ALF monitoring officers' follow-up the CLP.

4.1.2 Finances and resources

The first agreement between ALF and Sida signed in 2006 stipulated a grant of 15.5 million SEK to cover the years 2006–2009. In February 2009 an addendum to the contract was signed extending the activity period to December 2009 with an additional SEK 2.5 million. In January 2010, a second addendum was signed extending the contract to June 2011, with an additional 11.5 million SEK. With the additional contributions the total Swedish contribution to ALF is SEK 29 million (ca 3.6 million USD).¹¹

¹⁰ ALF noted in the 1st Narrative Report that the fact that there was no gender balance (all women) "is in harmony with the programme attitude: "reaching girls" (2.4 from the programme document)."

¹¹ An amount of 600.000 SEK was set aside by Sida for evaluations of the program.

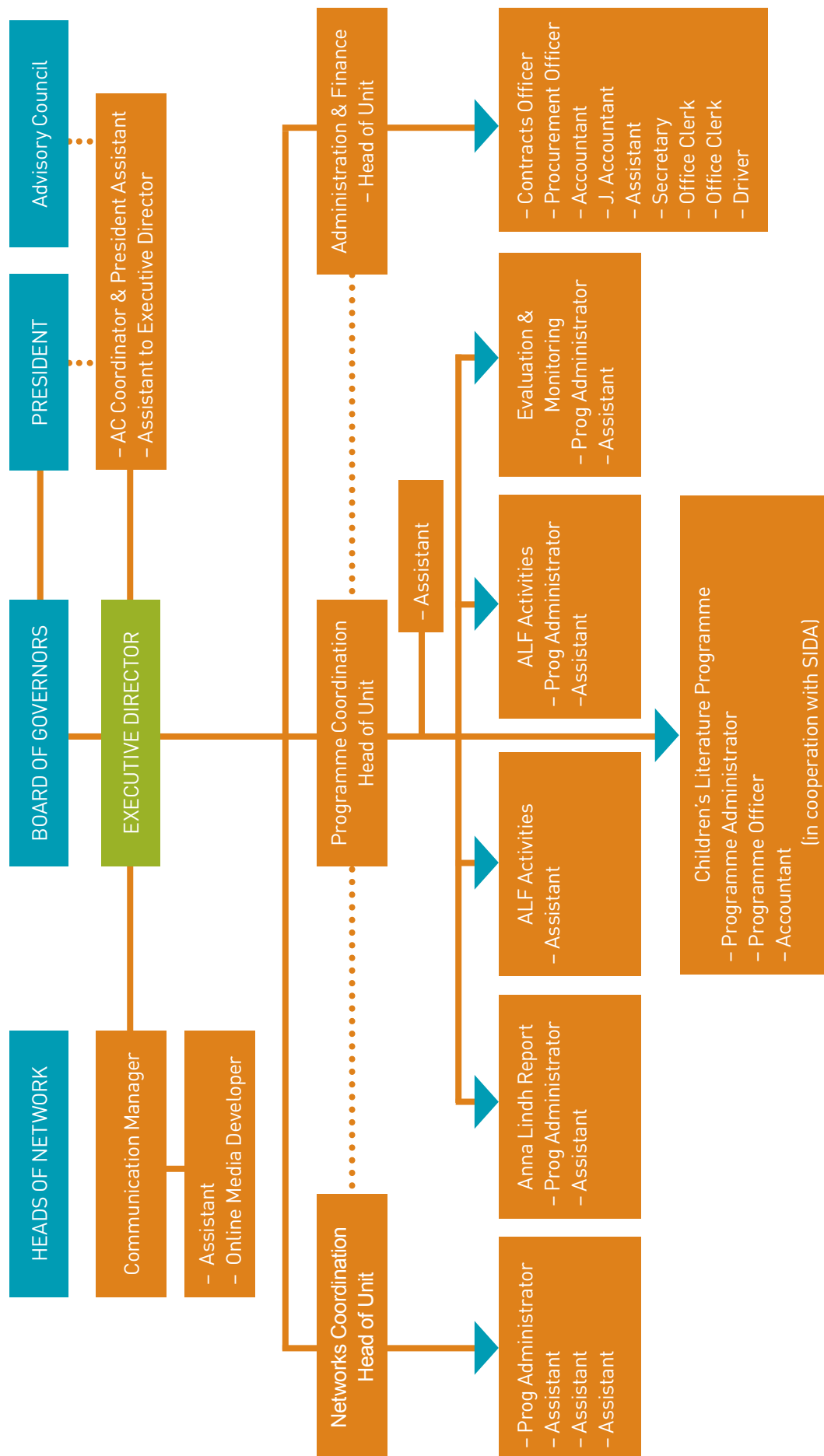


Figure 2 ALF internal structure [19.04.10]

Table 2 Sida funding to programme 2006–11

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010–11	Total (SEK)
Sida fund (SEK)	3,300,000	5,000,000	6,700,000	2,500,000	11,500,000	29,000,000

(Source: contracts Sid a-ALF)

The programme had a slow start, and a comparison of budget versus expenditures for the first phase (which was supposed to end in June 2009) showed that ALF CL had spent less than 40% of the budget by end of 2008.¹²

However by the end of 2009, the preliminary financial reports from the Finance and Administration unit showed that the programme had expenses 2.2 million out of 2.5 million USD, i.e. almost 85% of the budget for the whole first phase from 2006–9. The unspent funds of almost 400.000 USD were mainly due to the lack of transfer of funds to the Egyptian host institution (A&A) and various minor deviations on the regional activities.

The *financial and administrative system* of ALF is established according to EU standards and regulations. ALF has a strong internal control system with segregation of duties in place. The programme accountant prepares the payments with supporting documents in cooperation with the programme specialists (for 2010 programme administrator) and sends it to the Head of Programs, which in turn sends it to the Head of Unit in the Finance and Administration for approval of the Director. In most of the cases, according to the programme staff, the payment requests are returned with comments and questions for the programme, which forwards these to the Host Institutions for their responses, before a new round is made in order to get the payment released.

This system was found unnecessarily bureaucratic and cumbersome and leads to great delays in getting the funds out to the partners and activities. The administrative and narrative reporting requirements incurred extra transaction costs both at partner¹³ and ALF level. An example to illustrate; Host Institution A has signed a contract with ALF of around 150.000 USD with 11 different sub-components and approximate amounts for each of the sub-components. In order to get the funds released from ALF, the HI has to send a separate work plan and request for each of the 11 sub-components (even if the amounts were less than 3000 USD). Each request has to be approved in the routines described above. Multiplying that procedure by 11 components for five HI, it is self-explanatory why the programme and financial management has delayed the implementation.¹⁴

It should be noted that in the current phase, according to ALF, the programme management team will require the Host Institutions to submit one complete work plan.¹⁵

Another complaint heard from the HIs was the lack of flexibility from the program to change budget lines (even for minimal amounts) without prior approval by the Management Team.

A perhaps unintended effect of the bureaucratic procedures is that ALF was not able to work with small community-based organisations or publishing houses that base their income on local resources and not international funding. According to minutes from travel and monitoring reports of ALF's programme staff, some of the HIs declined to be a host institution because of the work and capacity needed to manage funding from ALF. In the SWP, ALF tried to compensate the HI by offering them 11 % com-

¹² Although CLP had signed agreements with the HIs before the end of 2008 and a first payment of 60% was made, this was not reflected in the 2008 financial report as financially an expense is not recorded unless it has been fully incurred (i.e. activities implemented).

¹³ One HI reported that since it had worked with ALF before it was aware of the "heavy administrative burden that came with projects funded by ALF", so when joining the CLP it had to hire a new financial administrator.

¹⁴ An indicator of the amount of paperwork is the 2,700 files recorded in ALF project and administration folder.

¹⁵ Comments from ALF on draft report 20.5.10

compensation for the coordination and planning work involved. The 11% was specifically stated in the contract that there was no need for supporting documents. When the external auditor, KPMG, found the 11% without supporting documents, the auditor refused to issue the audit certificates because it was against the ALF standard TOR for the audits. The fact that different regulations applied to funds from ALF (depending on whether fund was Sida/EU), made the reporting more complicated for host institutions that had an agreement with ALF outside the CLP. The ALF director stated that ALF would not integrate and harmonize the funding requirements for Sida with ALF. However if Sida had applied a programme-based approach (PBA) to ALF it should have been Sida that aligned itself to the programme reporting formats of the CLP.

The external audit reports provide management letters and comments on deviations from budgets and plans. By reviewing the external audit reports and the accompanying management letters; there were noticeable improvements in the performance of the programme. Although the audit report for 2009 was still not approved and ready for the team's perusal during the evaluation time, a comparison between 2007 and 2008 audited accounts showed some improvements.

When breaking down the total costs of the CLP, 58% of the funding has been channelled towards activities (a breakdown of national and regional activities is found in the next chapter), 35% of the total expenditure of 2.2 million USD has gone to salaries for the programme management unit, three per cent for travel costs and administration and 1% for audits.

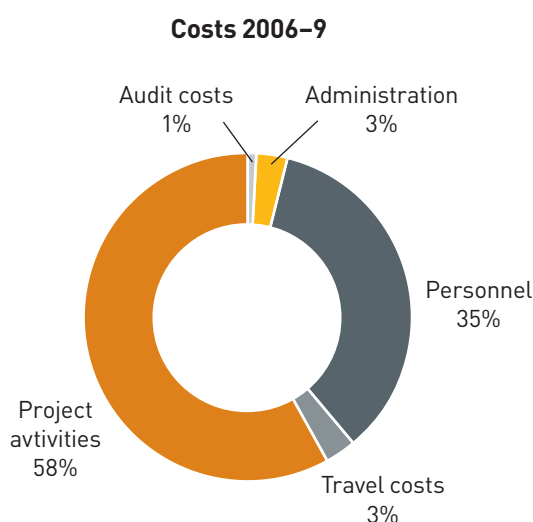


Figure 3 CLP costs 2006–9

According to the *original contract* signed in 2006, the distributed should be around 50% for project activities, 30% for staff, 6% for the website, 5% for travel and 10% for evaluation.

The *principal deviation* from the overall budget distribution is therefore the lack of investment in the website and evaluations (the cost of the evaluation is paid directly by Sida and not included in the CLP budget).

Finally, an observation on an perhaps unintended issue was that although disbursements were issued for each and every HI once the audit certificate was received, the external auditors requirements for having all HI's audit certificates, delayed the process of the closure of the previews phase and the disbursement for the current phase work plan. This unintended consequence should be kept in mind for the next phase.

4.2 Programme outcomes

4.2.1 Goals

The overall programme goal as stated in Programme Document (2005) was to strengthen the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and emotional development of children in the MENA region.

While the purposes were defined as a) to increase access and availability of quality children's literature in the MENA region; b) increase production and use of children's literature with a HR perspective, a cultural diversity perspective, and the perspective of the child; and c) increase dialogue between MENA countries and EU, in field of children's literature and reading promotion.

The 2005 Plan clearly stated that the main issue is "promotion of children's reading of children's books. This means that the main activities are related to children's literature – developing the quality of children's books, disseminating good quality books, encouraging reading of children's literature, propagating the benefits of reading, etc. However, when other cultural activities, such as music, arts and drama, clearly support the main goal, i.e. promotion of children's reading (e.g. storytelling, dramatising or illustrating stories) – they can be supported by the programme" (ALF2005:7) Furthermore, a key issue was reaching poor children and reaching girls.

After the inception phase, in the first work plan 2006–7, three results were defined:

6.3.1 Acquire a holistic, participative and focused approach for developing children's literature

6.3.2 Raise planning and management skills for developing CL

6.3.3 Acquire a regional approach for developing children's literature

In the *Second work plan* 2008–9, the focus shifted towards increasing the coordination and exchange between the different countries:

6.3.1 Increase coordination and management skills of the Host Institutions in each country

6.3.2 Increase exchange between the Host Institutions in the Five countries

6.3.3 Consolidate efforts on CL and Reading in each of the five related countries

In the Third work plan 2010–2011, the core groups in each country is planned to be enlarged, the exchange to be increased and the component of exchange between the Arab countries and the Euromed was included:

6.3.1 Enlarge, diversify and empower Core Groups for developing reading and CL in a focused way.

6.3.2 Increase exchange between the Host Institutions in the five countries for developing reading and CL

6.3.3 Increase coordination and management skills of the Host Institutions and their partners for developing reading and CL

6.3.4 Increase visibility and support for the programme within the countries and the Euromed region

In order to present the results of the different levels of the programme, this report will refer to three levels; programme management unit at ALF, national level and regional level.

As seen from the above three work plans, *the planned results have changed for each work plans*. These changes made the monitoring and tracking of exact outcomes more difficult.

4.2.2 Programme management

The activities of the programme management unit in order to set up the programme were:

- *Research*
- Select Host Institutions (ALF) and National Core Groups (ALF)
- Book exhibition (ALF with HI)
- Establishing a website (ALF)

Assessing the outcomes of the different components (built on the findings in Annex IV), the team found several challenges in tracking the outcomes because the Work Plans were structured and planned according to activities, not outcomes.

For the first activity planned, *research*, ALF planned to undertake in accordance with the First Work Plan, a survey and a Basic Assessment of the situation of children literature in the five different countries of work. The plan was to utilise such an Assessment as a baseline for planning future work and interventions in the different countries. ALF issued a public tender, and *The Information and Research Center at King Hussein Foundation* in Amman was contracted to conduct the assessment. Due to reasons that are outside the scope of this evaluation to assess, the Assessment was not completed. A draft report was shared with the Host Institutions in the countries, some refused the report arguing that it did not represent a true reflection of the situation of CL and mapping of actors in their countries, while others utilized parts of the findings and organised seminars for discussing them (Egypt, Jordan, a roundtable in Lebanon, Syria & Palestine).

Reflecting on the lessons learnt from this experience, the CLP team recognised that the scope of the research was too broad compared to the resources allocated when ALF contracted the company, and in addition the time provided for the research was too short for the assignment.

