Save the Children Norway
Localisation Baseline, 2021
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1. Executive Summary

The objective of this assignment is "to evaluate its (Save the Children Norway's) localization practices and develop a baseline. The assessment and baseline will serve as a programming tool helping SCN define short- and long-term policy objectives and measure policy changes/progress toward its localization objectives" (Terms of Reference).

This baseline exercise takes the NEAR Network's Localisation Performance Measurement Framework as its point of departure. The consultants worked with the SC Norway team to select or adapt relevant indicators and means of verification from the Framework's seven components (see table below). The study focused on awards originating from Government of Norway donors (Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad) for a sample of six SCI country offices (Lebanon, occupied Palestinian Territories, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Venezuela), and examined documentation from SC Norway, the COs and partners for the baseline year of 2021, supplemented by surveys and interviews with SC Norway staff.

The baseline study calculated results for 28 means of verification for 16 indicators across the Framework's seven components for the overall sample of COs (SCN column), and disaggregated by CO and by donor (NMFA and Norad columns). The table below presents summary calculations for an illustrative set of indicators. For complete results and methods of calculation, please see Annexes 6.2 and 6.3 respectively.

Findings for Select Indicators					
Component	**Indicator**	**Means of Verification**	**SCN**	**NMFA**	**Norad**
Partnership	1.2. Shift from project to strategic partnerships	1.2.1. % of SCN 2021 partners with scopes beyond project-based activities	24%	11%	28%
Funding	2.1. Quantity of funding	2.1.1. % SCN-funded 2021 SOFs budgeted to partners	38.81%	45.88%	37.44%
	2.2. Quality of funding	2.2.1. Average % of partner sub-award budgets devoted to indirect costs and capacity strengthening	9.28%	8.20%	9.74%
Capacity	3.2. Organisational development	3.2.1. % of SCN partners with evidence of OD support	58%	64%	55%
Coordination	4.1. Humanitarian and development leadership	4.1.1. # of humanitarian and development leadership and coordination forums supported by SCN	15	7	8
Policy and Influence	5.1. Partner Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting	5.1.2. #, list of partners participating in meetings with GoN donors	1/40	1/11	0/29

| Visibility | 5.2 Visibility in report-ing and communic'ns | 5.2.1. #, list of SCN 2021 part-ners featured in donor reports | 19/40 | 7/11 | 12/29 |
| Participation | 6.1. Participation of affected people in humanitarian response and development programming | 6.1.2. #, list of mechanisms with-in partners and SCN to provide information to, and ensure the participation of affected people | 19 | 11 | 18 |

Many of the LPMF indicators are not part of SC Norway's MEAL frameworks, so the calculations are based on what the consultants could glean from available documentation, which in many cases was incomplete, particularly for some partners for 2021.

The second table summarises our key conclusions and recommendations regarding SC Norway's progress toward its localisation objectives as described in Save the Children's Localisation Policy commitments, using the LPMF red/amber/green rating format.

Summary Conclusions and recommendations			
Component	Rating	Conclusions	Recommendations
Partnership		• SCN/SCI have not yet identified or operationalised strategic partnerships • Joint monitoring, including of partnership, is not a standard practice	• Operationalise strategic partnerships in future project designs • Reinforce COs' compliance with SCI's Partnership Monitoring procedure
Funding		• SCN meets or approaches major Grand Bargain and SC Localisation commitments for funding (25% funding to partners, 10% support) • Operational/support costs are not standardised across partner budgets, and capacity costs tend to be borne by COs, not partners	• Standardise partner support and capacity costs in SCN-funded sub-award templates • Consider including organisational costs in budget templates
Capacity		• Most partners receive range of capacity support, but focused on implementation, compliance	• Make greater use of in-country sources of capacity strengthening for the delivery of capacity strengthening support to partners
Coordination		• Network support is a strategy element in all COs and awards	• Make support for partner engagement in coordination mechanisms a standard of project design
Policy and Influence		• Limited evidence of partners' engagement in humanitarian coordination and influencing	• Develop joint advocacy agendas with partners for each project
Visibility		• Half of sample partners mentioned in donor reports, but often as recipients of SC support	• Work with media and fundraising units (including GCCU) to develop parameters for partner visibility

Participation		• All awards have documented examples for each indicator • SCN's mechanisms tend to focus on participation in public decisions more than in project decisions	• Build participation mechanisms into SCN award results frameworks and MEAL plans

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List of Acronyms

ALNAP   Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

AMS   Award Management System

CO   Country Office

CRG   Child Rights Governance

CSG   Child Safeguarding

CSP   Country Strategic Plan

GCCU   Global Content Creation Unit (SCI)

GoN   Government of Norway

L/NA   Local/National Actor

LPMF   Localisation Performance Measurement Unit

MEAL   Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

MOV   Means of Verification

NEAR   Network for Empowered Aid Response

NMFA   Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

OD   Organisational Development

PAT   Partnership Assessment Tool

PLRCAP Partnership and Local Response Capacity (localisation initiative in Nigeria)

SAA   Sub-award Agreement

SC   Save the Children

SCI   Save the Children International

SCN   Save the Children Norway

SOF   Source of Funds

UNCRC   United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children

UPR   Universal Periodic Review

2. Background

Objective

The objective of this assignment is "to evaluate its localization practices and develop a baseline. The assessment and baseline will serve as a programming tool helping SCN define short- and long-term policy objectives and measure policy changes/progress toward its localization objectives" (Terms of Reference). The ToR specified that the baseline should be rooted in the Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF) developed by the Start Network and the NEAR Network.

