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## CHAPTER 5 UNICEF'S SUPPORT TO THE PROCESSES OF CHANGE

This chapter attempts to summarize the role that UNICEF is playing in support of the processes of change, the variety of instruments and techniques that are being utilized, and how UNICEF has changed the organization and style of its work to meet the demands of the rights-based approach to programming. It also deals with the level and kind of interaction with TACRO and Headquarters, as well as with other parts of the UN system. Finally, there is an attempt to define what are the specific factors that have made UNICEF successful in supporting national change processes in Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela.

In the course of the visits to the three countries, these issues were frequently raised with national counterparts and allies, as well as with UNICEF's own staff. Since the study focuses on successful interventions for the purpose of identifying work of excellence and good practices, it is only to be expected that the discussion circled around the most positive characteristics of the organization. The summary in this chapter may therefore not give an entirely balanced picture of UNICEF.

### *5.1 The Role of UNICEF*

UNICEF plays a multiplicity of roles adapting its intervention strategies to the particular timing and circumstances in each country and process. The "name of the game" is precisely to identify opportunities and define the most appropriate role and action in each instance.

Some of the roles frequently played by UNICEF can be described as follows:

UNICEF raises public awareness with respect to child rights and influences public opinion. It promotes national dialogue on child rights and places important issues on the agenda.

As a UN organization with a mandate to promote human rights, UNICEF is in a position to denounce violations and denials of child rights, also when and where this may meet with resistance from the government or other sectors; in fact it is an obligation of UNICEF to do so.

UNICEF initiates, promotes and supports processes of change and gives moral support to key actors and agents of change. The organization is in a position to mobilize national actors, also at the highest political level. It motivates, encourages and supports the change of legislation, the reformulation of public policy and the reform of national institutions.

UNICEF contributes to the analysis of structural causes of problems affecting children and

youth, supports the production of new knowledge, develops new strategies and introduces innovative models. It monitors progress and evaluates results.

UNICEF is a dialogue partner of the government and civil society and serves as an intermediary between the two. It acts at the national, intermediate and local levels and stimulates interaction among those levels. It incorporates a variety of actors into the national processes, building consensus and commitment.

## **5.2 *Instruments Utilized to Support the Process of Change***

UNICEF utilizes a variety of instruments and techniques to develop new initiatives and support change processes. There is no standard procedure, but rather a need to adapt the performance to the specific circumstances. Some of the modalities are the following:

- Inviting national key actors to actively participate in the elaboration of the Situation Analysis, the discussion of the Country Program, the Mid-term Review and the Annual Plans. This helps promote understanding, learning, transparency and coordination.
- Organizing encounters, debates and public forums on key topics with broad participation of important actors on the national scene.
- Undertaking advocacy vis-a-vis the Government and the Legislative Assembly, as well as the public and private sectors at crucial moments.
- Identifying and contracting national or international expertise to provide the specific technical assistance needed at a particular moment; inviting national actors to study visits in other countries that have gone through similar processes; promoting horizontal cooperation among countries going through similar processes.
- Sponsoring meetings of specific professional groups, whose acceptance and support is decisive for the process of change.
- Supporting the training of staff in key national institutions to prepare them for the necessary changes.
- Developing, testing and demonstrating new solutions and innovative programs at the local level with the intention of replicating them on a larger scale.
- Strengthening community-based organizations that deliver services to children and adolescents.

- With respect to NGOs:
  - providing opportunities and involving NGOs in national processes;
  - supporting their organizational development;
  - strengthening networks among NGOs working with child rights;
  - giving technical and financial support for their production of information material.
- Establishing and maintaining fruitful long-term relations with the media. Encouraging coverage on topics related to children and adolescents by giving prestigious awards to journalists for outstanding contributions.
- Serving as a knowledge center; and producing and disseminating information on different topics to a variety of audiences.