Assessment: The lack of a baseline study affected the later planning process. ALF had to select partners and HIs without a transparent process and clear criteria. This placed more responsibilities on the programme specialist to find partners who used her personal contacts during field visits to find partners. There was no open bid or competitive process for establishing partnerships.

Identifying Partners – selecting Host Institutions

In the original programme document (ALF, 2005), “a local organization, (for example a library) will be identified in each country by the programme management to: host, coordinate, manage the logistics and facilitate implementation of the programme and produce reports.” Very general criteria were described for the HI, the organizations should not have a religious, confessional, political, tribal, or family label, should have or be a children’s library, should be centrally located, have the needed facilities to host workshops, be, or be encouraged to join the ALF network.¹⁶ The HIs selected by CLP were:

Tamer Institute in Palestine has long experience in the field and is supported by a strong willed Palestinian Core Group dedicated to the work on children literature. Tamer’s steering committee, included the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, UNRWA, Diakonia, other NGOs and various resource persons. Due to the political situation in Palestine, the programme was under threat in Gaza which delayed the finalisation of some plans.

In Lebanon four institutions shared the implementation of the first work plan, while in the SWP, ASSABIL, was contracted as a Host Institution. ASSABIL Friends of the libraries, has a long experience in

¹⁶ ALF has established networks in all the 43 Euromed countries.

establishing libraries in cooperation with municipal authorities in Lebanon. With the CLP, the HI established a Resource and Training Center, while the three other partners were specialists in each their field and all expressed the value of coordination during implementation since their tasks were complementary. ASSABIL developed in cooperation with the other partners 11 projects with 4 partners; it supported 22 *public libraries* and 15 *class libraries*.

In *Egypt*, identifying the Host Institution took more time than in other countries and several NGOs and agencies were tried out in the FWP (Tareq, NGO Support Centre, Upper Egypt). The identified host institution that ALF placed much hope in for the SWP was *Alwan and Awtar* (A&A), a small and dynamic NGO, with main goal of “learning through visual and performing arts”. A&A quickly experienced the attraction that reading had on the children and redirected itself towards reading by opening a library and involving itself completely in the objectives of the programme. However the context in Egypt is extremely difficult: the country is immense with enormous primary needs, while the identified local partners seem to be slowed by a bureaucratic working tradition, and continuous turnover of personnel. After many efforts, ALF gave up on securing the authorization for A&A¹⁷ and at the time of the evaluation, ALF was considering different options for the future.

In *Jordan*, the selected host institution *Ruwwad Tanmiya*, was involved in development projects and service-delivery at the start of the cooperation with the CLP. However during the first and the second work plans Ruwwad became more involved in children literature. Ruwwad opened a Children Library and implemented 14 projects in the CLP, identified 2 partners who are specialized in children literature and involved 6 municipalities in developing and renovating libraries. Ruwwad cooperated with the Swedish Embassy in Amman on promoting children’s literature.

*Muntada El-Ijtima*y in *Syria*. El-Muntada had previously never received any external funding, and had not focused on children literature and reading but on cultural activities and adult reading. Although there were indications that the HI had conducted storytelling activities also prior to the ALF programme. The Muntada implemented major activities of the programme with enthusiasm and an approval from the authorities was finally obtained.¹⁸

Assessment: Only in Palestine and Lebanon were the selected Host Institutions specialized in children literature and reading. The team did not find a clear process for selection of HIs in the different countries. There were some level of scepticism towards the fact that ALF did not stick to its own selection criteria, especially with regards to selecting partners that did not have experience in working with reading and writing for children. Questions were raised, also in ALF, about the process, selection criteria and choices made.

However, in the case of Jordan, the selection of a HI with a strong community-base (and weak on CL) turned out positively for ALF and provided the CLP with important visions and reminders for how to work with the targeted communities in mobilising them for supporting the programme. In Syria and Egypt, the partners were also not experience in CL, but were able to produce some good results in the short time they worked with ALF. However, at the time of this Evaluation – there were no signed agreements with any HI in neither Egypt nor Syria, but the lack of agreements with HI did not seem to be related with the organisations not being experienced in children literature, but rather a reflection of the lack of space for civil society activities in these two countries.

¹⁷ Alwan wa Awtar has since then received approval from the government for receiving three international funds; from Austria, from the US Embassy and from a Swiss Organisation.

¹⁸ But in early 2010, the Syrian HI informed the management team at ALF that it would not continue the cooperation on the programme. This issue seemed to have influenced the decision that it did not want the external evaluation team to come to Syria to assess the results of the work.

National core groups

In the FWP the concept of National Core Group was tried out and operationalised. According to ALF, the understanding of NCG was “every stakeholder participating in an activity or a meeting is part of the NCG. The NCG is contacted and updated by the related Host Institution” (SWP:7).

The team found that the concept of “core” group was not clearly understood; some pointed to the fact that a “core” is at the heart of an issue, and thus a member of a core group should be stable and continuous, and be fully informed and updated about related issues. In ALF’s definition, anyone who had taken part in an activity is a core group member, and thus the team spent considerable time, especially in Egypt, trying to track down the members of the core groups.

According to the SWP, “The National Core Groups do work under pressure and have difficulties to respect the time frames, but they are motivated, combative and willing to achieve results. The fact that the children literature programme is managed by a bureaucratic institution, implying heavy reporting, administrative and financial control of activities, is at times difficult to accept by the different Core Groups and, as it implies a lack of flexibility, it is often understood by the partners as a lack of confidence and respect towards them.”

The team found that the insecurity felt by members of the core groups towards their own roles in ALF and which expectations were towards them affected their ability to efficiently exert leadership and ownership towards the programme. ALF was concerned about the lack of ownership and wrote in the SNR that “efforts should be undertaken to measure the sustainability of the programme by analyzing if the different Core Groups feel ownership of the programme and its activities, or if they feel that they are simply implementing a programme belonging to the ALF” (SNR:8).

Assessment: the concept of a national core group was not clearly understood by the members of the NCG interviewed in the field.¹⁹ Some members did not even know that they were defined as members. The lack of a written TOR and budget for their work might have played a role on the lack of understanding. The core group could have functioned as a steering committee if it has been properly instructed and constituted. However, it should be noted that the work that has been done with core groups in the different countries is there and has paved the way for future initiatives.

Book Exhibition 101 books

The exhibition of 101 books from all over the Arab world was successfully implemented in all 5 countries. The exhibition was cost-efficient and well organised, and gave visibility to the programme. Contacts were established between illustrators, writers, publishers etc. and there was an actual exchange of books from different Arab countries. The work with the criteria for evaluating the children’s books from each focus country brought forward 1500 evaluations of the 100 books. CLP have posted some of these evaluations on their website and planned to post more. There were some concerns about the suitability of some of the included books for children in the exhibition, but all over the exhibition seemed to have been a success.

Website

The planning and preparing for a website for the CLP took much more efforts, time and resources than originally planned by ALF. The website was finally opened in September 2009, but is not actively updated, and was not found to be known among the HIs and the partners interviewed (except Lebanon).

The reasons behind the delay seem to be linked to institutional and organisational weaknesses found in ALF on the other project components. First of all there was a lack of clarity with regards to ALF’s role in the website; was it meant to be an independent CLP website or part of or integrated with ALF.

¹⁹ This finding is not applicable to Palestine or Syria as members of the NCG there were not interviewed.

According to the original programme document, the main interpretation would be the website was meant to function as an independent resource bank for children literature and reading, not necessarily linked to ALF. Furthermore, ALF procedures for announcing the call for proposals took more than five months in order to have more than two service providers to respond to the call. When a developer was selected, he was not found to be up to the professional standards and this furthermore delayed the design of the website.

Sida allocated a separate BAE to work on the communications and information strategy of the CLP, including the website. However, as the BAE was not an ALF-staff with clear reporting lines, she faced many practical challenges in getting the work done. The lack of a clear job description a separate budget for the website and communication activities, affected the BAE's effectiveness.

When the website was about to be launched, ALF sent the a mission to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine in the fall 2009 find focal points for receiving information from the countries. However, since that time there has been no systematic follow-up of this mission and the website.

According to ALF leadership, since 2010, the CLP team has been working on the development of the website; a call for an online media assistant was launched, screening of applicants took place and the shortlisted applicant will be contracted shortly (May 2010). In addition, a proposal from the ALF web developer was sent to the CLP team in order to integrate the CLP website in the ALF website.

Analysing the extent of learning from the previous experiences and recommendations of the Palestinian programme, the team found that CLP had lost out on valuable experience, especially with regards to planned virtual regional website and distance course in CL at Bir Zeit University described in earlier reports (Sida Evaluation 3/2004).

Assessment: The ALF programme management team has attached great importance to the website, and even planned that the number of hits and inputs from the region is a result indicator towards reaching the overall goal of the third work plan (TWP). Currently the website is not functioning and is not updated. The website is not known – the team systematically asked every person interviewed if they were familiar with the website, and the large majority said no. The team tried to explore the number of hits for the website, but according to ALF this cannot be counted at the moment. The lack of a fully functioning and updated CLP website illustrates the challenges that ALF has struggled with; lack of leadership and ownership from ALF towards the programme, and formalistic procedures for contracting service-providers led to great delays and non-delivery of results.

ALF should be credited for recently trying to solve the problems of the website and the TWP report due in June 2011 will hopefully show that the CLP website has become a resource bank and point of reference for children literature in the Arab world. However this needs to be monitored from Sida.

4.2.3 Regional activities

The regional activities in the second work plan consisted of:

- Research related to Arab children literature
- Three regional meetings
- Prizes and contests: (regional)
- Translation for the Web site and producing documents
- Print and distribute evaluations
- Announcement of Honour list
- Participate in pilot activities

For the *research* related to Arab children literature five research papers were produced by university academics contracted by ALF. The findings were discussed at the occasion of a regional meeting where regional conclusions were drawn and recommendations made. A regional meeting for researchers took place in October 2009, (i.e. by the end of the SWP) and some of the recommendations (according to the time frame and budget available) were planned to be taken into account in the TWP. However the team found little evidence that there were any further follow-up or actions taken on the research. The team's assessment of the research is that it was of varying quality, and even more importantly the research did not integrate into a planned process that would reach to an expected outcome. Being a stand-alone activity, the relevance and effectiveness of the research could be questioned.

Three *regional meetings* were planned. One meeting for University teachers teaching Children literature courses to discuss the curriculum, situation and possible exchange (Alexandria, November 2008). According to the narrative report of the SWP, the outcome of the activity was the inaugurating a "Regional Association of University Teachers of Children Literature" to develop children's literature teaching in the universities, to enhance research in the field and to involve the Universities in related activities with the local community. The recommendations for improving curriculum were conducted. However, it was not clear from CLP's reports how these recommendations have been followed-up or taken forward in a process of advocating for a change in curriculum at the different national levels.

Overall assessment of regional activities: A main weakness in ALF model for developing a *regional approach* was the lack of a joint understanding of the concept of regional activities and what is the *main purpose* of the regional meetings. The team found good discussions recorded in the regional workshops, but they did not reach concrete recommendations achieved and did not feed into an ongoing process towards a jointly agreed upon goals. The lack of defined purpose led to confusion and lack of ownership from the involved stakeholders. Some expressed that many of the meetings attended seemed to be "meetings just for the sake of meeting".

Because there was no joint understanding of the functions of the national core groups (see below), the timing of the regional approach was not right. The only experience that the partner had to build on was the national experiences, there was no regional experience. The team would say that the programme missed the opportunity for implementing an *actual exchange of regional experiences*, competencies etc.

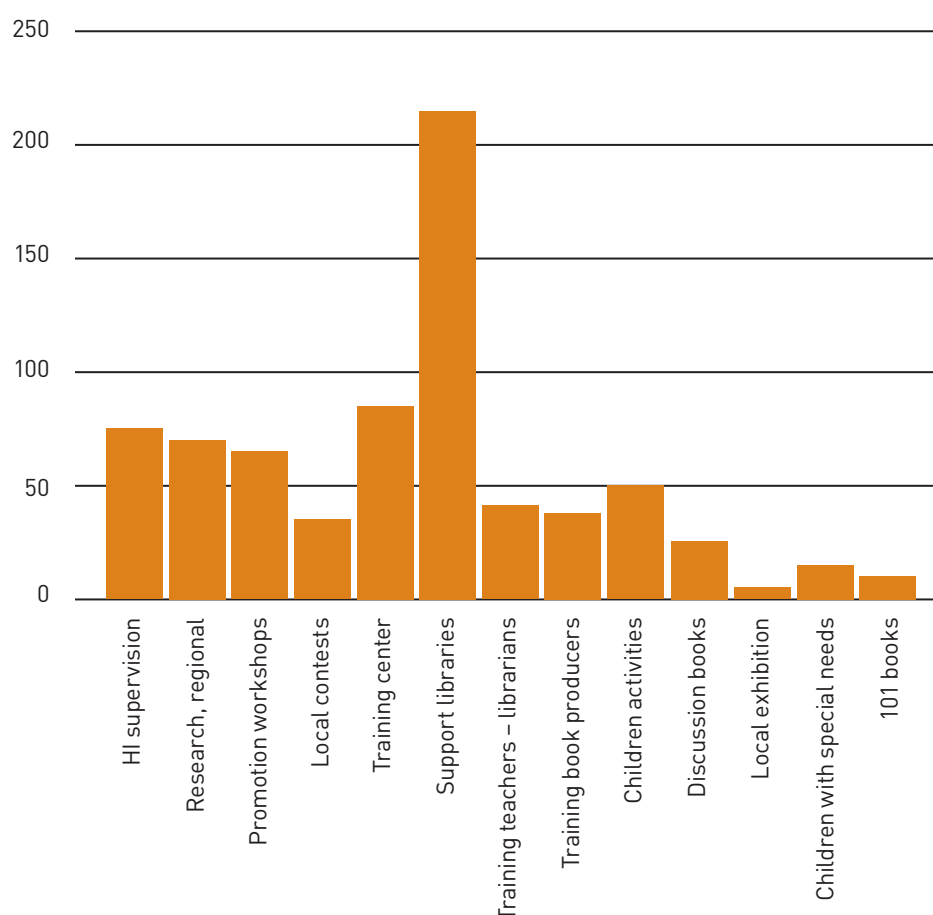
4.2.4 National activities

Based on the original programme document, ALF programme management team developed a model with a set of defined activities that the Host Institutions could choose between and based upon the literary needs of the country. *The national activities consisted of:*

- Advocacy (all countries)
- *Contests and prizes* (all except Lebanon and Egypt)
- Resource and Training Center (all except Syria and Jordan)
- Support and establish *libraries* (all countries)
- *Training* librarians and teachers (all countries)
- Training book producers (Syria, Palestine and Jordan)
- Activities and *story-telling* (all countries)
- Discussions of books (all countries)
- Local *exhibition* (only in Jordan)

- Children *Magazine* needs assessment (only in Jordan)
- Children with special needs (distribution of the Very Hungry Caterpillar in all countries)
- 101 Book Exhibition (all countries)

In the Annex IV, a description of what has been achieved and not achieved is provided, and thus in the below chapter key issues are only highlighted. In the below table a breakdown of costs for the activities that have been implemented for the years 2007–9 shows that renovating libraries has been the single largest cost, while supporting training and resource centres in two countries (Lebanon and Palestine) was the second largest cost.