Save the Children Norway's Partnership Approach

Save the Children Norway has a long history of egalitarian partnerships, and has had a profound impact on SCI's partnership approach since its inception in 2010. SCN's Partnership thematic evaluations (2011-12), including Mozambique, Nepal and Nicaragua case studies, documented its value-based partnership approach, for consideration by the then-newly formed Partnership Working Group. Another Partnership Review in 2017 looked at how SCN's partnerships were being managed by SCI country offices (COs), recommending, amongst other things, "SCN should consider, in the context of an increased global focus on humanitarian aid and the Grand Bargain, how it can pilot and generate learning on civil society and partner strengthening… and use this to influence wider SCI approaches on civil society partnerships in fragile contexts/humanitarian situations" (SCN Partnership Review, 2017).

Save the Children's Localisation Policy

"It is Save the Children's belief that by shifting greater capacity, means and ownership to national and local actors, it will result in more timely, appropriate and effective outcomes for the most deprived, vulnerable and marginalized children and their communities and better fulfil the rights of children." After much internal consultation, this declaration in SC's Localisation Policy (2020) finally commits the global organisation to putting partners at the centre of its work. The policy makes seven commitments, which align with the NEAR Network's LPMF components.

SC Localisation Commitments	LPMF Components and Impact Indicators
1. As local as possible, as international as necessary	(overarching commitment, not aligned with a specific component)
2. Our approach is based on child rights	6. Participation: Affected people fully shape and participate in humanitarian response
3. Funding models enable localisation	2. Funding: A funding environment that promotes, incentivises and supports localisation to enable a more relevant, timely and effective humanitarian response
4. We work in partnerships and live up to our partnership principles	1. Partnerships: Equitable and complementary partnerships between L/NA and INGOs/UN
5. Strengthening prevention and national and local preparedness	3. Capacity: L/NA are able to respond effectively and efficiently, and have targeted and relevant support from INGOs/UN
6. We promote national and local actor leadership and participation in coordination mechanisms	4. Coordination and Complementarity: Strong national humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms exist but where they do not, that L/NA participate in

	international coordination mechanisms as equal partners and in keeping with humanitarian principles
7. We advocate for localization of aid based on evidence	5. Policy, Influence & 6. Visibility: L/NA shape humanitarian priorities and receive recognition for this in reporting

Key Definitions

Some key terms include:

- *strategic partnership:* a relationship formed "with organisations with whom we have committed to collaborate to achieve a mutually agreed strategic objective and with an agreed plan, which can be more or less formalized. The collaboration can be longer term or short term (task-based) but is not confined to the logic and timeframe of a single project" (SCI Strategic Partnership Procedure). Both LPMF and Save the Children distinguish between strategic and implementing partnerships;

- *indirect or support costs:* "costs that are not directly accountable to a cost object. Indirect costs may be either fixed or variable" (Wikipedia). Indirect costs can include management cost/overhead and general administration, including security and are necessary for the implementation of a project. Indirect costs should be distinguished from organisational costs, which are not related to any specific project but which are necessary for a CSO's survival, such as marketing or legal costs;

- *participation:* "the involvement of crisis-affected people in one or more phases of a humanitarian project or programme: assessment, design, implementation, monitoring or evaluation" (ALNAP). LPMF indicators relate to SC Norway or partner mechanisms intended to generate participation (6.1.2), and the actual participation of affected people in decisions related to the projects (6.1.1) or to public issues that impact them (6.2.1);

- *local and national actors*: the LPMF defines these as "Local or national NGOs that are based in the global south and that are not affiliated in any way to an international NGO". For most indicators and MOVs in this baseline study the consultants have replaced "L/NA" with "partners", where data refers specifically to those L/NAs with whom SCI has partnership agreements. When referring to the broader set of civil society actors we have retained the term L/NA.

3. Methodology

NEAR Network's Localisation Performance Measurement Tool

SCN seeks to build evidence around current partnership practices, and compare these to the localisation policy's commitments. SCN selected the LMPF, developed collaboratively by the Start and the NEAR Networks to evidence progress towards achieving localisation commitments, to guide its approach to establishing its localisation baseline. The Framework consists of seven components, each with a set of key performance indicators and means of verification (MOV).

NEAR is a member of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream, and the LMPF is one of the measurement frameworks recommended in its Country-level Dialogue Resource Kit. Several SC members and regions, including Sweden, Denmark, UK, Netherlands, ESA and MEEE have or are currently undertaking baseline exercises using the LPMF.

Baseline Parameters

The baseline parameters were specified in the ToR, and/or agreed between the consultants and the SCN team. These included:

- *HQ-based exercise,* to minimise disruption to field operations;
- *Focus on Government of Norway donors* (Norad and NMFA), including awards funded by them through intermediaries (e.g. Norwegian Church Aid);
- *Sample* of six country offices, including Lebanon, occupied Palestinian Territories, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Venezuela;
- *Base year* of 2021;
- *All context analysis,* including adapting the LPMF indicators for both humanitarian and development contexts.

Data Sources

The consultants reviewed a total of 258 documents (see Annex 6.1), including the following:

- *SC and SC Norway documents,* including those related to the new localisation policy, humanitarian and development strategy documents, and proposals and reports to NMFA and Norad;
- *External localisation documents,* including the LPMF, as well as guidance notes from the Grand Bargain's Localisation Workstream;
- *CO documents,* including country strategic plans, humanitarian strategy responses, and NMFA and Norad proposals and reports;
- *Partner documents,* including sub-award agreements, budgets and reports, partnership assessments, and several partner external reports.