### **5.3 *Change of Methodology***

Together with national partners UNICEF country offices work in an increasingly systematic way to identify rights-based approaches to complex problems affecting children and adolescents. The strategic reorientation aims at a more integrated and intersectoral approach, emphasis on equity and universal access, the empowerment of communities and families to take effective action, making the poor key actors in their own development, and granting opportunities to children and adolescents to express their opinions. The phenomenon of social and economic exclusion and the processes that perpetuate various forms of inequality, discrimination and exploitation deserve profound analysis. Historic, economic and deep-rooted cultural factors affecting the outcome of policies and programs need to be thoroughly understood. All this will serve as a basis for the advocacy for a more progressive social policy and more resources dedicated to fulfill children's rights.

Programming in the context of rights requires a more profound Situation Analysis. It must focus not only on deficiencies and the problem areas, but also on underlying structural factors and linkages between the cultural, legislative and judicial aspects related to child rights. Values, attitudes and practices need to be taken into account. It is no longer sufficient to analyze sectoral policies – the focus must now be on the broader spectrum of macro policies and their effects on child rights. It is necessary to examine whether there is really equal opportunity, equity and access for all children and to identify any obstacles that may exist for certain groups or individuals. The economic and human resources allocated to children and adolescents should be assessed and compared over time.

The holistic approach of the Convention emphasizes a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral perspective with respect to policies and programs. The idea is to focus on the whole child and to promote all of his or her rights. Therefore, it is essential to foster increasing synergy among the various sectors and prevent fragmented interventions.

For UNICEF the new approach implies moving beyond the program-by-program approach. It requires the application of a systemic intersectoral approach involving the public and private sector, the academic sector and civil society. It demands interaction and linkages between the national, regional and local levels and feedback in both directions.

The rights approach to programming requires a long-term perspective because it supports processes that need much longer to mature than programs guided by the traditional approach. The processes are often slow; they are also of greater scale; and they are highly political. What is more, UNICEF is just one of several actors in the process and does not control the processes.

Programming from a rights perspective also calls for a better indicators that reflect the complex and multi-dimensional processes. Data collection needs to be disaggregated by gender, type of household, geographical area, etc., to allow for a specific analysis of the various sub-groups.

Leaving the old approach behind also means cutting off the relationships with some counterparts and the funding to their programs. This is often painful and may cause frustration and bad feelings. In its new role, UNICEF is consulted more to give advice on policy issues and provide technical expertise than to give financial support to programs and actions.

With the new approach UNICEF must broaden the range of counterparts, transcending “the exclusive counterpart relation” with one main counterpart, and search for a “larger umbrella” in the government. It must find spaces that allow working with both the government and civil society. Also in terms of NGOs UNICEF should seek partnerships and broad alliances. Success will depend to a great extent on the construction and maintenance of effective partnerships among a wide range of allies sharing the same values and perspectives.

#### ***5.4 Changes in Organization and Staff Profile***

The transition to the rights approach places new demands on leadership and staff. The new agenda calls for some new skills, experiences and work methods. Based on discussions with UNICEF staff in Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela, the following observations and opinions were presented.

UNICEF offices must become “learning organizations” and centers of excellence oriented towards social policy research in a wide sense. The generation, systematization and use of knowledge are essential conditions that require the continued transformation of the workplace into a knowledge center. Time and space must be given for thorough discussions and analysis— this is a central part of the learning process.

The organization of the workplace must become more horizontal and the level of interaction, communication and coordination among the staff increase. All staff needs to develop an intersectoral vision. It is time to leave vertical compartments and sectoral divisions behind and start working in teams to ensure a multi-sectoral, coherent and coordinated approach. The sharing of perspectives will enable people to see the situation they are dealing with in a more holistic fashion. Drawing on the knowledge and experience of several team members with different backgrounds will enrich all the participants and lead to better and more sustainable results.

The academic profile of the staff will probably shift towards political and social sciences and communication, although there will still be need for specialists in areas such as health and education. The transition to a rights approach requires staff that is trained in human rights, including child rights.

UNICEF offices will require professionals capable of conducting complex processes. The staff will need to develop superior managerial and administrative skills. Considerable autonomy, responsibility and flexibility must be given to individual staff members to pursue formal activities, as well as personal initiatives.