Advocacy

The advocacy component in this programme is actually launching of books, holding seminars or other information and promotional activities to attract attention to the programme.

Assessment: Utilizing advocacy as a tool for influencing governments towards adapting more reader-friendly policies and enabling environment was a missed opportunity in this programme. The potentials for joint advocacy on the regional level are enormous; in all countries for example, annual reading weeks are organised. If these reading weeks were organised parallel and at the same time in the five countries, the reading weeks could be used as an entry point for raising issues to the government.

Contests and prizes

In order to encourage and promote the production of authentic Arabic books, the programme offered the HI to implement contests in their countries. In Lebanon, the country analysis showed that there is no lack of children's books (it was rather the lack of libraries and activities order to encourage the children to read), and thus there were no prizes and contents. However, in all the countries, increasing the

quality of good children's books was recognised as a need. Criteria for evaluating the books were agreed upon. The CLP provided a matrix for evaluating the books for nomination, which included the following points:

- *Book format; cover, paper quality, size, number of pages*
- *Content; correspondence with the target age group, correspondence with the values that are needed in children books, creativity, new ideas, originality of the text, fun and attractiveness.*
- *Language; simple and refined, small paragraphs suitable for the target age group.*
- *Illustrations; nice bright colours, attractive shapes*
- *Respect of the cultural background of children and respect of local context*

In Syria, the HI contracted a publishing house (Dar Atlas) that took care of the contest; children books were divided into three age categories: preschool, children, and early teenagers. After a process of selection and evaluation, a jury of five experts made a final selection based on the 10 selected books and nominated the final 9 prizes (3 writers, 3 illustrators, 3 publishers). In Syria, it was a new experience and the HI learnt a lot from it, according to the report as there were many challenges on it. In Palestine, Tamer had organised such events many times earlier.

Assessment: The book contests and prizes seemed to relevant activities for creating an interest in producing children's books. As this was a new experience for most of the partners there were several challenges and lessons learnt for ALF such as the selection of channels for distributing the calls for books, the timing and the logistics. The main comments from the HI to ALF in their evaluations were to make the contests an annual call so writers and illustrators know about it. Another recommendation was to announce a prize in each country, but jointly in the Arab region in order to attract more media attention to the programme.

Resource and Training Center

Funding for establishing resource and training centres was made available to all countries, but based on the assessment of needs, Syria and Jordan were not found to have a priority for resource centres. Tamer institute in Palestine already established a resource centre in 1999 while ASSABIL established a resource centre in its own office locations in Beirut. The resource center in Lebanon included the following activities:

- Establish of resource center (book and materials).
- Training librarians.
- Cultural activities and storytelling.
- Book club

Assessment: the evaluation team observed that with regards to the resource centre in Lebanon a concern was raised on the extent of outreach and accessibility of such a resource centre to the general public and target group. The Resource Centre in Tamer institute in Palestine, which has been funded for many years by both Diakonia and Sida, is co-located with a library, has a separate entrance, is open at regular hours and this might be seen as increasing the access of children and the CLP's target groups of teachers, librarians and volunteers.

Training of librarians and teachers

Training of teachers and librarians was a key activity in the Palestinian programme to further support and promote reading in libraries and schools. In the CLP the training seem to have been of less impor-

tance when assessing funds allocated for this component compared to the renovating of libraries. Still, the result is that more than 330 librarians and teachers were trained in the SWP according to the reports of ALF.²⁰

The evaluations of the trainings from the teachers and librarians were quite positive. The librarians stressed in their evaluation that the classification and indexing in the libraries was the most important session in the technical training, and thus the issue of computerizing was highlighted as an issue that could be even more prominent in the training. The teachers interviewed in the focus group meetings, along with the school principals, shared the importance of having teachers trained in getting ideas for how to inspire children to read. Many of the teacher trainees felt that were exposed to a new concepts, such as learning through experience, the use of musical instruments and shadow theatre as a way of interacting with children, listening to children's needs. All trainees agreed that such trainings renew their passion for their job. Some of them were excited to go back and practice new skills they learned.

The original programme document stated that "the Palestinian experience provides, if not a model, an interesting piece of learning for the other countries in the MENA region. The program has provided concrete material, models and structures to draw from. However, each country must develop its own activities according to its own context and in its own pace."

The CLP chose not utilise the previously developed training material developed by the Palestinian Tamer/Diakonia programme.

Support and establish libraries

Renovating libraries has been the largest component in the whole ALF budget, and has brought forward good results. The projects of the current work plan includes both establishing new public libraries and school libraries and also to activate ones which have not been frequently visited. In total 52 libraries have been re-animated or established²¹ and furnished with books and shelves in all the countries, except Egypt, where the library in A&A was supposed to be funded by ALF, but due to the lack of receiving an authorization from the authorities, A&A had to cover the costs from their own resources (around 50.000 USD). The renovation of these libraries is likely to have an outcome as it has provided girls and boys better access to books and stories.

Positive spin-offs of project

A positive spin-off effect of the CLP was found in a joint workshop for training of producers of books organised between Tamer institute and Ruwwad Tanmiya. The workshop allowed participants from Jordan and Palestine to communicate with a well known writer concerning publications from the Arab world. The target group was writers, critics, editors. The workshop allowed the participants to be introduced to publications in children's literature from the Arab world, which gave them an opportunity to follow up what happens in this sector in these countries, and to be introduced to experiences of Arab writers. Moreover, the presence of participants from both Palestine and Jordan was very motivating and allowed them to look into the experiences of each other and to have discussions and exchanging the point of views, which increased the benefit and the level of discussion. Participants raised the necessity of arranging such trainings in different Arab countries in order to keep the contact and to enable the writers to look into the publications and achievements in children's literature in different countries.

²⁰ Information from ALF CLP website "State of the Play" (2009) indicated 250 trainees, but according to the SWP a total of 331 librarians and teachers were trained in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The evaluation team was unable to find accurate statistics of the total number of trainees in the region for the years 2006–9.

²¹ Ibid. However, according to former ALF specialist only 17 libraries were renovated.

5 Assessment – evaluative conclusions

In this chapter an assessment of the intervention and results are conducted against the Sida given evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, feasibility, sustainability and rights-perspective (poor, gender, and children).

Relevance

For Sida, the overall goal of promoting children's literature is closely related to democratic development and human rights. The CLP is specifically mentioned in the strategy, "Greater assistance should be provided for initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, e.g. through cultural projects and support to the media. Examples could include projects focusing on children's literature and the promotion of reading, or media programmes targeting women and young people" (MENA Strategy 2006:15).

While the SIPU Evaluation argued that media, culture and arts are long-term interventions for having an effect on democratic development, and thus recommended Sida to move away from these areas. This evaluation would agree that it might be more difficult to see the *direct short-term* results from the CLP on democratization, however *long-term objectives are important and necessary when engaging in the Middle East*. Sida has developed a considerable comparative advantage in the field of children literature and reading during the last 15–20 years and this evaluation team believes it would be a loss if Sweden stepped down from this arena in the MENA region. Pippi Longstocking (*Jinan*) will always be Swedish and even if her ideas and ways of doing things are quite anti-authoritarian, unconventional – and thus not always approved by different circles in the Middle East – and the West²², reading for fun has gained serious ground in the region after the first Pippi books were translated by Dar el-Muna to Arabic more than twenty years ago.

Arguably, the outcomes of children literature programme might be divided between individual levels for the children that have been read for in the kindergarten, in school and at home, and on the other hand, on the society level, where governments are gradually starting to recognize that reading for fun enhances children's cognitive skills and abilities to learn other subjects. While the current CLP has worked mainly on promoting results on the individual levels (children's access to books, library infrastructure and activities for children), if these activities were to be taken on by the ministries of education they would be sustained and could potentially yield great results on promoting human rights, i.e. the respect for children's rights to express themselves freely and without censorship, children's right to ask questions and curiously enquire in order to attain new knowledge etc. All of the above do require a different mindset towards the child – the child needs to be viewed as an individual with integrity.

In Lebanon and Palestine, the ministries of education have shown that they are interested in cooperating and benefiting from the CLP; the MOE in Palestine has been in the programme steering committee since 1995, while in Lebanon, the MOE has approved a local partner to enter the schools and read for the children aloud. In Jordan, contact is underway with the library section in the MOE. But because changes in the educational systems is closely intertwined with changes in the popular culture which currently tends to swing in more traditional directions, the approach requires a long-term thinking and partnerships with key stakeholders in the region.

The evaluation team found that the CLP is relevant with regards to the MENA strategy, the civil society, human rights, and good governance objectives. However because the policies are quite

²² According to Tiina Meri, even in Sweden there are voices heard opposing the style of Pippi arguing that she poses a negative role model for children, see "Pippi Longstocking — Swedish rebel and feminist role model", March 4, 2005

vague, assessing the extent of relevance depends on the definition of the objectives in the policies; for example, there is no doubt that the ALF programme has contributed to opening space in the region for people and organizations working with children's literature and reading. Thanks to the programme a few new initiatives have been jointly developed by the partners. Although the potentials seem to be much stronger the CLP has started the process of bringing together professionals, activists and artists.

Rights perspective

Assessing the programme relevance from a rights-perspective, a key issue in the original programme document was reaching out to poor children and girls. Although stated in the document, this objective was not translated into specific strategies and targets. Ensuring that children, poor children and girls, are included in the programme, not just as passive recipients, but gaining their rights in the programme demands a different type of approach. A child/girl/poor-centred approach would imply that these targets are included as cross-cutting issues and indicators of achievement. For example, applying a rights-based approach to the CLP would mean that for every key activity, the target group – children, poor, girls etc – should be involved as active participants and consulted. The programme was not found to have included children as able decision-makers, and did not report on gender – or poverty-aggregated data. Participants' statistics were not broken down on boys/girls nor geographic or socio-economic background of the children.

An analysis of geographic areas of interventions of HI and poverty/access was not found as a criteria or requirement by ALF to the HI. The team is aware that this might have been communicated orally from the ALF management to their partners and host institutions.

This does not mean that the programme has not targeted poor children. The HI in Jordan is based in the eastern part of the capital Amman and works with empowering and mobilising poor communities to take responsibility for their own development. Ruwad's already existing relationship with the communities via different programs for renovating schools and other infrastructure had gained them trust and credibility in the communities. ASSABIL in Lebanon tried to work with the communities where they open libraries by inviting them in to the libraries, "community voices" and enabling children to express themselves. Iqra, the reading partner of ASSABIL targets poor people in the rural areas of Bekaa valley and the southern suburbs of Dahiye. Tamer institute in Palestine has also deliberately targeted rural areas and poorer communities, including refugee camps in both West Bank and Gaza. Tamer's branch office in the Gaza Strip has reached out to hundreds of children that live under harsh conditions. Finally, the identified HI in Egypt, A&A, is located and works in a poor area of Cairo (the destroyed neighbourhoods of Muqattam), but these activities were not funded by ALF.

However, for the programming of ALF CLP, there was no *direct targeting* of boys and girls living in communities with tough socio-economic conditions, and thus the reporting on actual outcomes did not reflect the potential good results from the partners. This might therefore be an area that is *underreported* by ALF CLP.

For gender equality, the ALF management team would probably have benefited from having a better gender balance in terms of reaching out to more diverse target groups and partners. An important issue is that boys and especially teenage boys are usually underrepresented on statistics of who is reading and thus different approaches need to be applied in order to reach them (more on this under 'lessons learnt').

Effectiveness and cost-efficiency

When assessing to which extent the CLP has been able to achieve its goals, the main conclusion is that good initiatives are found on the national level, and some on the regional level. But none of the results seem to be outcomes – i.e. medium to long-term effects that will be sustained after the funding has ended.

The main reason for the lack of sustained outcomes is linked to the *activity-driven versus long-term partnership approach*.

Pursuing an activity-driven approach with many projects components (up to 11) within a short implementation periods (7–8 months) was and still is, the ALF way of managing its programs. The team found that this approach might be suitable for short-term activities like one-off seminars and talks, but for long-term interventions aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours in society this approach was found to be less relevant, effective nor sustainable for a number of reasons:

- The approach undermined the host institutions' real *ownership* of the programme as they were so busy with the hectic implementation according to the work plan that they lost the ability to stop, reflect and listen to the communities in which they were working. Because the activities – which according to one stakeholder came “like a ready-made blue-print” – there were little room for adapting or changing the components in order to be *responsive* to the particularities and needs of the constituencies and/or communities of the host institutions.
- As a lesson learnt from the previous phase (2006–2009), the CLP former team suggested during the last regional meeting with HIs be more responsive to the needs of the countries (i.e. countries work plan will be divided into four general budgets items²³ in order to allow the HI more flexibility in implementing their work plan (activities, training, books, hardware), this new strategy was included in the TWP.
- The approach led to *gaps in time* between the different works plans as ALF was waiting for the work plans and reports to be approved by ALF's finance and administration departments and Sida. The gaps were found to last from four to eight months. The gaps led a loss of “momentum” in the national and regional programs, and thus waste of valuable time for implementation. In other words, the ALF had a hectic implementation period of 7–8 months, then a period of preparing reports and waiting for approval, while preparing for the next work plans. Since the approval of the successive work plans were conditioned upon the approval of the previous narrative and financial reports for all the five (four actually) countries in the programme, the delays were substantial in the closure of the SWP. This delay affected the process of the new work plan as the management team was at the time of the evaluation (April 2010) waiting for the approval and developing formats for the new plans and reports. Gaps of more than six months are not conducive to a long-term development approach.