Data collection also included some primary sources, including the following:

- *SC Norway localisation baseline team,* who collaborated with the consultants to flesh out the baseline methodology through a series of working sessions, including Christina Wagner Faegri (Senior Advisor for Evaluations and Learning, and contact person for the baseline study), Wawan Muhammad (Senior Humanitarian Advisor-Localisation) and Helene Andersson Novela (Director of Quality Partnerships);
- *Staff survey,* with 10 responses, primarily from award managers, particularly those covering the sample COs;
- *Individual interviews,* with SC Norway's Channe Gebre (SC Norway's PPM/PRIME/PMA focal point), and with Philip Crabtree (SC Norway Communications team).

Colour Ratings

The LPMF proposes a simple 3-point traffic light system (red = poor, amber = modest, green = excellent) to indicate the level of progress that has been achieved against each of the localisation KPIs, to allow assessment, calibration and comparison of findings. The consultants adopted this intuitive rating system, assigning a green rating where SC Norway demonstrated solid progress on most indicators, and had easily accessible sources of data to document and monitor progress. They assigned an amber rating where progress on the set of indicators and respective SC localisation commitments was modest, and/or data sources were not clear or easily accessible. A red rating was assigned where SC Norway showed

little evidence of progress on localisation indicators and commitments, and it lacked clear and easily accessible data.

Limitations

Access to partner information against the requested list of documents was the primary limiting factor. SC Norway was unable to provide the consultants direct access to SCI's Award Management System where most partner documentation is stored, and requested the consultant not approach the CO teams in order not to disrupt field operations. SC Norway's award managers thus had to download hundreds of documents to a SharePoint site. Despite these efforts, the documentation was incomplete, possibly indicating the incomplete nature of COs' own documentation; the consultants were unable to verify several partnerships on the list provided of SCN partners for 2021, and could not access a complete set of partner narrative and financial reports for 2021. As a result, the consultants produced a reduced list of 40 partners that could be verified for the six COs in 2021, and used budget (including amended budgets where available) rather than actual figures to calculate funding MOVs. The consultants drew data from COs' own reporting on partners where partner data was missing, but cross-validation was therefore not always possible.

A second limitation was that SC Norway does not report on many of the indicators and MOVs in the LPMF, touching every one of the Framework's seven components. Examples of lack of reported data include joint monitoring (Partnership, 1.1.2); examples of innovative financing (Funding, 2.1.2); coordinated capacity strengthening initiatives (Capacity, 3.5.1); partners actively engaged in humanitarian or development coordination mechanisms (Coordination, 4.2.1); partners participating in meetings with GoN donors (Policy and Influence, 5.1.2); partner stories published by SC Norway (Visibility, 5.2.2); and participation by affected people in SCN awards (Participation, 6.1.1). Where lack of data was evident from the outset the consultants adapted MOVs, for example calculating numbers of examples rather than percentages. The consultants were also able to supplement documentation through surveys or interviews with SC Norway staff. In many cases, however, finding evidence for indicators amounted to looking for needles in a haystack. As a result, some baseline scores, such as for the indicators listed above, may simply reflect the availability of data rather than the actual state of localisation practice.

4. Findings and Conclusions

Partnerships

SC localisation commitment: 4. We work in partnerships and live up to our partnership principles	LPMF impact indicator: 1. Partnerships: Equitable and complementary partnerships between L/NA and INGOs/UN				
Indicator	**MOV**	**SC Nor**	**NMFA**	**Norad**	**Rating**

1.1. Quality in relationships	1.1.1. % of SCN 2021 partners designated as strategic partners, by CO and donor[1]	10%	0%	14%	
	1.1.2. # of partners with evidence of participation in joint monitoring with SC, by CO and donor[2]	1/40	0/11	1/29	
	1.1.3. #, list of marginalised partners for above indicator (1.1.1)[3]	1/4	0/0	¼	
1.2. Shift from project to strategic partnerships	1.2.1. % of SCN 2021 partners with scopes beyond project-based activities, by CO and donor[4]	24%	11%	28%	
	1.2.2. #, list of marginalised partners for above indicator (1.2.1)[5]	1/9	0/1	1/8	
1.3. Partner engagement	1.3.1. #, list of partners with evidence of participation in project decisions, by CO and donor[6]	8/40	2/11	6/29	
	1.3.2. #, list of marginalised partners of above indicator (1.3.1)[7]	0/8	0/2	0/6	

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[1] Strategic partnership is defined as a relationship formed "with organisations with whom we have committed to collaborate to achieve a mutually agreed strategic objective and with an agreed plan, which can be more or less formalized. The collaboration can be longer term or short term (task-based) but is not confined to the logic and timeframe of a single project" (SCI Strategic Partnership Procedure).

[2] Joint monitoring is defined as "the shared responsibility and ownership of the CO and the partner for monitoring. While the CO must independently verify partner reporting, it also should foster the partner's sense of ownership; we monitor with the partner (rather than monitor the partner) to ensure the joint project's success" (SCI Partnership Monitoring Procedure). SCI's Monitoring Procedure refers to monitoring the project (activity and budget), the partnership (including partnership principles), donor and beneficiary accountability, and partner capacity.