A team-based organization that promotes the virtues of trust and diversity cannot function with a traditional top-down management structure. Leadership has to take on a different style and meaning. Decision-making in a team-based organization is participatory. Managers must learn to trust the ability of the team to take decisions. When the responsibility for achieving results is entrusted to cross-functional teams, the manager is no longer the leader of an hierarchic structure but a facilitator and a coach whose main concern it is to have the best qualified staff and to have them produce the best possible results. Perhaps the most important asset for a leader is a clear institutional vision to guide the long-term development of the work and an ability to inspire and lead the team in that direction. Negotiating skills and team building are other important aspects of leadership.

The transformation that UNICEF is going through in its programming and within its own organization will give rise to profound change that will not go unnoticed. Change creates tensions and conflicts; it may be stressful and traumatic. Leading an organization through change requires a clear institutional vision. The change process must be transparent and managed with tact, trust and diplomacy. The manager must have a superior ability to negotiate and the staff must be prepared to make adjustments and assume new challenges.

Finally, there is an increasing awareness within UNICEF that the moral authority of the organization as an advocate for children's rights has validity only to the extent that the organization itself works on the basis of an internal rights culture. With the recognition of human rights at the core of the organization's work, UNICEF must also apply those principles inside its own structure. In their personal lives and daily work managers and staff of UNICEF must abide by the fundamental principles of human rights, the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual, the tolerance for diversity, participation, openness, trust and accountability.

### **5.5 *Level of Support and Interaction with TACRO and Headquarters***

On the whole, the three offices are perceived by the staff as quite autonomous and independent of Headquarters and TACRO. Within the confines of the established policy framework, each office is free to establish priorities, design country programs and choose their work methodology. The financial and administrative procedures are, on the other hand, strictly guided by directives from Headquarters.

The role of TACRO in relation to the country office is that of an advisor in matters of substance and methodology. In past years, TACRO has given significant support to UNICEF in Costa Rica and Venezuela with respect to the conceptualization of the doctrine of integral protection and the child rights focus, and specifically to the process of legislative change by making highly qualified staff and external consultants available at crucial moments, by organizing study visits etc. Brazil has played a special role in this respect thanks to the early date of its own legislative reform and the availability of skillful advisors. It is said that the Brazilian "Statute" has influenced new child legislation in as many as fifteen countries in the region.

With Headquarters there has been less interaction on substantive issues, but more communication with respect to financial and administrative matters.

### **5.6 *Coordination with Other Bodies of the UN System***

In the context of the current UN Reform consensus is progressively emerging among UN country teams on the convergence between the human rights and development mandates of the various agencies. This has helped define the context in which the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is evolving and the Common Country Assessment (CCA) to which it is linked.<sup>19</sup> The question is, how do the reform efforts translate into practical reality at the country level?

In the three countries visited, the inter-agency coordination within the UN system appears to be rather limited over and beyond the elaboration of the CCA. In the opinion of UNICEF is that -with few exceptions- the understanding and acceptance of the rights approach on the part of the other agencies are limited. The level of agency coordination depends more on the personal relations between the representatives and staff than on institutional needs.

### **5.7 *UNICEF's Role – A Delicate Balancing Act***

As a rule, governments are sensitive to external pressure. In many cases, politicians do not want to acknowledge that their country would need assistance or advice from an international organization – or any country either, for that matter. Resistance, political frustration and overreaction are easily provoked when external actors press for change, express viewpoints or become involved in what is considered internal affairs.

Preventing such reactions and coming to terms with resistance require discretion, diplomacy and sensitivity and the capacity to tread the fine line between being proactive, on one hand, and respecting the dynamics of the national processes, on the other. UNICEF must respect that countries will want to be in charge of their own processes and proceed at their own pace. UNICEF's role should be discretely supportive.

In other words, UNICEF's role is to support national processes, but not to lead them. UNICEF should be careful not to substitute national actors, but to let them take the lead in the change process. This way national ownership is strengthened, and although processes may advance more slowly, the results will be more sustainable.