When assessing the *skills* of ALF programme staff, the team found that the *programme staffs* were highly respected for their *knowledge* of children literature, libraries and their *technical expertise* in contracting, reporting and planning. The value addition of ALF in the programme implementation was mainly perceived as technical support by the partners. The “soft” components linked to rights-based development and promotion of children's rights that Sweden is well known for advocating for, was less visible according to some of the partners. One representative said that when reporting to ALF she felt that she had to remove activities that the organization was doing with child participation and community – including parents' mobilization, because ALF's concern was the reading activities.

²³ The new approach of four budget areas replaces the earlier 8–11 items as in the two previous work plans.

Iqra [read!]

A potential best practice was found in the reading for children in schools conducted by the Iqra association. The readings have been approved by the Ministry of Education in Lebanon. Iqra, which was established in 1996 as an NGO and run by volunteers, has had some support from Oxfam and UNICEF and worked with 103 schools. In cooperation with three other partners in Lebanon, Iqra recruited and trained volunteer to read for groups of children in 1–3rd grade in three schools (Beqa, Dahieh and an orphanage) with the support from ALF. The school library was supported with books, and when the volunteers left the school they encourage the school teachers to continue to read, and assisted in making a system for borrowing books from the school library. The ALF project built on previous experience with the project Alkabir Yaqra Lisaghir, where 5th graders read for the younger ones.

Efficiency

When analysing the efficiency of the programme, the team assessed to what extent resources were spent in a *cost efficient and timely manner* to deliver results, and the different management factors important for delivery, such as capacity gaps, working relationships within the implementing organisation, working relationships and efficiency between partners, stakeholders and donors.

The programme started slowly and by the end of 2008 less than 40% of the budget had been disbursed, mainly due to the lengthy procedures for approving costs incurred at the host institutions. Another factor impeding the efficiency of the programme was the challenges in the internal communication between the programme staff, as well as challenges in the communication between the finance and administration of ALF and the programme. Challenges were related to different understandings and interpretations of objectives and priorities of the programme as well as guidelines and requirements of financial and narrative reporting.

The lack of commitment from the early leadership of ALF also impeded the efficiency of implementation. ALF has been described as an organic body that changes with its directors. This has both advantages and weaknesses. For the first phase lasting until 2008, there was an almost non-existent support from ALF's top leadership to the CLP. However, after the third director took office in last part of 2008, the leadership of ALF has been more visible; the director has taken onboard problems like the lack of governmental authorization for the Egyptian host institution and the Syrian host institution. The paradox is that both Egypt and Syria are board members of ALF and has approved the programme for implementation. Still the decisions on political top level (Euromed ambassadors) do not penetrate through the bureaucracy in the countries in question and the result is that the CLP has been unable to move on certain issues.

The decision-making document of Sida from 2006 stressed that “the decision to choose a regional partner organisation with limited experience of children's literature before one of the national organisations with long experience and good reputation in the area of children's literature is *motivated by efficiency reasons*.” (BD, 2006: 9).

Summing up, the evaluation found that the gaps and weaknesses in cost-efficient planning and implementation has been one of the most decisive factors when concluding that the CL programme would be more efficient under a different regional umbrella or agency.

Sustainability

The CLP was managed by ALF in Alexandria and the original goal was to establish partnerships with host institutions in the participating five countries. Based on the national host institutions ability to mobilise partners, national core groups were meant to be established and based on these, the idea was

to set-up one regional core group. This plan did not materialise due to different reasons, a regional core group was never established. One of the reasons for the lack of creating regional structures was probably that the plan might have been too ambitious; it was too early to establish regional bodies since there was a lack of strong national bodies. Building top-down and at the same time bottom-up seems to have been too comprehensive taking into consideration the resources allocated for this programme and the duration of the CLP. An aspect that particularly affected the chances of sustainable effects of this programme was the lack of ownership; both at the ALF top level and among the national Host Institutions. For the ALF lack of ownership, it took almost three years, towards the very end of the planned project period in 2009, before ALF initiating steps for integrating the programme into the overall ALF activities. Furthermore, the short-term activity-driven approach of ALF also affected the ability of the Host Institutions to sense a real ownership to the programme. Although there were great hopes attached to the website becoming a sustainable outcome of the programme, few indications were found to that end. ALF has been given credit in this report for currently trying to solve the problems with the website, and thus there are still chances that the website might become a dynamic resource for the involved parties in the TWP.

However, based on the evaluation of the period 2006–9 – and not evaluating the future visions and intentions of ALF, the team concluded that due to the lack of ownership towards the CLP among the Host Institutions and the current inactivity of the website the programme with the current set-up was not perceived to be sustainable.

6 Lessons learnt

In this chapter the team highlights general conclusions that are likely to have a potential for wider application and use for all stakeholders involved in development programs, and in particular Sida and ALF.

National and regional approaches

Reflecting on the lessons learnt from the programme, key stakeholders like the programme specialists and some of the staff, shared that having the knowledge and experience that they have today, they would not have tried to establish a regional programme for children literature. One of them was clear that there is a need for further building the national activities in countries like Egypt and Syria before developing it regionally. Looking back four years ago, one of the specialists stated that the CLP could have prioritized each national programme stronger and even considered a different structure, for example a coordinator with an advisory board, instead of having programme specialist based in Egypt working on the different countries.

Activity-driven vs. long-term partnership and programme-based approach

The activity-driven approach mentioned in the previous chapter is something that Sida should take note of, and assess if it could have done things differently, i.e. Sida did not advise ALF to make longer-term plans, but allowed ALF to pursue the approach of developing annual work plans without linking them to the overall programme plan. Although Sida and ALF signed a three years contract (2006–9) the partners decided to break down the contract into three different work plans. The three work plans changed its objectives each time (not with great disparities, but enough to make it difficult to track the results and link them with the overall planned outcomes). When discussing this issue with the adminis-

tration and finance department in ALF, the team discovered that there might have been a lack of communication in understanding the potentials and opportunities of a three-year Sida contract.

A lesson learnt here might be that when contracting with new partners Sida need make them aware of the opportunities for long-term development planning that lie in such contracts. The programs need to be results-based, but at the same time, Sida can commit to a programme-based approach (Sida, 2004). This implies that Sida would align and harmonize its funding and reporting requirements with the programme that it is being funded.

Gender equality also means targeting boys and men

The programme was aimed at targeting gender equality, and the rights of the poor and girls/women. Although this issue was continuously raised in Sida monitoring (as seen from Minutes from the Annual meetings with ALF after each narrative report had been submitted), no specific responses or strategies seemed to have been taken to adjust the course.

Another related issue was that while Sida would address the issue of the poor and girl child, *working with boys from disadvantaged backgrounds* was not a planned result. In a gender perspective, young boys and adolescents often tend to be forgotten. Research has documented that boys left unattended tend to run a higher risks of becoming ‘angry young men’ that are more vulnerable for being manipulated and exploited. The scope of programme activities would thus also need to reflect priorities and interests of young boys – rap music can also be poetry (!), documentary movies are activities that tend to be popular among young boys and would require the children to learn how to read and compose a story.

The concern, and potentially lesson learnt, is that the literature and reading domain is largely dominated by urban women from the middle – and upper classes with a focus on the place for reading, i.e. the libraries, more than the activity of reading and enjoying the books. If the objective is to *reach out to social groups that do not traditionally visit public libraries*, the strategies and approaches must be devised in order to reach them, in other words, the activities must reflect the interests of these target groups and thus consultation mechanisms with the target group need to be devised.

In Lebanon, the team observed a community-based group (not included in the ALF programme) consisting of men and women working with mobilizing boys to take part in media and culture activities. The animators were working in the streets and camps in order to capture the boys and girls. The main objective was to establish a relationship between the children and the stories. When the focus is on the relationship between the child and the book/story, the strategies were different: mobile libraries in order to reach out – “let the book come to the child, not vice versa”, videos and documentary films, arts and music with a bit of a rougher and more youthful style.

The stakeholders could thus reflect on the issue to which extent the “feminisation” of the children literature is contributing to excluding men. Traditionally, also in the Middle East, reading for the children (except the Holy Books) is perceived as part of the caretaker role kept for women. While writing books still has some prestige, and men are involved as writers, promoting children’s activities is almost purely a female domain. Thus, for designing a potentially new phase in this programme, Sida and partners could reflect on what kind of tools and strategies must be adopted in order to reach boys and the more disadvantaged social groups.

Child-centred approach

Sida was found to have commented on the lack of strategies in ALF for ensuring that poor and children were targeted as recipients of the activities provided by ALF and partners. However included children at the *centre* of the planning and designing of the programme was not found to have been an issue dis-

cussed much between ALF and Sida. In accordance with Sida policies based on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), when children are targeted in a programme, they also have the right to have their voices heard when it comes to decisions and prioritizations of programs designed for them. Both ALF and Sida could have considered utilizing *Practice Standards* [also known as ‘minimum quality standards’ or ‘key elements’] which are statements that describe an expected level of performance to what children and others can expect of organisations.²⁴ Examples of practice standards that could have been utilised in this programme:

- Children are involved from the earliest possible stage and are able to influence the design and content of participatory processes.
- ‘Outside’ adults involved in any participatory processes are sensitised to working with children, clear about their role and willing to listen and learn.
- Organisations and workers are accountable to children for the commitments they make.
- Where the process of involvement requires representation from a wider group of children, the selection of representatives will be based on principles of democracy and non-discrimination.
- Children are involved in setting the criteria for selection and representation for participation.
- Children’s participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time they wish.
- Children are involved in ways, at levels and at a pace appropriate to their capacities.

A lesson learnt could there be that for any rights-based programs involving children, Sida need to monitor and ensure that at least a minimum of children’s participation is included. The involved stakeholders could consider *utilizing child participation as an indicator of achievement*.

Cultural diversity

The UNESCO declaration of cultural diversity was referred to in the original programme document (2005), but not in the any other reporting of ALF or Sida monitoring reports. Although not directly reported on, the team found a strong consciousness about the need for using this programme for promoting and encouraging the Arab cultural identity as a means for strengthening children’s understandings and knowledge about their own history and culture. As one partner stated, “when I come to a remote rural area and the children have drawn Cinderella on the wall instead of heroines from our own culture, I really see the need to focus on cultural diversity.” The Arab culture is in great need for being revitalising and actively used in arts and literature. Assessing this programme’s effect on cultural diversity, it seems that there is a great potential for using this as an entry point in for example Syria and perhaps Egypt. In Syria, there is a high value of the Arabic language and strong *Hakawati* traditions and thus programs encouraging creative writing of children stories based on the rich Arabic culture would be appreciated. Including cultural diversity in the objectives and planned results of a new phase of the programme would be helpful in countering risks of potential labelling of the programme as non-Arab or imposing cultural concepts alien to the Arab identity.

Sida monitoring

In the contract signed between Sida and ALF, Sida stated that it would “review the programme after one year, and reserve the right to terminate support if necessary” (Sida 2006:4). However, according to information accessed by the evaluation team, it seems like Sida did not conduct a review after one year (at least there is no documentation of such a review). Nor was a mid-term review (MTR) conducted of

²⁴ International Save the Children Alliance (2005), Practice standards in Children’s Participation

this programme. Instead, the current evaluation was commissioned, which came after Sida had signed the last phase with ALF. The timing of this evaluation was questioned by both ALF and the partners. If a MTR had been conducted there would have been sufficient time for ALF and the partners to make necessary amendments in order to get 'back on track', it was suggested by the stakeholders.

The team therefore proposes that a lesson learnt for Sida is to ensure that MTRs are inbuilt in the timeline of programs and carried out. For new and innovative programs such as this one, a MTR might seem especially important and useful for promoting learning.

The annual meetings between Sida and ALF came after each narrative report had been submitted. There was no participation of the regional partners in these review meetings. The lack of inclusion of the regional partners in the meetings with the donors might have had an effect of the weak ownership felt by the HIs and regional partners towards the CLP.

Finally, and this is a lesson learnt commonly found and not unique for this programme, is that the objectives and planned results could have been better defined and more realistic. By having outcome indicators developed, the monitoring and follow-up from Sida could have been more on a strategic policy level. The team found clear indications that Sida had supported the programme management unit in ALF greatly in the early set-up phase, but also today. During the evaluation period, it was observed that ALF and Sida (in Cairo) were in contact almost on a daily basis. Had Sida monitored on a more strategic and policy level issues like the lack of engagement with the governments in the countries of work, the gaps in child-centred programming and implementation might have been more visible in Sida's monitoring.

This gap might be related to the lack of leadership and ownership from the side of ALF – there was no partner for Sida to take on issues that required leadership, until recently. After the third director took office in last part of 2008, the leadership of ALF has been more visible; the director has taken onboard problems like the lack of governmental authorization for the Egyptian host institution and the Syrian host institution.

Summing up on the lessons learnt for all the stakeholders in this programme, the evaluation team would suggest that the CLP is a programme that has been able to produce some good short-term results especially on facilitating meeting spaces for CL stakeholders, however the ALF working modalities were not found to be relevant and effective for obtaining the planned results on regional and national levels. Here, the external factors working against such regional programs need to be kept acutely in mind. Sida's follow-up and support was in the early phases directed towards meddling between conflicting parties and contributing to an internal "enabling environment" in the CLP because ALF did not take programme responsibility and leadership until the last year. The potentials for succeeding with the programme could therefore ideally be stronger today due to the new ALF leadership. However considering factors like recent staff turnover, ALF leadership being subject to EU policies and the lack of a community-based approach in ALF, the team concludes that ALF could play a great supporting role for promoting the Children literature networks in the region but that the programme management responsibility should be handed over to another regional partner.