[3] Partners from marginalized groups: "Partners led by and representing groups identified as marginalized or excluded in SCN or CO strategies, including women, children, persons with disabilities, the displaced, and minorities". This does not include disability-serving partners, who target but do not represent persons with disabilities.

[4] Scopes beyond project-based activities: "Scopes that include roles and activities beyond service delivery to or advocacy on behalf of affected populations." Such roles and activities might include support for the development and sustainability of the partner, support for or coordination with clusters or networks, or support for the partner's strategic plan.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid. In terms of programme cycle participation, this includes participation in needs assessment, project design, management meetings to review and monitor implementation, and close-out or lessons learned meetings.

[7] Partners from marginalized groups: "Partners led by and representing groups identified as marginalized or excluded in SCN or CO strategies, including women, children, persons with disabilities, the displaced, and minorities". This does not include disability-serving partners, who target but do not represent persons with disabilities.

Findings:

Despite SC Norway's long tradition of quality partnerships (1.1), available documentation rarely revealed strategic partnerships (1.1.1) or joint monitoring (1.1.2). One complication in accessing strategic partner documentation is that the AMS partner folders are only created for funded partners. A number of partnerships have been in existence at least since the beginning of the strategy period (2019-22, which corresponded to the beginning of the Norad awards), but partner scopes and documentation did not indicate any progression in the relationships. Of the seven marginalised partners (run by women, children, minorities or persons with disabilities), one was designated as a strategic partner (Lebanon's child-led Manara network).

Despite SC Norway's commitment to shifting from project-based to strategic partnerships (1.2), available documentation revealed little evidence of this shift. The approach to partner scopes in SC Norway awards (1.2.1) seems haphazard; scopes that reflected partners' own missions or sustainability tended to be those for networks (e.g. Al Majmouaa's scope in support of the Lebanon Humanitarian and Development Forum or Nepal's OP3CRC Coalition) or for partners who designed their own projects (e.g. some of the Palestinian partners such as Al Mezan or Ma'an News Network). Again, the Manara Network was the one marginalised partner whose scope went beyond project activities (1.2.2).

The consultants found little evidence of partner engagement (1.3), likely due to absence of systematic reporting on this.

Promising Practices:
- South Sudan's partner agreements include two MOUs with specific mention and description of strategic partnerships (Child Rights Coalition; Ministry of General Education);
- Al Mezan's scope (oPT) is based on the partner's on-going work, reflecting its unique contribution to the project (monitoring grave human rights abuses).

Conclusions:
- SC Norway and SCI have not yet identified or operationalised strategic partnerships, despite the existence of CSP guidance and partnership procedures;
- Joint monitoring, including of "the health of the partnership," is not a standard practice in the sample COs;
- Some of SC Norway's most innovative partnerships are those that are not funded. The absence of standardised procedures may in fact be an enabling condition for partnership innovation;
- The consultants assigned an amber rating to this component, largely because SC Norway, whether via SCI or independently through its GoN-funded awards, has not put in place mechanisms to ensure and document quality partnerships.

Funding

SC localisation commitment: 3. Funding models enable localisation		LPMF impact indicator: 2. Funding: A funding environment that promotes, incentivises and supports localisation to enable a more relevant, timely and effective humanitarian response				
Indicator	**MOV**	**SC Nor**	**NMFA**	**Norad**	**Rating**	
2.1. Quantity of funding	2.1.1. % SCN-funded 2021 SOFs budgeted to partners, by CO and donor	38.81%	45.88%	37.44%		
	2.1.2. # of examples of innovative financing mechanisms that promote localisation, by CO and donor[8]	2	2	0		
2.2. Quality of funding	2.2.1. Average % of partner sub-award budgets devoted to indirect costs and capacity strengthening, by CO and donor[9]	9.28%	8.20%	9.74%		
	2.2.2. Ratio of average partner indirect cost rates to SCN indirect cost rates (%)[10]	133%	117%	139%		
	2.2.3. #, list of partners participating in funding and financial decisions, by CO and donor[11]	1/38	0/11	1/27		
2.3. Access to 'direct' funding	2.3.1. # of partners recommended by SCN to donors, by CO and donor[12]	0/38	0/11	0/27		

Findings

SC Norway generally performs well on Quantity of funding (2.1), with each CO and award averaging between 32 and 59 percent passed on to partners (2.1.1) (with the exception of Somalia, due to lack of data for some partners). The consultants found little evidence of innovative financing (2.1.2), with the exception of the NMFA Flexi Fund mechanism.

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[8] Innovative financing: "Mechanisms or processes of financing partners other than the traditional award/sub-award mechanism regulated by back-donor compliance." Examples include pooled funds, fixed amount awards, longer-term awards, block grants, flexible funding grants etc.

[9] Indirect costs: "costs that are not directly accountable to a cost object. Indirect costs may be either fixed or variable" (Wikipedia). In the context of award budgets, a 'cost object' can be interpreted as project operations or results. Indirect costs can include management cost/overhead and general administration, including security. Capacity strengthening support: "'Purposeful interventions that support partners to increase their ability to successfully act on behalf of children and their families,' (UNDP). This describes the appropriate role of an INGO such as Save the Children" (SCI Partner Capacity Strengthening Support Procedure)

[10] Ibid.

[11] Partner participation: "involvement in review, analysis and decision-making processes relating to a joint project." In terms of funding and financial decisions, this includes any of the following: budget preparation and donor negotiations, access to SCN's award budget and financial reports, and any budget amendments.