UNICEF has to work in a way that does not compromise its autonomy, always guarding a healthy distance and independence.

This is admittedly all quite a difficult balancing act that UNICEF has to manage.

### **5.8 *What Makes UNICEF Successful***

What are the specific factors that have made UNICEF successful in supporting national change processes in Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela? In this final section of the chapter there will be an attempt to answer this question which was usually asked towards the end of the interviews with national partners and allies of UNICEF.

- UNICEF has a serious commitment with children and adolescents, a reputation for standing on their side. It enjoys credibility, confidence and respect based on its reputation for moral leadership. It is appreciated for its flexibility and responsiveness to new initiatives and demands.
- UNICEF has solid knowledge and long experience and is perceived as a reliable source of information and technical support. The organization is well known and its name has a very positive connotation among the public.
- UNICEF is neutral and apolitical. It is in a position to work with governments, as well as the civil society, sometimes serving as an intermediary between the two.
- UNICEF is appreciated for the high professional competence and personal standards of the staff in the three countries visited.

UNICEF Brazil deserves special mentioning because of its very long history and active presence in the country. The organization is extremely well known among the public at large and enjoys a particularly positive public image. Its successful communication strategy, the far-flung network of like-minded partners cultivated over a long period of time and the dedication and competence of its staff are among UNICEF's strengths.

In view of UNICEF's limited budget, it is not first and foremost the financial contributions, but the prestige and technical support that UNICEF can offer, that make it an attractive partner in the three middle income countries included in this study.

## CHAPTER 6      LESSONS LEARNED

There are a variety of lessons to be learned from working with the rights approach. The following lessons are based on the experiences in the three countries visited. Some are general, others more specific in nature.

### *6.1 With Regard to the External Context*

#### 6.1.1 Acting in the political arena

To have maximum impact on national change processes UNICEF must work at high political levels. UNICEF should however always guard a distance not be too closely associated with the government in power or any other political party for that matter in order to keep all options open.

#### 6.1.2 Change of government

When there is a change of government before a new program is firmly established and institutionalized, there is always an additional risk of failure, because of the change of policies, decision-makers and professionals that usually take place on such occasions.

### *With Regard to the Process of Change*

#### 6.2.1 The sequence of the reform process

Although there is no pre-determined order of the reform process, the logical sequence may be illustrated as follows:

CRC (arrow to right) Legal Reform (arrow to right) Policy Framework (arrow to right) Institutional Reform  
 (arrow to right) Institutional Development/Training of Staff (arrow to right) Implementation of New  
 Social Policies (arrow to right) Child Rights Respected/Improved Conditions for Children

*(I would like to ask the editor to please help me make a good illustration of the above with arrows illustrating this flow and line of thought).*

This does not mean that the sequential order is as simple and straightforward as the illustration indicates. Each one of the processes will last for a long period of time. Different parts of the reform process will go on simultaneously. The processes will change pace, retrocede, come to a halt, start over again etc. They will never be fully completed – all of them are ongoing processes or at least they will start moving again, when needs arise. Increasing budgetary resources for children will be required to have the processes continue to move forward.

Social mobilization and advocacy must be ongoing activities throughout the process. Also monitoring of the progress is a constant task. Finally, assessment of the impact on the protection and fulfillment of child rights must to be made periodically. However, there should be awareness of the fact that evaluation of the long-term impact can only be undertaken after several years, or even a decade or two. It is important that civil society play an important part in all these activities.

### 6.2.2 Legal reform as a first step towards other changes

Reform of the child legislation is usually seen as a first step towards adjusting the national policy framework to the Convention. Experience shows that legal reform indeed leads to changes in important areas, such as the establishment of new frameworks for more adequate policies and institutional approaches, and changing attitudes and behavior towards child rights. At the same time, legal reform effectively supports the consolidation of democratic governance and the rule of law.