7 Arabic Translation of Executive Summary

تقرير تقييم منتصف المدة

لبرنامج أدب الأطفال

في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا (مينا)

2006 : 2011

03.05.2010

ملخص التقرير

1. التقرير الذي بين أيديكم هو نتاج التقييم الخارجي - منتصف المدة - لبرنامج أدب الطفل في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا 2006 - 2011، والذي تموله سيدا، وتديره مؤسسة أناليندا الأورو - متوسطية، في الإسكندرية، جمهورية مصر العربية.
2. للهدف الأساسي من التقييم شقان: الأول قائم على النتيجة ؛ لتقييم إلى أي مدى تم تحقيق أهداف المشروع والغرض منه والنتائج المتوقعة . والثاني لتقييم قدرة مؤسسة أنا ليندا، والجوانب المتعلقة بملكيته كشريك منفذ للبرنامج.
3. يتبع فريق التقييم الخارجي بمجموعة نوردك الاستشارية، ورؤى للاستشارات والتدريب في القاهرة - مصر ، لكي تقوم بإجراء دراسة مدتها خمسين يوم عمل، من بينها 12 يوم عمل ميداني في مصر، والأردن ولبنان. وقد تم إجراء مقابلة مع الشريك الفلسطيني من خلال المحادثة الهاتفية ، في حين لم يتمكن الفريق من مقابلة الشريك في سوريا . وقد قام الفريق بمراجعة أكثر من 500 من وثائق المشروع ، كما وقد قام بإجراء مقابلات مع إجمالي 87 فرداً من الأطراف المعنية المختلفة : أنا ليندا - المنظمات المضيفة - الحكومات والشركاء والسفارات والفاعلين في المجتمع المدني.

1.1 خلفية مختصرة :

4. كان الهدف العام من وراء برنامج أدب الأطفال ، تقوية عملية تنمية الأطفال في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، من الناحية الفكرية والمعنوية والأخلاقية والاجتماعية والعاطفية. والنتائج المتوقعة تمحورت حول ثلاث مستويات أساسية ؛ هي : وضع نهج كُلي شامل للترويج لأدب الأطفال، وبناء قدرات أدب الأطفال على المستويات المحلية في البلدان الخمسة المستهدفة ، وتيسير التبادل على المستوى الإقليمي بين المؤسسات المضيفة والشركاء. في الخطة التنفيذية الحالية (2010 - 2011) هناك هدف رابع تم تضمينه ويتعلق بزيادة توضيح الرؤية ودعم البرنامج في البلدان العربية والأوروأوسطية
5. ترجع جذور برنامج أدب الأطفال إلى بداية التسعينات، عندما بدأت الناشرة السويدية/ الأردنية منى هيننج (مؤسسة دار المنى)، في توزيع كتب أطفال مترجمة من السويدية إلى العربية، على أمينة المكتبة ماري فاشه من مؤسسة تامر للتعليم المجتمعي رام الله . بعد ترتيبات الحكم الذاتي في الضفة الغربية وغزة في عام 1995/1994، أتت وزارة الثقافة ووزارة التعليم الفلسطينية التي تم تأسيسها حديثاً على رأس المشروع . واستمرت هيئة دياكونية (منظمة سويدية غير حكومية) في تقديم الدعم التعليمي والمادي للشركاء، بينما قامت تامر بتدريب أمناء المكتبة والمعلمين ، وعقدت أيضاً ورش عمل للكتاب والرسامين. وفيما بعد انضمت وكالة الأمم المتحدة لغوث اللاجئين، وانتشرت أنشطة برنامج أدب الأطفال من تدريب للمعلمين، وحملة القراءة القومية (جواز سفري للقراءة)، وحكي القصص، ومسابقات الكتاب في كل أرجاء فلسطين.
6. تم تقييم البرنامج كبرنامج ناجح في مجال تشجيع الأطفال وحثهم على القراءة للمتعة، والتعبير عن خبراتهم، من خلال القصص (تقييم سيدا 2003 / 2004).

7. وبناء على الخبرة الفلسطينية أرادت سيدا التوسع في البرنامج على المستوى الإقليمي، ووقع الاختيار على مؤسسة أنا ليندا، لكي تكون الجهة الإقليمية المنفذة للمشروع في عام 2006، وقد كان إجمالي الميزانية للفترة من 2006 – 11 مبلغ 29.6 مليون كرونة سويدية (3.7 مليون دولار أمريكي) متضمناً تكلفة التقييم الخارجي الذي تم تمويله من سيدا.
8. ووفقاً للنقاط المرجعية؛ سيعتبر هذا التقييم بمثابة الأساس للقرار السويدي، بشأن التعاون المستقبلي في قطاع أدب الأطفال، بعد نهاية الاتفاقية الحالية (يونيو 2011). وقد طُلب من فريق التقييم تقديم توصيات، بشأن كيفية الدعم السويدي المستقبلي لأدب الأطفال، والتخطيط لكي يُحقق البرنامج التأثير المطلوب في حال لو أن السويد قررت الاستمرار في دعم هذا المجال. وأخيراً يمكن للدروس المستفادة أن تكون بمثابة مدخلات لإستراتيجية التعاون الإقليمي القادمة لسيدا، والتي ستبدأ في عام 2011.

2. 1 النتائج الأساسية التي تم التوصل إليها وفقاً للنقاط المرجعية :

9. استطعنا أن نرصد عدداً كبيراً من المبادرات الجيدة مثل : تدريب المعلمين وأمناء المكتبة والمتطوعين ، والتشجيع على القراءة فيما بين الأطفال ، وقص الحكايات والمناقشة بشأن الكتب . كما أقيمت المعارض على المستوى المحلي في البلدان الخمسة، مع نتائج قليلة في مصر ، وذلك بفضل الأنشطة . وقد قام البرنامج برفع الوعي بشأن أدب الأطفال وأهمية القراءة للمتعة في المجتمعات المستهدفة.
10. إن أكثر إنجاز للبرنامج - ملاحظٌ بوضوح - هو أنه جمع الكتاب والرسمين والناشرين وأمناء المكتبة ، وقد ساهم ذلك في خلق أرضية لقاء ؛ ليس على المستوى القومي فحسب، مع بعض الامتدادات على المستوى الإقليمي، لمناقشة الجوانب المختلفة لأدب الأطفال والقراءة، وقد ذكر كثيرون أنهم تقابلوا معاً لأول مرة
11. وقد كان لتلك اللقاءات والحوارات بعض التأثيرات؛ منها : ظهور أفكار لكتب جديدة ولدت في لبنان وسوريا، واكتشاف قنوات للتوزيع، والترتيب لتدريبات مشتركة بين كل البلدان ماعدا مصر .. وقد بدأت المؤسسات المضيفة في كل من الأردن ولبنان في التشبيك مع أكثر من شريك على المستوى القومي.
12. من بين الإنجازات الأساسية للبرنامج أيضاً ؛ تقوية القدرات المؤسسية للمؤسسات المضيفة من جانب أنا ليندا وبصفة خاصة في لبنان والأردن، فقد استخدمت مؤسسة أنا ليندا نهجاً ونظاماً صارماً ، ووضعت متطلبات رسمية حازمة على التقارير المالية والفنية . بعض الشركاء أفاد بأنه تعلم كثيراً من هذه الخبرة ، بينما البعض الآخر كان لديهم شعور بأنهم أضاعوا وقتاً ثميناً كان يمكن استخدامه في التنفيذ.
13. كان أكبر دعم مادي قد تم تقديمه لتجديد وتأثيث المكتبات بالأرفف والكتب والتدريبات لأمناء المكتبات في الدول الأربع . وفي مصر تم تحديد المؤسسة المضيفة ونفذت مجموعة من الأنشطة، ولكن كان عليها أن تغطي التكاليف، بسبب عدم الحصول على الموافقات الحكومية اللازمة للحصول على تمويل أجنبي.
14. القيمة المضافة لمؤسسة أنا ليندا في برنامج أدب الأطفال كانت محدودة من البداية .. وذلك لم يمنع من بعض التآزر بين برنامج أدب الأطفال والبرامج الأخرى لأناليندا ؛ مثل شبكة مؤسسة أنا ليندا في سوريا والتي تم استخدامها كمدخل لبرنامج أدب الأطفال هذا بالإضافة إلى أن أنا ليندا لديها أسلوب مبتكر ومبدع وجديد في إيجاد حلول للتحديات، وقد ظهر هذا بوضوح في الإبداع لبرنامج أدب الأطفال
15. أنا ليندا وجدتُ لتتبع مُقاربة إدارة الخدمة باتجاه تفعيل برنامج أدب الأطفال . بينما كان التخطيط الأولي للبرنامج يتمثل في تكوين مؤسسة (رؤية مشتركة - مؤسسات مضيفة - تطوير مفاهيم) في كل بلد من البلدان المشاركة في البرنامج ، ثم تأتي مرحلة تعزيز البناء المؤسسي على المستوى الإقليمي.

والآلية التي تم بها تطبيق وإدارة البرنامج من جانب أناليندا ، لم تقم بالتعديلات اللازمة لتتناسب المقاربة المطلوبة سالفة الذكر . كما أن المؤسسات المضيفة كان عليها إنجاز عدد كبير من المشروعات والمكونات الخاصة بالبرنامج في فترة زمنية قصيرة . هذه المقاربة - إدارة الخدمة - إنما تتناسب أكثر مع الأنشطة قصيرة الأمد مثل عقد حلقة دراسية حول موضوع .. أما التدخلات على المدى البعيد ؛ والتي تهدف بالأساس إلى التغيير في المواقف والاتجاهات والممارسات نحو مشاركة ديمقراطية للأطفال في

المجتمع من خلال القراءة والكتابة . فإن مقارنة الأنشطة لا تتناسب معها ومع الفعالية والاستمرارية اللازمين لإحداث مثل هذه التغييرات المطلوبة في المواقف والاتجاهات

16. مقارنة إدارة الخدمة مع أسلوب إدارة البرنامج قَوْضاً فرص الملكية الحقيقية للبرنامج من جانب المؤسسات المضيفة ، حيث كانت - المؤسسات - مشغولة بشكل كبير في تفعيل أنشطة البرنامج ، وبالتالي فقدت القدرة على التوقف والتأمل والإنصات إلى المجتمعات المحلية ومعرفة ردود أفعالها على ما تقوم به من أنشطة .. هذا المدخل أدى أيضاً إلى مشكلات في الوقت حيث الخطط التنفيذية الآتية من المؤسسات المختلفة لابد أن تُراجع فنياً ثم إدارياً وأخيراً مالياً (بالشكل المطلوب والتي تريد أنا ليندا أن تكون عليه هذه الخطط) حتى تتم الموافقة على التنفيذ. وقد أدت هذه الفجوة إلى فقد زخم كان سيفيد في بناء نتائج للبرنامج على المدى الطويل ، كما كان سيفيد أيضاً في الوصول إلى رؤية مشتركة على المستوى الإقليمي.

17. برنامج أدب الأطفال لم يبن على الخبرة السابقة لبرنامج فلسطين الممول من سيدا. وبذلك افتقد إلي معرفة قيمة وتراكم للخبرات، والتشارك في العمل فيما بين المختصين بالبرنامج من لبنان وفلسطين زاد من هذه الفجوة.

18. وتبعاً لما سبق ؛ فإن فريق التقييم وجد أن أنا ليندا وبرنامج أدب الأطفال كانا يركزان بشكل كبير على تقارير أنشطة متفرقة وعلى المدى القصير ، دون ربط ذلك بالنتائج والتأثيرات المخطط لها على المدى الطويل ... قلة الإدارة بالنتائج والتغيير في النتائج المخطط لها عند كل خطة عمل جديدة . أدت إلى تحديات منتظمة في مسار البرنامج ، وكذلك متابعة النتائج والمخرجات المحتملة .

3.1 الخلاصة والتوصيات :

وافق فريق التقييم على أمرين فيما يتعلق بالأسئلة الأساسية التي تم طرحها فيما يتعلق بالنقاط المرجعية للتقييم :

19. حقق البرنامج بعض النتائج الجيدة على المدى القصير، ولكن هناك شك في أن تلك النتائج ستستمر بالاستمرارية على المدى الطويل، وقد طبقت مؤسسة أنا ليندا نهجاً يقوم على الأنشطة حيث نفذ الشركاء العديد من الأنشطة في مدى زمني قصير، وقد أدى هذا إلى وجود أنشطة منفذة بسرعة مع قليل من التركيز على بناء العلاقات مع المجتمعات لتغيير اتجاهاتهم فيما يتعلق بالوضع الاجتماعي والتنمية الثقافية للأطفال. ولم يكن هناك فهم مشترك فيما بين الأطراف المشاركة في الرؤية والمفاهيم الأساسية للبرنامج . وهناك مؤشر على تلك الفجوات تمثل في ضعف شعور الشركاء نحو ملكيتهم للبرنامج (حيث تمثل الأرضية المفاهيمية المشتركة نقطة ارتكاز للإحساس بالملكية الجماعية للبرنامج ، ونقطة انطلاق لبناء رؤية مشتركة على المدى البعيد).

20. لتقييم الإمكانات المستقبلية لبرنامج أدب الأطفال ، يُرجى الأخذ بعين الاعتبار مساحة الديمقراطية وضبط السلطة للمجتمع المدني في بعض البلدان. مؤسسة أنا ليندا بتكوينها لم توجد لتكون الشريك الأكثر مناسبة لبرنامج أدب الأطفال لثلاث أسباب أساسية ؛ هي : أولاً ؛ الافتقار إلى النهج المرتكز على المجتمع والذي يُعتبر مطلب أساسي للعمل في التنمية على المدى البعيد والتي تهدف إلى التغيير في اتجاهات المجتمع نحو أدب الأطفال والقراءة .. وثانياً؛ إدارة البرنامج كانت بيروقراطية وتسببت في تأخيرات في التطبيق ، هناك أيضاً ضعف في القيادة وفي ملكية البرنامج من جانب أنا ليندا . وأخيراً .. صورة أنالينا في بعض بلدان "مينا" أثرت في قدرة برنامج أدب الأطفال على التكوّن والاستمرارية وتكوين شراكات ثابتة تتسم بالاستمرارية مع المؤسسات المضيفة لامتلاك البرنامج وإدارته.