[12] Facilitating contacts: "deliberate activities or communication to introduce a specific partner to a donor." This would not include general introductions of all partners to a donor via letter or at a conference.

SC Norway performs well on Quality of funding (2.2) as well. Partner indirect cost rates are generally higher than the 7 percent allowed by NMFA and Norad to SCN (2.2.2). Indirect costs take different line item titles (sometimes called Support costs), and are not standardised across partner budgets. Furthermore, capacity costs tend to be borne by COs, not partners (2.2.1). The consultants found only one documented example of a partner participating in a funding decision; TOCH (Nepal) requested a budget realignment to enable it to complete its workplan (2.2.3).

Access to 'direct' funding (2.3) was difficult to assess, as the consultants found no reporting on this indicator.

Promising Practices
- SC Norway's NMFA Flexible Fund allowed it to rapidly top up partners' budgets to respond to emergencies, such as for Ma'an Development Center's Gaza response;
- Support costs for some Nepali consortia were generous, covering some organisational costs and costs related to capacity strengthening of network members (CZOP, Consortium of Organisations on Child Protection).

Conclusions
- Operational/support costs are not standardised across partner budgets, and capacity costs (a localisation commitment in SC's policy) tend to be borne by COs, not partners;
- There is little evidence of egalitarian partnerships regarding partner participation in funding decisions;
- The consultants awarded SCN's localisation practice for this component a green because SCN meets or approaches major Grand Bargain and SC Localisation commitments for funding (25% funding to partners, 10% of sub-awards devoted to support costs).

Capacity

SC localisation commitment: 5. Strengthening prevention and national and local preparedness		LPMF Impact Indicator: 3. Capacity: L/NAs are able to respond effectively and efficiently, and have targeted and relevant support from the organization			
Indicator	MOV	SC Nor	NMFA	Norad	Rating
3.2. Organisational development	3.2.1. % of SCN partners with evidence of OD support, by CO and donor[13]	58%	64%	55%	
	3.2.2. % of SCN 2021 partners whose capacities were assessed, by CO and donor	90%	100%	86%	

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[13] OD support: "capacity strengthening support provided for the development and sustainability of the partner, independent of the project being implemented." OD domains listed in the PAT include governance & leadership, human resource management, systems and controls, organisational culture, and child safeguarding.

3.3. Quality standards	3.3.1. % of SCN partners with evidence of capacity building support on relevant thematic and programming areas, by CO and donor[14]	65%	73%	62%	
	3.3.2. % of partners with evidence of CSG capacity building support, by CO and donor[15]	63%	91%	52%	
3.5. Collaborative, coordinated capacity strength-ening (new ind)	3.5.1. #, list of coordinated capacity strengthening initiatives, by CO and donor[16]	6/40	1/11	5/29	

Findings:

Organisational Development (3.2) remains a limited focus in partnerships even though 58 percent of SC partners received OD support. All implementing partners were assessed using SCI's PAT or variations of this tool. Capacity assessments and support for non-funded (government or strategic) partners and networks varies, however; for some networks, for example, support tends to focus on member capacities rather than on the network itself. In general, OD support tends to focus on partners' implementation capacity and SC/donor compliance rather than as a concrete contribution to partners' sustainability. In several cases, there were no capacity strengthening activities despite some serious capacity issues and gaps identified in partnership assessments.

Most partners received support related to Quality standards (3.3). On average, 65 percent received capacity building support in thematic areas and 63 percent received support on child safeguarding. These capacity building needs were identified during partner assessments (PAT), conducted for 90 percent of partners.

The consultants found only limited examples (6) of collaborative capacity building (3.5) actions through clusters and consortia. For instance, Al-Majmouaa trained LHDF members on different quality standards, grants management and proposal development. Similarly, CZOP Consortium in Nepal trained CSOs on investment/public financing for children.

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[14] Thematic/programmatic support: "aims at developing technical and organizational capacities of a partner in thematic areas prioritized by SC, as well as for improved project/programme management."
Thematic areas are those with thematic codes. Programme capacity domains listed in the PAT include thematic, project management and reporting, MEAL, and advocacy & campaigning (listed below).
[15] Coordinated capacity strengthening initiative: "Capacity strengthening interventions planned and implemented with other development actors, or using common frameworks and tools." These might include using a common assessment tool, aligning around a common agenda (e.g. cluster strategy or standards), or joint or complementary trainings.
[16] Ibid.

Promising Practices:

- Coordinated capacity planning: SC/Somalia coordinated a joint capacity strengthening plan amongst Somali partners, potentially fostering efficiencies in capacity delivery and also peer exchange;
- Coordinated capacity support: SC Lebanon engaged local partner and network (Al-Majmoua and Manara Network) to build capacities of others SC partners and local actors.

Conclusions:

- The consultants rated SC Norway's capacity strengthening support as green, as partners' capacities were assessed and documented, and they received a range of capacity support accordingly, although this was largely focused on implementation and compliance rather than OD;
- Capacity strengthening was a consistent intervention for the majority of partners, starting with partnership assessments that led to development and implementation of coordinated efforts through networks and partners.