Ten years after the passing of the new child legislation, Brazil has witnessed the following significant changes<sup>20</sup>:

- Children and adolescents have procedural rights in the juvenile justice system.
- Paternalistic approaches are giving way to the entitlement of children and adolescents to claim rights.
- A new division of responsibility between the national, state and local levels, and between the State and civil society has been defined.
- Child Rights Councils have been established at the three levels of government and Guardianship Councils are now functioning at the municipal level in about half of Brazil's 5,500 municipalities. By means of participation in the councils, citizens can now start to exert certain control over public policies and the use of public funds.
- New institutions and programs for children, adolescents and families are being created.
- The discretionary power of adults over children and adolescents is being reduced; the doctrine of the "irregular situation" is being replaced by a rights approach.

The experience in Brazil demonstrates that the adaptation of the legal framework to the Convention is indeed a very significant step which sets other processes in motion. It also shows that it takes a long time to introduce and implement the consequential policy

changes and indicates that a complete transition to a rights approach will take decades involving profound changes not only of policies and practices, but also of values and attitudes.

### 6.2.3 Social policies

Social policies are starting to change and in all three countries there is evidence that people are ready for a change of social policies towards children, policies that reflect child rights. It is encouraging to note that the majority of the people working with children in the old institutions appear to welcome new social policies and are prepared to change their values, attitudes and actions. Changing social policies are well received by large segments of the population and are gradually changing people's vision. The old paradigm is definitely giving way to the new child rights vision, although progress is gradual, uneven and sometimes slow.

The sometimes slow pace of progress is not surprising considering that the transition child implies profound changes of values and principles of the entire society, different relations between people and sectors in society, a greater sense of solidarity, the restoration of public space and the allocation of public resources.

#### Eradication of child labor

As the efforts to combat child labor have shown, it is essential to go beyond a simple intervention in the area of employment of children and address the complex causal factors behind the phenomenon. Success has only been possible when a series of comprehensive policies and complementary programs have been implemented in a coordinated fashion promoting a clear legal framework, a quality system of education, advocacy and awareness campaigns, incentives for families, mechanisms for monitoring and inspection, and the allocation of sufficient resources.

### 6.2.4 Institutional development

Legal, policy or institutional reform requires massive training of personnel if desired changes are to be produced. All institutions involved in policy making or program implementation at the central, regional and local level must be considered and all categories of staff included. It is not only a question of training but -just as important- a change of values and attitudes because often the very "mission" of the institution will undergo profound change.

### 6.2.5 Effectiveness and sustainability

Experience shows that intersectoral work is more effective and produces more sustainable results than sectoral work programs. Working in teams brings the benefit of a more holistic analysis and a more integrated approach. Besides, there is more transparency and more social control. Working collectively with several partners in the host country also enhances effectiveness and sustainability.

## 6.3 *With Regard to Counterparts and Partners*

### 6.3.1 Not to substitute counterparts

It is important that the roles of UNICEF, its counterparts and partners be well defined, explained to all concerned and respected to avoid confusion and unclear responsibilities.

UNICEF's role is not to implement but to support programs and activities executed and coordinated by national counterparts. This way UNICEF can concentrate on its two essential functions:

- To support the government and civil society in the area of child and adolescent rights and to help strengthen their technical and organizational capacity;
- To monitor the protection, respect and fulfillment of child and adolescent rights - which is part of UNICEF's mandate at the national and global levels.

### 6.3.2 Intersectoral networks as counterparts

In light of the intersectoral and multidimensional nature of the new programs, having one ministry or institution as the counterpart is sometimes too narrow a solution. In some cases it is preferable to create an intersectoral network to act as the UNICEF counterpart, as is the case with the National Council for Child and Adolescent Rights in Costa Rica.

### 6.3.3 Universities as strategic allies

Universities can be very strategic allies of UNICEF because they are autonomous public entities recognized as non-political institutions with a high degree of independence,

legitimacy and prestige. They tend not to be influenced by political change. They are therefore well placed to undertake independent evaluations of programs where also the performance of the government and its political and social institutions is critically analyzed and assessed. Moreover, universities are among the few institutions that are capable of providing technical assistance on complex problems.

Universities also play an important role at the local level, developing new methodologies, and strengthening local institutions, such as the new child rights and guardianship councils.