21. إن الخلاصة الأساسية والنتائج المذكورة عاليه ، نضع توصيات لسيدا وأنا ليندا : الأولى منها تخص الإجراءات الفورية التي يجب اتخاذها . أما الثانية فتتمثل في التوصيات الاستراتيجية

22. في التوصيات على المدى القصير نوصي سيدا بالتالي :

23. المحافظة على الالتزام الحالي نحو مؤسسة أنا ليندا ودعم البرنامج بالنسبة للفترة المتبقية من العقد (حتى عام 2011)، ويقترح الفريق على سيدا الآتي في هذا الصدد :

24. الإعداد للفترة الجديدة من برنامج أدب الطفل والقراءة مع شريك إقليمي آخر مع رؤية بعيدة المدى (على الأقل خمس سنوات)

25. تأسيس مجموعة استشارية مكونة من نشطاء على المستوى الإقليمي وخبراء في المجال (مُتضمنة أطفال) ، وذلك سيدعم البرنامج فنياً ويوجّهه في الفترة المتبقية له مع أناليندا، ثم يستمر الأمر مع الشريك الجديد المُحتمَل
26. في المرحلة الانتقالية، يجب التأكد من توافر وقت كافٍ لانتقال البرنامج من أناليندا إلى الشريك الجديد بشكل عملي يتضمن كل توثيق أناليندا للبرنامج . ومطلوب من سيدا أن تتفق مع أنا ليندا بشأن إنجاز الآتي:
- أ. توثيق الإنجازات ذات الدلالة لبرنامج أدب الأطفال 2006 – 2011 ، متضمنة قاعدة البيانات
- ب. إعداد قوائم بأفضل الممارسات من دولة لأخرى
- ت. إعداد قائمة بالأطراف المعنية والأشخاص مصادر الخبرة الذين أظهروا اهتماماً بالبرنامج (الكُتّاب - الرّسّامون - الناشر - أصحاب المكتبات - المعلّمون - مديرو المدارس - الخ ...)
27. نوصي سيدا بالاستمرار في العمل مع مؤسسة أنا ليندا بشأن مجالات الاهتمام المشترك وتبادل المنفعة (مثال الشبكة التي تم تأسيسها حديثاً والخاصة ببرنامج الأدب عبر الحدود لمؤسسة أنا ليندا).
28. من أجل مزيد من التوصيات الإستراتيجية ؛ فإننا نوصي سيدا بدعم وتأكيد التزامها القوي والفريد في الترويج للتنمية الاجتماعية والثقافية والفطرية للطفل من خلال القراءة من أجل المتعة. السويد تستطيع أن تُحسن من دورها القيادي في قطاع أدب الأطفال إلى أبعد حد . خصوصاً بالتركيز على الروابط بين المشاركة الفعالة لهؤلاء الأطفال كأطراف معنية مع في برنامج أدب الأطفال
29. نوصي سيدا بتسمية شريك إقليمي جديد لديه القدرة على إدارة البرنامج، ويقوم باستلام مقاليد الأمور في ظل المجموعة الاستشارية المذكورة أعلاه . والمعايير المقترحة للمؤسسة الشريكة ؛ يمكنها أن تكون :
- أ. حيادية، وغير سياسية
- ب. لديها خبرة في أدب الطفل والقراءة
- ت. لديها خبرة في العمل الإقليمي
- ث. لديها كفاءة في إدارة البرنامج
30. البرنامج الجديد ينطلق من أهداف واضحة مبنية على:
- أن تكون مشاركة الطفل جزء مدمج في كل مستويات البرنامج (ترويج حقوق الطفل في تصميم البرنامج - التخطيط - التنفيذ - والمتابعة) .
 - تعبئة المجتمع ودعم القاعدة العريضة في المجتمعات المحلية لدعم أدب الطفل والقراءة.
 - بناء معرفة جديدة بشأن أدب الطفل والقراءة فيما بين الشركاء الإقليميين بما يتماشى مع مبادئ اليونسكو بالنسبة للتنوع الثقافي.
 - ابتكار وسائل وطرق للتأكد من الوصول إلى الفقراء والمهمشين (بما في ذلك وسيلة المكتبات المتنقلة)
31. في البرنامج الجديد لابد من إدراج التعاون مع الحكومات المحلية والوكالة الأمريكية لغوث اللاجئين (كلما أمكن) المعنية بالحاجة إلى أدب الأطفال حتى يتم تضمينه في بداية البرنامج وتكاملاً مع سبق ؛ دعم نشاطات القراءة مع الفلسطينيين في الشتات ومخيمات اللاجئين ، واستكشاف آفاق التعاون مع دياكونية التي تعمل مع الفلسطينيين في المنطقة .
- توصيات لمؤسسة أنا ليندا :**
32. تقليل الإجراءات الإدارية والمالية المتعلقة بالتخطيط للأنشطة وكتابة التقارير عنها لتقليل مصروفات المعاملات.

33. إيلاء المزيد من الأهمية للأنشطة الإقليمية خاصة تلك التي ستؤدي إلى حوار يؤدي إلى فهم مشترك بشأن المفاهيم الأساسية والرؤى الخاصة بأدب الطفل والقراءة.

34. الانتهاء من الموقع وتحديثه (التصميم والمواد)، ووضع آلية لتشجيع الشركاء لوضع المواد على الموقع، وأفكار جديدة وطرق لكي تجعله أكثر حركة وجذباً، ليساهم في فتح حوار فيما بين الشركاء في الدول المختلفة بشأن خبراتهم ومفاهيمهم ورؤيتهم.

35. لو سمح الوقت والميزانية في الفترة المتبقية، فمن الممكن التركيز على مبادرات قد تنجح بسهولة وتحقق نتائج سريعة في بعض الدول (كيف يصل الكتاب للأطفال، كيف نشجع الطفل على القراءة، والعمل مع 4 مليون كتاب بـ 7000 عنوان في المشروع القومي للكتاب بمصر..) وبشكل خاص يمكن دعم المنشورات التي تستهدف الأطفال في الفئة العمرية 8 : 13 سنة والتي تفتقر إلى الكتب العربية الكافية ذي النوعية الجيدة .

References

ALF documents

302–08 ALF Draft Triennial Programme 2009–2011

Anna Lindh Foundation booklet (2009)

First Annual Work Plan, November 2008–November 2009 (3)

Second Annual Work Plan, November 2009 – November 2010 (2010_Narrative FINAL)

Organizational Structure 2008–2011 as at 19 April 2010

ALF, Interim Narrative Report submitted to EC – Sida Only

www.euromedalex.org

ALF Children Literature Programme (CLP)

2010

Narrative report from HI Syria, Muntada al-ijtima'ji

Narrative report from HI Lebanon, ASSABIL, with recommendations from evaluation meeting

Narrative report from HI Jordan, Ruwwad Tanmiyya, with recommendations from evaluation

Narrative individual activities' reports from HI Palestine, Tamer Institute for Community Education, along with recommendations from evaluation meeting

Memo, Potential solutions for the implementation of the CL Programme in Egypt, January 2010

2009

4th Narrative Annual Report covering January – December 2009

State of Play (web-document)

Selecting Host Institutions (web-document)

Indicators of success (web-document)

Draft Third Work Plan (TWP) 2010–2011 with annexes

Monitoring Matrix Adapted09

BISN-7KDGEU (Revisedbudget2008-april2009)

Travel reports (February, May, June, July, August, September, October)

HI's work plans (with details for each sub-activity), dated March – May 2009

Hand-over note from N. Trabulsi, 13.12.09

Hand-over note from Y. Batran, 13.12.09

2008

Countries – National Strategies for activities according to Work Plan 2008–9 (web document)

Second Work Plan (SWP), revised 28th May 2008
3rd Narrative Report CL programme (covering January – December 2008)
Minutes from Annual Review Meeting ALF and Sida 17.04.08
Copy of financial report dec08before kpmg
Travel reports (January, April-May, July, September, December)
Organisational structure ALF, August 2008

2007

First Work plan (FWP), POA SIDA 2007 February
1st Narrative report May 2006 to June 2007
2nd Narrative report June – December 2007
First Monitoring Matrix (undated)
Minutes from Annual Review Meeting ALF and Sida 28.08.07
Concept paper Egypt (web), Concept paper Jordan (web), Concept paper Lebanon (web)
Concept paper Palestine (web), Concept paper Syria (web)
MSDC-76D9U5, MSDC-76D9U4, MSDC-76D9TZ (Monthly Statements of Expenses ALF-CL)
Financial report final2006-June2007
KPMG External Audit report 2007
Management Letter external audit 2007
Travel reports (August, September, October, November)

2006

RMDC-6QS97V.OriginalAgreement
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GJDC-6PQDLP.BPM
No Travel Reports

2005

Original Programme Plan Children's Literature (in English)

Sida project documents

2010–Amendment to original contract–2011
2010-Lagesrapport, A. Bjorkmann
2009-KSTN-7PSFNQ, Amendment to Agreement
2006 Original Agreement between Sida and ALF regarding CL project

Sida policies

2001 Sida Policy for Capacity Development

2004 Looking Back, Moving Forward. Sida Evaluation Manual

2006 MENA strategy 2006–10

2006 SIDA30665en_Policy-Culture

2007 Civil Society Policy-SIDA37855en_web_Policy_CS.indd

2010 Policy-Human Rights and Democracy (in Swedish, Policy för demokratisk utveckling och mänskliga rättigheter inom svenskt utvecklingssamarbete 2010–2014)

Sida related evaluations

2003 Children's Literature in the Middle East and North Africa – a pre-Study for Swedish Support, by Anna Birgitta Eriksson, Varmdo, Sweden, August 2003 (commissioned by Diakonia).

2004 Reading for Life, Evaluation of Diakonia's Palestinian Children Literature Programme 1995–2003, by Britt Isaksson

2008 Reading for Life Under Siege, Evaluation of Diakonia's Palestinian Children Literature Programme 1995–2008, by Britt Isaksson

2010 Evaluation of the MENA Strategy 2006–2010 – SIPU International

2010-Final_Poverty_Sida_08032010 by Middle East Awareness (M. J. Irving and L. K. Rasmussen)

External sources

Arab Knowledge Report 2009

International Save the Children Alliance (2005), Practice standards in Children's Participation

UNESCO and UNICEF (2007), A Human Rights-Based Approach to EDUCATION FOR ALL – A framework for the realization of children's right to education and rights within education.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

UNESCO (2001), Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), 2009, Arab Human Development Report – Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries

Annex I Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Children's Literature cooperation in Middle East and North African region (MENA) 2006–2009

Evaluation purpose

Since 2006, Sida has given financial support to the MENA regional programme for developing Children's Literature (CL). The programme involves Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria and is managed by a programme unit at the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF) in Alexandria.

At the outset, an important prerequisite for the regional support to Children's Literature in the MENA region was to include and to build on the earlier experiences and results of Sweden's bilateral CL cooperation in Palestine, where a Sida supported CL programme was implemented during 1995–2008 by Diakonia and Palestinian NGOs and authorities. Hence, an outlook at the Palestinian experience will be of value for the current assignment. As reference, evaluation of the CL cooperation in Palestine was conducted in 2004 (see reference list).

The evaluation will serve as base for Sweden's decision on future cooperation in the CL sector after the termination of the current cooperation agreement. An emphasis in the evaluation shall be laid on recommendations how a possible future Swedish support to children's literature shall be designed and planned in order to achieve an enhanced impact. Given that Sweden decides to continue to support the sector, the study will serve as an input in designing a possible future support to the sector; assessing possible cooperation channels and identifying CL development needs that could be met by a future Swedish support. Furthermore, the evaluation's identifications of results and lessons learned will give an input to the forthcoming regional cooperation strategy, commencing in 2011.

Sida is not however committed to take any action as a result of the study and/or the recommendations.

The current evaluation has two main purposes:

1. To make a result-based evaluation in order to see to what extent the programme's objectives, purpose and expected have been achieved. The evaluation should be able to assess the significance/strategic importance of the achievements, to what extent programme activities have contributed to the realization, and likelihood of future achievements.
2. Adding to the result-based evaluation, specific emphasis should be given to assessing capacity and ownership aspects of the ALF as implementing partner of the programme; assessing such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The evaluation should be able to assess Sida's choice of the ALF as implementing partner of the programme and provide recommendations, as well as identification and assessment of alternative cooperation models and channels, for the purpose of strengthening the implementation of the programme and to enhance impact.

Finally, the evaluation should provide Sida and ALF respectively with recommendations and lessons learned on the above, as well as a basis for decision for a possible future support, and/or the guidance of similar development cooperation in the future.

Intervention background

Sida's Position Paper, and later Regional Strategy for Development Cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa, highlights cultural cooperation as an approach to democratic development. Furthermore, a regional approach to support children's literature is suggested, and to incorporate and build on the experiences of the programme in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Therefore, in February 2005 Sida arranged a workshop in Alexandria with representatives from institutions and programmes to brainstorm on a possible regional programme in the field of children's literature. Next, two consultants were contracted to elaborate a programme document, using a participatory approach. The process resulted in a programme proposal for development of Arab Children's literature 2006–2009 and the ALF was identified and selected by Sida to manage the programme.

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and emotional development of children in the MENA region. Target countries are Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

Specific programme purposes are: (a) to increase the access and availability of quality children's literature in the MENA region; (b) to increase the production and use of children's literature with a human rights perspective, a cultural diversity perspective, and the perspective of the child; (c) to increase the dialogue between MENA countries as well as with the EU, in the field of children's literature and reading promotion.

The programme's result areas and indicators engage advocacy and awareness raising, production and distribution of quality children's books in Arabic, training, regional networking and sharing of experiences and best practises, regional university cooperation in the field of children's literature, and programme management.

The programme organisation consists of the ALF management team, national hosting institutions, national core groups and a regional core group.

The activity phase to be evaluated covers the years 2006–2009.

Stakeholder involvement

The methodology used for the assignment shall be participatory and include the ALF, all identified stakeholders, target groups and national partners to articulate and present their needs, interests and expectations.