Coordination

SC Localisation Commitment: 6. We promote national and local actor leadership and participation in coordination mechanisms	LPMF Impact Indicator: 4. Coordination and Complementarity: Strong national humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms exist but where they do not, that L/NA participate in international coordination mechanisms as equal partners and in keeping with humanitarian principles				
Indicator	**MOV**	**SC Nor**	**NMFA**	**Norad**	**Rating**
4.1. Humanitarian and development leadership	4.1.1. # of humanitarian and development leadership and coordination forums[17] supported by SCN, by CO and donor	15	7	8	
4.2. Humanitarian and development coordination	4.2.1. # of SCN partners actively engaged[18] in humanitarian or development coordination mechanisms, by CO and donor	7	3	4	

Findings:

Despite a mandate, technical capacity and donor funding for SC to lead and co-lead the clusters and working groups, the study rarely found situations where partners were funded or provided with technical support to lead/co-lead the coordination mechanisms (4.1) in humanitarian contexts. The support to partners is limited to usual participation in the existing coordination mechanisms and

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[17] Leading/co-leading: "Partners or CSOs supported by SCN holding designated leadership roles in formally constituted clusters, networks, consortia, or inter-agency committees."

[18] Actively engaged: "Partners or CSOs supported by SCN that have membership in formally constituted clusters, networks, consortia, or inter-agency committees, and participated in at least one meeting of these bodies."
Networks or fora supported by SCN: "multi-organisational structures with a clearly defined developmental or humanitarian mandate and an agreement regulating governance and operations"

meeting fora (15 examples). On the other hand, SC Norway's support to CSO networks, alliances, coalitions and consortia, for instance in Somalia, South Sudan, Nepal and Palestine, strengthens the coordination among civil society on issues related to child rights governance where participation of partners was highly visible (4.1.1).

Support for partners' engagement in coordination mechanisms (4.2) seems haphazard; the consultants found evidence of seven partners reporting active participation in humanitarian and development coordination mechanisms (4.2.1).

Promising Practices:
- Support to networks e.g. LAC RMD Coalition with a humanitarian mandate in Venezuela, Child Rights Coalition in South Sudan and a Consortium on Child Protection in Nepal contributed to strengthened cooperation among network members;
- Support to Al-Mezan in reporting on child rights violations in Palestine, and the use of the partner's network for wider dissemination, as well as referrals to Ma'an Development Centre (another SC partner) for rehabilitation services signifies a coordinated effort on achieving a common objective.

Conclusions:
- Network support constitutes a strategy element across all COs and awards;
- The consultants assigned an amber rating to the Coordination component for the following reasons: i) coordination on child rights governance was aptly supported and documented, although ii) there was insufficient information on support to partners on leadership roles in coordination, particularly in the humanitarian context, and most importantly iii) there was limited focus on local leadership in the awards in the sample;
- The consultants understand that coordination is a new area of support which requires a different type of partnership engagement and funding distinct from the usual service delivery.

Policy and Influence

SC Localisation Commitment: 7. We advocate for localization of aid based on evidence		LPMF Impact Indicator: 5. Policy, Influence & Visibility: L/NA shape humanitarian priorities and receive recognition for this in reporting				
Indicator	**MOV**		SC Nor	NMFA	Norad	Rating
5.1. L/NA Influence in policy, advocacy	5.1.1. % of partners with evidence of capacity building support for advocacy[19], by CO and donor		43%	18%	52%	

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[19] Advocacy support: "Capacity strengthening support to strengthen partners' ability to advocate to relevant decision makers, including government, donors and the general public on behalf of their constituents". Sub-domains covered by the PAT include research, planning $ strategy, and engaging with the community & the public.

and standard-setting	5.1.2. #, list of partners participating in meetings with GoN donors[20], by CO and donor	1/40	1/11	0/29	
5.3. Advocacy for localisation and partner delivery of services (new ind)	5.3.1. # of advocacy initiatives[21] on localisation that SCN supports	2/40	1/11	1/29	

Findings:

Regarding partner influence (5.1), the assessment found that not all partners received support on capacity strengthening on advocacy (5.1.1); support correlates with the nature of partnership, the scope of project and the context, which varies by context and donor (18% for NMFA and 52% for Norad). Due to its position and strong capacity, much of the advocacy initiatives are SC-led in humanitarian settings, in coordination with local partners, often in a top-down manner. For example, SC coordinated advocacy actions on child-safe and inclusive education with Al Mezan in Palestine. In the development context, SC implemented joint advocacy actions with partners focusing on engaging affected children and child-led groups in advocating for child rights and holding the duty-bearers accountable. Similarly, there was limited evidence of partner participation or engagement in donor meetings. The only example the assessment can quote is the participation of LAC's RMD Coalition in a high-level international donors' conference in Venezuela (5.1.2).

The study uncovered one SC Norway advocacy initiative on localisation (5.3), +Local Venezuela, aimed at promoting and strengthening partners for the delivery of effective and high-quality humanitarian responses, to be implemented in 2022.

Promising Practices:
- SC Norway's support for CZOP's 2021 advocacy focus on lobbying to amend Nepal's National Strategy to End Child Marriage;
- Support to Somalia's Ministry of Women (MOWDAFA) to host one FGM high-level workshop among 40 Puntland influential women to develop a communique and strategy to fast-track approval of the Draft FGM bill.

Conclusion:
- The consultants rated SC Norway's performance for advocacy and policy influence as red, since SC Norway support for partners in this area was limited, and systematic reporting was absent. On the other hand, advocacy support to partners was substantial for civil society networks and coalitions on child rights issues.

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[20] GoN donors: "Any representative of a body of the Government of Norway, or with participation of the GoN." This includes Norwegian embassy staff, GoN ministries, multi-donor funds or UN bodies of which Norway is a member.

