

# **Assessing Impact**

Lessons from Save the Children  
UK's Global Impact Monitoring  
framework

# Why assess impact?

- To understand the implications of our work
- To be more accountable to those we work with (stakeholders)
- To help demonstrate organisational performance
- To support institutional learning and decision making and improve future work
- To inform policy development and effective advocacy

# Complexities of impact assessment

- Development processes are not linear: change is complex
- Impact is subjective - different perspectives must be accounted for
- Attribution - many different contributing factors to any change
- Scale and diversity of NGO activities

# **SC UK Global Impact Monitoring Framework (G.I.M.)**

- focus on change and processes leading to change
- simple system built upon existing mechanisms
- inclusive process involving external stakeholders
- identification of general dimensions of change to enable analysis and comparison

# 5 Common Dimensions of Change of SC UK Work

- **Changes in the lives of children and young people**

Which **rights** are being better fulfilled? Which rights are no longer being violated?

- **Changes in policies and practice affecting children and young people's rights**

Duty bearers are more accountable for the fulfilment, protection and respect of children's and young people's rights. Policies are developed and implemented & the attitudes of duty bearers take into account the best interests and rights of the child.

- **Changes in children's and young people's participation and active citizenship**

Children and young people **claim their rights** or are supported to do so. Spaces and opportunities exist which allow participation and the exercise of citizenship by children's groups and others working for the fulfilment of child rights.

- **Changes in equity and non-discrimination of children and young people**

In policies, programmes, services and communities, are the most marginalised children reached?

- **Changes in civil society and communities capacity to support children's rights**

Do networks, coalitions and/or movements add value to the work of their participants? Do they mobilise greater forces for change in children and young people's lives?

## **Lessons learned: Measurement**

- Quality of evidence varied
- Involving others is critical, but avoiding bias is difficult
- Unfocused objectives and lack of milestones hamper assessment
- Assessing advocacy particularly challenging (long term, multiple influences, need to monitor policy influence + implementation)

# **Lessons learned: Management**

- Purpose of reporting: tensions between impact assessment and management reporting
- Resources: time and labour intensive.  
Require a different set of skills from NGO staff?

## **Lessons learned: Accountability**

- Significant engagement of stakeholders in GIM processes (e.g. Bangladesh). How can we build upon this and ensure it feeds into future decision making?
- Institutional donors (e.g. DFID) accepted GIM as reporting mechanism for Programme Partnership Agreement.

# **Towards balancing Measurement, Management & Accountability (1)**

- Need to practically combine ‘scientific’ and ‘interpretative’ approaches (mixed methods)
- Need to engage in policy and budget monitoring [implications for who we work with - civil society monitoring role?]
- Frameworks useless without a culture of openness, trust and learning, and genuine partnership.

# **Towards balancing Measurement, Management & Accountability (2)**

- Challenge 1: Can we as a sector establish relationships of openness and trust despite imbalances in power?
- Challenge 2: can we as a sector give up the ‘fantasy of total control’ and work towards more ‘intelligent accountability’?