Evaluation questions

- a) Objectives and expected results according to the project document:
 - Has the cooperation contributed to the overall objective?
 - Have the programme purposes and expected results been achieved?
 - What results and development effects can be identified at outcome and impact level?
 - What are assessed to be the main reasons for results achievements and limitations?
- b) Assessment of the relevance of the support to children's literature in relation to the following documents:
 - The objectives and strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with the MENA region

- Perspectives on Poverty (Sida 2002)
- Sida's Policy on Culture and Media in Development Cooperation
- Sida's Policy for international development cooperation with civil society
- Sida's Policy for Capacity Development

c) Effectiveness and cost efficiency:

- Describe any major failures and challenges of the cooperation to date, explaining why they have occurred.
- Describe any unforeseen impacts (whether positive or negative).
- Assess to what extent resources are being used in a cost efficient manner to deliver project results.
- Is monitoring data being collected as planned, and used to inform future plans?
- Assess programme management factors important for delivery, such as:
 - Capacity gaps
 - Working relationships and efficiency within the implementing organisation (team – management).
 - Working relationships and efficiency between partners, stakeholders and donors
 - Learning processes such as self-evaluation, coordination and exchange with related projects
 - Internal and external communication

Recommendations and lessons learned relevant to possible future Swedish support

1. Based on the evaluation findings, the consultant should provide recommendations and lessons learned relevant to preparing a possible new phase of the cooperation and/or new agreement on Swedish support aiming at an enhanced intervention impact.
2. The evaluation should provide recommendations and lessons learned to Sida regarding cooperating partners and cooperation modality.

The above recommendations should be based on assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of the current Sida-ALF cooperation in the field of Children's Literature; assessing for instance cooperation efficiency in relation to a) building partnership with stakeholders, b) capacity building and strengthening ownership of partner organisations.

In light of the above, the evaluation should be able to assess and present possible alternative cooperating arrangements to Sida and ALF, including for instance an enhanced ownership and responsibility of regional or national partners in programme coordination and implementation, including enhanced budget responsibility.

Methodology

The consultant shall as far as possible assess the results from the parameters relevance, effectiveness and cost efficiency, feasibility, sustainability, perspectives of the poor and a rights perspective, gender.

The evaluation shall be carried out through:

- Studies of relevant documents and reports such as cooperation policies, regional cooperation strategy, project proposal, agreement and financial and narrative reports from ALF to Sida.
- Interviews with ALF and Sida officials who are responsible for the administration of the support both in Stockholm and in Cairo/Alexandria.
- Interviews with responsible authorities at Ministries of Culture and Education, UNRWA, with teachers, children, cultural workers and other groups with a vested interest in children's literature and expertise within the sector in the MENA region.

It is suggested to use field visits, interviews, focus groups and participatory methodologies for data collection and analysis. The chosen methods for carrying out the assignment should be described and justified by the consultant in the tender documents. Methodology and suggestions of key informants and stakeholders will be discussed with Sida and ALF during the preparatory phase.

Work plan and schedule

The evaluation is preliminary scheduled to take place in Sweden and in relevant countries in the MENA region during February and March 2010. The total number of consultancy weeks is expected to be maximum 6, with field work during at least 10 working days. The tender shall include a proposal on the number of weeks in Sweden and in the relevant countries in the MENA region.

Reporting

The findings will be presented in a report and orally at Sida. The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes.

Furthermore, preliminary findings of the evaluation shall be presented orally to the Sida officer in Cairo and the ALF management team and other relevant stakeholders before concluding the field work.

Format and outline of the report shall follow the Sida guidelines for evaluation reports (see reference list). A draft report shall be submitted to Sida no later than March 15, 2010 according to the preliminary timetable. Within 1 week after receiving Sida's comments on the draft report a final version shall be submitted to Sida.

Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. The evaluation assignment includes the completion of Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet. The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the draft report.

Evaluation team

Necessary qualifications of the evaluation team and team members:

Team leader:

- In-depth evaluation skills and significant evaluation experiences of development projects in human rights and democracy, preferable in the areas of culture cooperation
- Experiences from evaluations of development cooperation in the MENA region and in-depth knowledge about the social, cultural and political environment in the region
- Fluency in English

Competence of the Team:

- Documented knowledge of the cultural sector, preferable in Children's Rights and Children's freedom of expression and Children's Literature
- Documented knowledge of cultural institutions and organisations, of capacity building, administration and management in the cultural sector
- Documented working experiences from the MENA region and in-depth knowledge about the social, cultural and political environment in the region (especially from target countries Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria)
- Documented knowledge of EC development cooperation, procedures and regulations
- Fluency in English and Arabic

The names and CVs of the Team should be presented in the tender.

References:

The following documents can be obtained from Sida's website, from Sida's information centre +46-8-698 50 00.

- Sweden's development cooperation strategy for the MENA region
- Sida's Perspectives on Poverty
- Sida's Policy on Culture and Media in Development Cooperation
- Sida's Policy for international development cooperation with civil society
- Sida's Policy for Capacity Development
- "Reading for life", Evaluation of Swedish Support to Children's Literature on the West Bank and Gaza for the Period 1996–2003, Sida Evaluation 04/26, by Britt Isaksson
- Sida guidelines for evaluation reports.

Contact persons:

- Sida, Team MENA/Iraq Maria Bendel, Programme Officer
- Swedish Embassy Cairo Malin Stawe, Sida Regional Programme Officer

Annex II List of Interviewees

Name	Position/Title	Institution
SWEDEN		
1. Maria Bendel	Programme Officer	Sida
2. Birgitta Danielsson	Former advisor Culture and Media	Formerly Sida, Embassy of Sweden Cairo
3. Anna Björkmann	Former BAE ALF	Sida
4. Karin Fyrk	Former advisor	Formerly Embassy of Sweden Cairo
5. Malin Stawe	Former First Secretary	Formerly Embassy Cairo/now Sida
6. Brita Papini*	Programme coordinator	Dramatiska instituten, Stockholm
EGYPT		
7. HE Malin Kjärre	Ambassador	Swedish Embassy of Egypt
8. Dr Fredrik Ugglä	First Secretary	Swedish Embassy of Egypt
9. Hassan Hussein	Regional programme officer North Africa and Middle East	Swedish Embassy of Egypt
10. Andreu Claret*	Director	Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)
11. Gemma Auberell	Programme Manager	ALF
12. Fida Hennawi	Head of Administration and Finance	ALF
13. Leila Youmna Batran*	Former programme specialist	Formerly ALF (formerly Ministry of Culture, Palestine)
14. Nawwal Trabsulsi	Former programme specialist	Formerly ALF (now consultant, Lebanon)
15. Susanne Abughaida	Programme administrator	ALF CLP
16. Doaa Chalaby	Programme Assistant	ALF CLP
17. Marian Nabil	Accountant	ALF CLP
18. Claudia Marinaro	Monitoring officer	ALF
19. Azza Kamal	President	Alwan wa Awtar
20. dr. Mahmoud abou Doma	Prof of theatre	Alexandria library
21. Moushira Moussa	Journalist	Al-Ahram & Ministry of Culture
22. Magdi Asham	Director	Jesuit for development (NGO)
23. D. Zeinab El Tanahi	Consultant/former head of library section	Integrated Care Society
24. Balsam Saad	Publisher	Director of Dar El Balsam
25. Christoffer Sjøholm	Regional Representative	Diakonia
JORDAN		
26. Samar Dudin	Regional Director	Ruwad Tanmiya
27. Marian AbuAdas	Project Manager	Ruwad Tanmiya
28. Nijwan Shabir	Chief Operations Officer	Ruwad Tanmiya
29. Taghrid Al-Nagy	Librarian	Ruwad Tanmiya
30. HE Charlotte Sparre	Ambassador	Swedish Embassy of Jordan
31. Mona Barghouth	Adviser	Swedish Embassy of Jordan
32. Dr Hala Hammad	Children rights/protection expert	Independent

Name	Position/Title	Institution
Focus group discussion with illustrators, publishers		
33. Wasfi Aref	Specialist in libraries	Balkaa university
34. D. Rashed Essa		Balkaa university
35. Israa El Safi	Researcher on CL	Amman university for higher studies
36. Dr. Hashem Gharaibeh	Author	
37. Amal El Tamimi	Journalist	Jordan agency press
38. Rita Ziadeh	Writer	
39. Manal Haddadin	Illustrator	
40. Buthaina abou Elbanadora	Marionette theatre expert	
41. Rabeea Alnasser	Story teller	Music and stories house
42. Zeinat Al Karmi	Publisher	Dar Almanhal
Focus group discussion – teachers		
43. Hifaa Al Seef	Director	Ramla Ben Abi Ouf School
44. Mirna Mshrbsh	Director	Elaahlia & Elmatran kindergarten
45. Mirvat khore	Director	Elaahlia & Elmatran kindergarten
46. Faris Osman	Librarian	Elaahnaf school
47. Nedaa Qassem	School Principal	Bait elmaqdis – first
48. Rajaa Hamde	School Principal	Bait elmaqdis – second
49. Madeha Rashed	School Principal	Fatma bent abd elmalik School
50. Wassila ahmed	School Principal	Aatiqa bent zaid School (1)
51. Bassina elrifaay	School Principal	Aatiqa bent zaid School (2)
52. Khatam Abo Elzanen	School Principal	Elshimaa School
53. Khawla Houssen	School Principal	Elmarekh School
54. Eman eljabry	School Principal	Elnazef School (1)
55. Rana Baker	School Principal	Elnazef School (2)
56. Manal Qadora	School Principal	Elshefaa bent ouf School
57. Sozan Hatr	School Principal	Halema elsaadea School
58. Abd Elmajeed Jumaa	Head, Dept of School libraries	Ministry of Education, Jordan
59. Serene Huleileh	Regional Director	Arab Education Forum
LEBANON		
60. Reem Musallem	President/volunteer	Iqra association
61. Joumana Ghazzai	Volunteer	Iqra association
62. Lara Auode	Project Coordinator	Iqra association
63. Susanne Badawi	Accountant	Iqra association
64. Ranya Shigir	Founder, writer	Khayat el-Sghir
65. Dr. Fadia Hoteit	Involved in the organization of Regional Conference on Children's Literature	Bahethat (Female Researchers)/ Lebanese university
66. Nizar Ramal	Director/trainer for ALF	Development consultative firm
67. Michele Warda	Former president, director	ASSABIL
68. Ali Sabbagh	Activity coordinator	ASSABIL
69. Doris Summer	Project coordinator	ASSABIL

Name	Position/Title	Institution
70. Dr Ghassan Issa	General coordinator	Arab resources collective (Mawareed)
71. Samar Choucair	Librarian	Bachoura Municipality Library
72. Hicham Kayed,	Projects coordinator	Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts – Al-Jana
73. Dr Aziziza Khalidi	Civil society activist/consultant	AUB/Sidra
PALESTINE		
74. Rennad Qubbej*	Director	Tamer institute
75. Ruba Totah*	Programme manager	Tamer institute
76. Jihan Helou	Director of Tamer 2000–2006	President of IBBY Palestine and member of IBBY Central Board
77. Safa Abu Assab*	Programme manager CLP	Diakonia

* email or phone interviews

Annex III Draft Interview Guidelines for Field Interactions

Group 1: Host institutions and members of National Core Groups

1. Awareness of the programme

- a. What do you know about the Arab Regional Programme for reading and the development of children's literature?
- b. What is your professional assessment of the goals of the programme? To what extent has the programme achieved its goals?

2. Awareness of the concepts presented by the programme:

- a. ما المفاهيم التي يطرحها البرنامج ؟ The concepts put forward by the programme?
- b. What does it mean for you the following concepts: reading for pleasure, the Arab totalitarian approach to develop and improve reading and the book industry to support the identity of the Arabic language with cultural diversity, which strengthens critical thinking etc.
3. Roles and responsibilities:
 - a. What roles and responsibilities were assigned to you from ALF? How was the roles and responsibilities agreed upon?
 - b. To what extent the institution to help you carry out these roles and responsibilities?
 - c. After your experiences during the past two years; what you propose to modify these roles and responsibilities.
 - d. What have been the key lessons learnt in implementing the project/programme? Any main challenges? *Anything you would have done differently today with the knowledge that you have gained throughout the last years of implementation?*
 - e. How can you enter these proposals in a practical way in the next year?

4. Stage of the selection of key groups, and host institutions:

- a. How was your introduction to the ALF CL programme?
- b. How was the choice of joining the programme taken? According to what criteria?
- c. How was the assessment of the main groups and host institutions in accordance with the selection criteria set?
- d. Did you take part in the development of standards? إذا نعم ؟ If yes? كيف تمت هذه المشاركة ؟ How was it?

5. Implementation of national programme – regional coordination

- a. What have been the main challenges of implementing the programme for you? Any success stories, lessons learnt, negative experiences?
- b. How have you worked with authorities in your country? Any advocacy or lobbying campaign for making a National Plan for Children literature?

- c. What has been the experience of working with ALF? Positive and negative aspects.
- d. How has the regional coordination functioned? What have been your main benefits from taking part in the regional conferences?
- e. Can you give us an example of exchange of experiences with other Host Institutions or members of National Core Groups outside your own country?

6. Cooperation with ALF

- a. What has been the experience of working with ALF?
- b. How would you assess the strengths and weaknesses of ALF and PMT?
- c. Has your capacity been built due to the cooperation with ALF? In case, yes – how? Give examples. In case no, why not? Any obstacles worth mentioning?
- d. Have anyone in your organisation taken part in ALF CL trainings? How useful/effective was the training? Has there been any follow-up of the trainings?
- e. How frequently do you access the ALF Children Literature website? Any comments to the website?
- f. Have you accessed any new contacts or made useful acquaintances via the ALF Mediterranean network? (contacts outside the CL programme?)
- g. Any recommendations to ALF on improving effectiveness or efficiency of programme?