[21] Advocacy initiative: "Advocacy efforts undertaken directly by SCN, separately or in coordination with other organisations, on issues related to the localization agenda, conveying a policy position with recommendations." SCN's reports to NMFA identify a specific list of advocacy initiatives.

Visibility

SC Localisation Commitment: 7. Visibility		LPMF Impact Indicator: 5. L/NA shape humanitarian priorities and receive recognition for this in reporting.			
Indicator	**MOV**	**SC Nor**	**NMFA**	**Norad**	**Rating**
5.2 Visibility in reporting and communications	5.2.1. #, list of SCN 2021 partners featured[22] in donor reports, by CO and donor	19/40	7/11	12/29	
	5.2.2. #, list of partner stories or cases published by SCN[23]	0/40	0/11	0/29	

Findings:

Regarding partner visibility in reporting and communications (5.2), roughly half of sample CO partners were mentioned in the donor reports, but often reported simply in the lists or as recipients of SCN support (5.2.1). Only rarely were partners credited with contributions towards CO programme outcomes and SC achievements, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. oPT's DCI, Al Mezan). Though the visibility and credits to partners in donor reports remains limited, nevertheless, the mentioning of partners has largely improved compared to 2020 donor reports. This can be well attributed to the launching of SCN Localisation Policy during 2021.

SC Norway's Communications team acknowledged that no partner stories (5.2.2) had been featured its publications in 2021, due to the Covid-related travel ban that prevented the team from gathering the first-hand information to construct stories.

Promising Practices
- "One child-informed supplementary report was submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in June 2019, led by SC's partner, Defence for Children International (DCI), and supported by SC" (p166, SC Norway 2021 report to Norad)
- "SC's partner Al Mezan monitored and documented grave violations against children in Gaza" (p28, SC Norway 2021 report to NMFA).

Conclusions:
- Half of sample partners were mentioned in donor reports, but often as recipients of SC support;
- Given the limited credit acknowledged for partner contributions to SC Norway's results, the consultants have assigned a red rating for Visibility.

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[22] Featured partner contributions: "Descriptions of activities and results achieved by named partners, in the body of SCN's reports to donors".
[23] Partner stories or cases: "Stories written by or highlighting the activities and results of named partners in SCN's public communications, including, website, social media, FB or print".

Participation

SC localisation commitment: 2. Our approach is based on child rights		LPMF impact indicator: 6. Participation: Affected people fully shape and participate in humanitarian response				
Indicator	**MOV**	**SC Nor**	**NMFA**	**Norad**	**Rating**	
6.1. Participation of affected people in humanitarian response and development programming	6.1.1. #, list of examples of how affected people, particularly children, have participated[24] in SCN awards in 2021 per stage of the project cycle, by CO and donor	25	11	14		
	6.1.2. #, list of mechanisms[25] within partners and SCN to provide information to, and ensure the participation of affected people, by CO and donor	19	11	18		
6.2 Engagement[26] of affected people in humanitarian and development decision making and standard-setting	6.2.1. #, list of examples of affected people's participation in public decisions that affect their lives, by CO and donor	22	3	19		

Findings

On participation of affected people in humanitarian and development programming (6.1), Save the Children Norway uses a fairly wide range of mechanisms to inform and generate participation of affected people (6.1.2). Evidence of affected people's participation in actual project decisions was rarer, and generally focused on needs assessments to inform project design, or inputs from students or teachers in pre-determined structures or outputs, such as feedback mechanisms or codes of conduct.

Examples of engagement of affected people in public decisions (6.2) were more substantive. The Norad 2021 report highlights two examples of child-authored Universal Periodic Review (UPR) supplementary reports (Nepal, South Sudan). Some partners also conveyed children's voices to decision makers, such

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[24] Participation: "the involvement of crisis-affected people in one or more phases of a humanitarian project or programme: assessment, design, implementation, monitoring or evaluation" (ALNAP).
What participation is not as per ALNAP: "activities that are carried out in exchange for a salary or 'in kind' payment are considered to be employment rather than participation because the population itself is not involved in decision-making processes and the humanitarian organisation retains power." (ALNAP)
(Evidence simply refers to documentation, including reporting. Mention by an interview respondent is not adequate.)
[25] Mechanisms and activities: "Efforts, whether one-off or on-going, using project resources to provide relevant information to affected populations, and to document their inputs and feedback."
[26] Engagement: "the processes by which organisations communicate, consult and/or provide for the participation of interested and/or affected stakeholders, ensuring that their concerns, desires, expectations, needs, rights and opportunities are considered in the establishment, implementation and review of the programmes assisting them" (CHS)

as Gazan children's articles in Ma'an News Network's publications, or children's participation in Al Mezan's documentation of human rights violations.

Promising Practices
- The CRG theme uses a wide range of mechanisms to foster participation, such as social accountability mechanisms, and its results include children's participation in decision making, such as in the UNCRC's UPRs.
- Through well-connected structures and activities, Nepal's children's clubs were able to contribute to recommendations to the Government of Nepal for the amendment of the Children's Act 2018, amendment of the National Child Rights policy, formulation of a National Strategic Plan of Action for Children 2021–2030, and the amendment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 2000.

Conclusions
- The consultants were able to find documented examples for each indicator in each award;
- The consultants assigned an amber rating to this component because, although all awards have documented examples of the three indicators, SC Norway's mechanisms tend to focus on participation in public decisions more than in its own project decisions. Furthermore, an absence of definitions and systematic reporting on these indicators suggests that there is room for improvement.

5. Recommendations

Overall: *Build key localisation indicators into MEAL plans.* Select and build into results frameworks and MEAL plans those LPMF indicators most relevant to SC Norway's work and localisation commitments. This is particularly important for Partnerships (strategic partnerships, 1.1.1; joint monitoring, 1.1.2; partner scopes, 1.2.1; partner participation in project decisions, 1.3.1), Coordination (partner engagement in coordination mechanisms, 4.2.1), Policy and Influence (partners participating in donor meetings, 5.1.2); Visibility (partner stories published, 5.2.2), and Participation (affected people's participation in SCN awards, 6.1.1). Integrating such LPMF indicators into SC Norway's projects should yield improved localisation performance and clearer measurements for a midline exercise, perhaps in 2024.

Partnership: *Operationalise strategic partnerships in future project designs.* SCI's partnership procedures include one for identification of strategic partners in COs' strategic plans, such as policy-making bodies or civil society networks able to play key roles in advocacy and coordination. SC Norway should engage with its priority COs to identify strategic partners in relevant thematic areas, and engage these partners in the next rounds of Framework funding proposals. Strategic partner scopes and capacity support should reflect their organisational mandates and sustainability. Strategic partner documentation such as MOUs can be stored under the relevant SOF folders rather than in partner sub-folders.

Partnership: *Reinforce COs' compliance with SCI's Partnership Monitoring procedure.* This procedure has been approved, and yet the consultants found little evidence that COs apply it. Compliance should include annual satisfaction surveys and documented annual lessons learned exercises.

Funding: *Standardise partner indirect and capacity costs in SCN-funded sub-award templates.* SCI Partner Finance Guidelines, attached to partner sub-awards, include a section on indirect costs (section 3). SC Norway should standardise the sub-award budget template for GoN-funded awards, with a line item for indirect costs and description of allowable costs. The list should expand beyond the examples of allowable costs mentioned in the SCI Guidelines (management oversight, finance costs, building costs) to include HR, security, legal fees and any other indirect costs allowed by the donor. SC Norway should also consider encouraging partners to budget for capacity strengthening as an Activity cost, to be used at the partner's discretion.

Funding: *Consider including organisational costs in budget templates.* Indirect costs are still project-related costs. To better reflect the spirit of localisation and partner-led development, SC Norway should also invest in partners' organisational costs, to help them survive beyond the project timeframe. Organisational costs help partners invest and grow, and can include marketing and fundraising costs, public relations, legal and liability costs, investment in infrastructure such as IT systems, etc. Some donors, such as USAID, have adopted a *de minimis* rate for partner overheads.

Funding: *Develop guidance for partner engagement in funding decisions.* This should include involvement of partners in development of budgets and amendments, as well as joint review of partner financial reports, including any partner comments or requests regarding funding.

Capacity: *Reinforce messaging regarding capacity support beyond the project focus.* SC Norway should do more to communicate its comprehensive approach to capacity strengthening and OD support in all contexts (humanitarian and development), including areas such as effective networking and sustainable fundraising strategies.

Capacity: *Make greater use of in-country sources of capacity strengthening for the delivery of capacity strengthening support to partners.* These might include local providers (such as Al Majmouaa) or capacity building support available through clusters and consortia. One example of such an approach is the Nigerian INGO Forum's Partnership and Local Response Capacity (PLRCAP) Initiative, in which Save the Children participates.

Coordination: *Make support for partner engagement in coordination mechanisms a standard of project design and partner budgets.* Improved localisation in coordination mechanisms should be a priority for SCN. This requires increased local leadership support to partners and networks in all contexts with adequate financial and technical support, as well as improved and systematic reporting from partners on membership and participation in coordination structures, and leadership support from SCN. SC Norway can consider collaboration with the NEAR Network at country and regional levels by establishing strategic engagement of partners on different humanitarian coordination mechanisms and forums to ensure partners can play a leadership role and raise issues pertaining to humanitarian coordination such as access, identification of needs, civil-military liaison, and thematic support.

Policy and Influence: *Support partners with advocacy capacity development and develop joint advocacy agendas with partners for each project.* As much as possible, such advocacy agendas should support and be driven by existing partner advocacy campaigns, such as those of CZOP or the OP3CRC Coalition in Nepal. The +Local Venezuela initiative may offer a template for promotion of local actors in humanitarian response, to influence donors, including for under-funded crises, and improved advocacy on localisation.

Visibility: *Work with media and fundraising units (including GCCU) to develop parameters for partner visibility.* Several staff mentioned the dilemma between featuring partners in communications and highlighting SC Norway's role in its fundraising literature. This is a clear example of where the localisation agenda challenges INGOs' business as usual. SC Norway should urge SC stakeholders to find a way to capitalise on its high-performing partnerships as a strength in its publications and fundraising.

Visibility: *Support partner capacity strengthening in capturing success/impact stories, and include these in CO Annual Reports.* Producing success stories is an important marketing capacity for partners, and providing such capacity support would be consistent with investing in partners' organisational capacities.

Participation: *Build participation mechanisms into SCN award results frameworks and MEAL plans.* To truly foster people's participation in its projects, SC Norway should not only design mechanisms to generate participation, but should also document affected people's inputs and feedback, and track how project management responds to such feedback.

6. Annexes

6.1. List of Sources

6.2. Baseline Calculations

6.3. Methodology

6.4. Notes from SCN Documentation