7. Any recommendations to Sida for the next Strategy period?

Group 2: National institutions, governments, UNRWA

- a. Are you familiar with the ALF CL programme? If yes, what do you know? If no, share the main ideas
- b. What are the main features and/or main challenges to building up a Children Literature in your area/country?
- c. Do you take part in any coordination or networking on Children's Literature, either on national or regional level?
- d. Have you taken part or been invited to any of the ALF CL seminars or meetings?
- e. Have you or any colleagues taken part in ALF CL trainings? How useful/effective was the training? Has there been any follow-up of the trainings?
- f. Are you familiar with ALF Children Literature website? Any comments to the website?

Group 3: International Organisations working in Arab region

- Are you familiar with the ALF CL programme? If yes, what do you know? If no, share the main ideas
- What are the main strengths and challenges of working with the Arab region?
- What have you learnt from working with regional initiatives? Any best or worst practices?
- What your recommendations are for projects such as the ALF CL?

Group 4: Swedish embassies

- a. Are you familiar with the ALF CL programme? If yes, have you attended any ALF CL events in your country?
- b. Do you see any short-term results or long-term outcomes as a result of the programme?
- c. Are there any potential synergy effects of the CL programme with main priorities of the Embassy?
- d. Have you been part of providing inputs to the:
 - ALF Choice of Host Institutions in your country?
 - Country Action Plans or Regional plans of ALF CL?
 - Advocacy strategy for influencing the government in developing a National Plan for Children's Literature?

Annex IV Matrix of findings and implications – Evaluation of Children Literature Program in MENA

Evaluation issues		Findings	Implications
Sida	Selection of ALF as regional lead agency	Sida report (2006) built on solid assessment of CL situation, but no institutional or programmatic assessment of ALF Political interests of revitalizing Swedish Institute in Alexandria. Swedish support for ALF	1. Choice of ALF not clearly understood 2. Communication between Sida/ALF on “transfer” of project from Diakonia (in previous phase 1992–2004) to ALF
	Programme independence (ref. contract Sida – ALF) Programme design: Building on previous Palestinian experience: – training manuals – cooperation model btw MOC/ MOE, UNRWA – virtual regional website – distance course in CL at Birzeit university) Monitoring of project by Swedish Embassy/Sida	An independent unit for CL programme physically separated from rest of ALF. Process of integration in ALF started in 2009 Most of recommendations from reports 2003, 2004 have not been take into consideration in ALF design of programme Few of experiences from Palestine were included in the ALF CL work plans 2006–7 and 2008–9 ALF CLP decided to design its own model Annual review meetings held after each work plan Weak follow-up of the agreed recommendations in minutes from meetings	3. Programme was not integrated with other ALF projects or with ALF administrative and financial systems 4. ALF CL programme did not build on the previous experience, knowledge 5. Programme lost out on valuable experience, especially with regards to virtual regional website and distance course in CL at Bir Zeit. 6. Trying to create a new CLP model, but takes more time to measure the impact of the new model 7. Issues like absence of baseline-research, delays of payment to HIs, situation in Syria and Egypt, negatively affected the progress of programme 8. Sida did not take sufficient action to “adjust” the course, could have initiated a Mid-Term Review
ALF institutional issues			
Regional structure of ALF		Regional network of ALF premise for Sida choice	9. In Syria, the choice of HI was found via ALF network.
Programme independence (contract)		ALF made a separate programme unit	10. Programme was not integrated with other ALF projects or with ALF administrative and financial systems
Programme management structure		2 programme specialists were placed on the same level without a director involved	11. Each staff worked in her own way and according to her own vision and capacities

Evaluation issues		Findings	Implications
Country context		CLP specialists possessed knowledge of Palestine and Lebanon, less on Egypt, Syria, Jordan	12. Weak results in Egypt 13. Syria – HI implemented well in SWP, but then pulled out without explanation 14. Jordan good results after one year of challenges, great improvements. 15. Strong results in Lebanon 16. Obstacles in the way of important communications with governments (MOE, MOC) especially in Egypt 17. Sense of equality among 5 countries 18. Activities in each country was funded based on an assessment of efficiency and potentials (i.e. in the first phase although some HIs proved to be active and efficient the budget was the same as non-active countries) 19. Less opportunities of flexibility for new initiatives 20. Serious delays (almost one year) in implementation of programme 21. Partners' financial reporting improved as results of rigorous system 22. Cumber some process of planning and reporting affects time for implementation in partner institutions 23. Some HI achieved some discipline in planning and reporting
Equal treatment of all countries		Same budget for all five countries irrespective of country size, needs, potentials etc.	
Administration and finance		Lack of support from ALF to programme in the start 2006–8/9 ALF and Sida system of financial reporting not compatible Bureaucratic system of planning; CL programme prepares plan, send to head of finance which in turn send to director who approves it	
ALF programme issues			
Programme approach and modalities		Mainly activity-based approach Short time for partners to implement activities	24. Many initiatives created based on each HI and partners' priority of activities. Intense periods of creative activities 25. Lack of long-term common direction
Programme design		Goals and expected results were too ambitious compared to inputs (budget and HR) and regional context analysis	26. Programme staff was over-loaded with work in five countries; unable to focus sufficient and continuous efforts on all countries 27. Less time to reflect about concepts and vision
Basic assessment – research		TOR for research was developed, researchers contracted, draft circulation. Research rejected by programme, partners and HIs.	28. Lack of research led to many difficulties in the next step.

Evaluation issues	Findings	Implications
Selection of Host Institution	No clear process for selection HI in different countries (criteria were general, process was different in the different countries) Signed protocols	29. Questions being asked about different choices. Pragmatic approach to selection of HI. 30. Syria and Egypt delayed and not implemented
National Core Group	Brought different sectors together (in some countries first time) No TOR was developed for NCG Concept of national core group not clearly defined (roles, criteria, expectation etc) Formation of NCG not achieved People registered in the core group in ALF CL did not know that they are listed as core group	31. Positive multiplier and side-effects 32. Differently understood in the different countries 33. Lack of efficiency in planning (NCG was supposed to plan CL in each country) = increased work load for programme specialists 34. Sense of ownership among core group weak 35. Transparency towards core group varied 36. Implementation of project was ad-hoc.
Book exhibition – 101 books	Exhibition successfully implemented in all 5 countries, cost-efficient and well organised	37. 101 books gave visibility to the programme 38. Contacts established btw illustrators, writers, publishers 39. Exchange of books from different Arab countries
Website	Website was opened in September 2009, but not actively updated nor known among the His or partner (except in Lebanon and Palestine)	40. There is no 'hub' or common space for partners and HI in the programme.
National core group share the same vision for developing the CL		
Selection of books, evaluation of books, announcing honor lists etc	Criteria were done, screened the 530 books purchased until mid-2007 Activities planned under developing same vision for CL (criteria for selection of books, evaluation of books and announce honor lists) were not logically linked to developing vision	41. A common vision was not developed. 42. Key questions were not agreed upon; what does children literature mean, how do we define ownership, what does children literature from a child-centered approach, what is a core group etc) 43. A common vision is derived from discussion on definitions, concepts, understandings and not from evaluating books. 44. Children not involved in the evaluation of books
National core group effectively plan the CL		
Planning workshops	Programme tried to use a participatory approach in each country by inviting experts to meetings, but it was not sustained and followed-up systematically Some in understood changes in the process (in Lebanon)	45. Waste of time and resources in organizing seminars/ workshops that were not continued 46. Frequent change of people who took part in the "core" group meeting led to dissolution of ownership of programme (Egypt) 47. No national plans were developed, except Palestine that had worked on it prior to involvement with CLP

Evaluation issues		Findings	Implications
Capacity of HI to influence national authorities on CL	Character of HI differ from country to country (Library-oriented, community-based organization etc)		48. Successful initiatives and activities scattered around, but no overall plan that binds them together (ex strategic planning in Lebanon was not completed and with no result). 49. Common vision not developed – weak conceptual framework
Regional level – NCG in the 5 countries share experience and plan effectively with a regional approach			
Regional approach	No joint understanding of the concept of regional activities One regional plan is developed Good discussion in regional workshops, but they did not reach concrete recommendations achieved Related ministries actively participate in the process		50. Timing of the regional approach was not right since there was no joint understanding of the national core groups (see above) 51. There was no regional experience to build on – only the experience of each country 52. Missed opportunity for actual exchange of regional experiences, competencies etc
Contact with government	Programme did not interact sufficiently with decision-makers (govt) in some countries HI in Lebanon have worked with municipalities for a long time (before the programme) and partner in Lebanon (Iqra) has permission from MDE to read in classes Govt appreciate the efforts of the programme		53. Government is not on board in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, while in Palestine strong partnership with government established prior to ALF CLP.
Research	5 research papers were produced, Recommendations for improving curriculum was conducted		54. Partners are in contact with lower and middle levels of govt 55. Potentials for exchange of experience on how to work with different levels of govt.
Evaluation of books	More than 1000 evaluations of books received by ALF CL, not yet analyzed and published		56. Research was partly utilized 57. Missed opportunities for linking researchers with advocacy efforts aimed at specific themes/issues 58. Opportunity for knowledge spread on books was missed
National level – situation for CL has improved in the five countries			
Advocacy	“Advocacy” activities were mainly information-sharing and promotion		59. No joint vision for which issues to advocate with authorities on
Prizes	Programme did not communicate sufficiently with partners in some countries Announcement was only by email A few number join the prize Selected 10 books from a few numbers of books		60. Prizes were not well announced and known 61. The result was lack of high-quality books nominated, and thus some prizes were cancelled 62. One overlapped with another major prize (Sheikh Saed prize)

Evaluation issues		Findings	Implications
Activities;		Activities (training, stories, resource libraries, discussion on books, local exhibition etc) were mainly implemented as planned in Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine	63. Short time for implementations. 64. Intense period of activities created momentum, many “seeds sown”, created fertile ground for future interventions
	National partnerships	Palestine: 85 partnership, 60 libraries in WB, 15 in Gaza Jordan : Ruwwad collaboration with the Jordanian Library and Information Association, “Hakawaty” bookshop Lebanon, ASSABIL collaboration with Iqra, Bahithat and publishing house El Khayyat el Sagheer. ASSABIL network of 25 libraries. MOC has nominated ASSABIL as member of the Reading Committee of the ministry.	65. Partnership in Palestine between CLP ALF and HI based on former programme specialist links with Palestine and Tamer’s receiving funds from Sida and Diakonia since 1992 66. Partnership in Jordan genuine partnership established in MENA region. 67. The process in Jordan of buying books was great for children libraries handled by JLIA 68. Partnership in Lebanon based on former programme specialist links with Lebanon
Overall assessment – summed up			
Effectiveness	Ability of ALF to achieve its own objectives?	ALF has built capacity in CLP and is today able to partly achieve its goals	69. Some good initiatives developed, questions of sustainability due to lack of ownership
Efficiency	Ability of ALF to deliver timely and good results?	First 1.5 years serious delays in implementation of projects due to internal issues in ALF (lack of ownership)	70. ALF has not been a cost-efficient partner for Sida
Relevance	Extent of ALF’s relevance to CL programme	ALF approach (short-term and activity-driven) seem less relevant for achieving long-term goals	71. ALF not able to establish sustainable relationships with partners in all countries of implementation
Impact	Likelihood of ALF being able to achieve its goals in future	ALF and CLP are not compatible in vision (short-term vs long-term, dialogue vs long-term partnership relation)	72. Chances of high impact with current programme set-up and administration of ALF is limited
Sustainability	Likelihood of programme to continue without support of Sida – ALF	Weak sustainability of programme due to lack of ownership in ALF and among the key stakeholders (no core group, no regional group)	73. Programme has not achieved a programmatic or conceptual sustainability in period evaluated (2006–9)

Annex V Profile of Evaluation Team

The Team Leader, *Nora Ingdal*, is an experienced development consultant and the managing partner of NCG Norway. Ms Ingdal has been team leader more than 20 project and programme appraisal, review and evaluation missions for donors like DFID, SDC, USAID, Denmark, Germany, Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (Norad) and Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies, and international NGO's since joining NCG in 2005. She speaks Arabic well and has gained a special focus on development assistance to civil society during/after conflict, conflict & gender sensitivity (SCR1325), SGBV, and 'do no harm', particularly in the Middle East. She lived for four years in the Gaza Strip being the country director of a international NGO (NPA) that was a driving force (along with Diakonia) for the Palestinian children's resource centre in Ramallah run by the Tamer Institute. Based on the experience gained in the Palestinian areas she conducted a series of evaluations for donors in oPT amongst them the Palestinian National Theatre (Hakawati), Children's Cultural Centre in Bethlehem, the reform process in PLC etc. Ms Ingdal is familiar with Sida's policies and priorities; in 2009 she evaluated Diakonia's Middle East CBR programme which included in-depth interaction with Sida and Swedish Embassy in oPT. Ms Ingdal has written a Documentary book on the Separation Wall in the West Bank, speaks the Arabic language well.

Mr. Emad Thawrat Khalil is an experienced educationalist based in Egypt. He co-founded Salama Moussa Foundation for Education and Development in El Minya and later Roa for Consultation and Training in Cairo. He is also on the advisory committee of the Arab Education Forum & member in Arab Resource Collective in Lebanon.

Mr. Thawrat has trained teachers, administrators, facilitators and other education and development staff in Egypt, Yemen and Sudan. He design some project for Girls Education in Yemen and he has produced a number of studies & researches & training manuals, for programs around literacy, life-skills development, community participation and children rights.



EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE PROGRAMME IN MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN REGION, 2006–2009

The report in hand is the outcome of an external evaluation of the Children's Literature cooperation in the Middle East and North African region (MENA) 2006–2009. The main purpose was two-fold: a result-based evaluation in order to assess to which extent the programme's objectives, purpose and expected results were achieved; and secondly to assess the capacity and ownership aspects of the ALF as an implementing partner of the programme. The overall goal of the Children Literature Programme (CLP) was to strengthen the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and emotional development of children in the MENA region. The expected results centred on three levels; developing a holistic approach for promoting Children Literature (CL), building capacity for CL at the national levels in the five targeted countries and facilitating exchange on a regional level between the HIs and partners. In the current work plan (2010–11), a fourth result on increasing the visibility and support for the programme within the Arab countries and the Euromed region was included.

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