## **6.4 *With Regard to Program Approaches***

### **6.4.1 Using the events of the program cycle for advocacy**

Opening up the main events of the program cycle to counterparts and allies has proven an effective strategy to turn this originally internal UNICEF procedure into a broader learning process. This helps create ownership, responsibility and commitment among national partners. Such an approach also promotes partnership, transparency and accountability.

Using the official language of the country – rather than English – for documentation and reports will make the material much more accessible and useful for national partners.

### **6.4.2 Placing sensitive issues on the political agenda**

UNICEF is sometimes the only actor on the national scene that is in a position to place sensitive issues on the political agenda and to build broad consensus and commitment. It is important that UNICEF make use of such opportunities whenever the moment is considered right. In fact it is a moral obligation of UNICEF.

Examples of such issues are: the sexual exploitation of children (governments may not wish to disturb the important tourist business); the eradication of child labor (this may meet with resistance from politically influential sectors which depend on cheap child labor); and fair treatment of juveniles in conflict with the law (important segments of society may request tough treatment of “delinquents”).

### **6.4.3 Horizontal cooperation**

It has proven an effective strategy to invite leading actors from one country to visit and exchange experience with professionals in other countries in the region to discover first-hand solutions that have been successful there.

#### 6.4.4 Need to focus on adolescents

While Brazil and Venezuela have active and well-organized children's movements, there are no significant youth movements in any one of the three countries. Moreover, the debate on adolescents and areas of interest to this age group is virtually non-existent. More attention needs to be paid to this crucial age group.

#### 6.4.5 Rights in service

Child rights implies not only right of children and adolescents to services but also that they be treated with respect "in service", i.e. when they are at school, in the community or meet the justice system. There are great deficiencies in this respect due to an authoritarian style of leadership and a degrading treatment of young people by adults. Therefore, leaders and staff of institutions working with children and adolescents need to be trained and have opportunities to discuss the new style of work characterized by dialogue and respect for the individual.

#### 6.4.6 Limiting the legal jargon in UNICEF's vocabulary

The excessive use of legal vocabulary when discussing the rights focus tends to create resistance among people with a non-legal background within and outside UNICEF. Effort should be made to explain the child rights focus with words that are familiar to professionals trained in the social sciences and to non-academic personnel.

### 6.5 *With Regard to Interventions at the Local Level*

#### 6.5.1 Decentralization to the municipal level

It is in the community that children and adolescents should be attended to, because that is where they spend their lives. Decentralized decision-making and the development of community services which have been promoted by UNICEF for years. Since these concepts are now increasingly recognized and promoted by public authorities it is an opportune moment for UNICEF to make continued efforts in this area. Just as at the national level, an intersectoral approach must be applied at the local level with full integration among all actors and programs.

Decentralization and the creation of local systems imply a profound cultural change in most

parts of Latin America where centralized systems of government have been the rule. Therefore, it will take time and patience to make them work.

### 6.5.2 Local projects. Pilot projects.

Local projects must have an institutional base, if they are to survive. If they subsist only with support of UNICEF, they are not replicable and sustainable. (This is an old truth, but needs to be repeated because there are still some examples of the latter kind).

The justification for UNICEF to support pilot projects is that of developing, testing and validating new models of intervention. These pilot projects are often successful - the challenge is to have them accepted as a model for expansion to larger areas, or even reproduced nationwide - and to have them work well without the intensive support usually granted to pilot projects.

### 6.5.3 Local Protection Systems

The local level is the most important part of a national system of protection, because this is where children and adolescents spend their lives and consequently where they need to be protected. Strengthening the role and responsibility of the municipalities in terms of social policies and encouraging the involvement of civil society in providing services and exercising social audit will enhance the protection of child rights.

Child Rights Councils and Guardianship Councils have the best chance of success in municipalities where there is a progressive political party in power, a mayor who has understood the advantages of working with local councils and where civil society is well organized. Demonstrating the effectiveness of the councils is the most powerful tool of persuasion to other communities to set up such councils.

### 6.5.4 Linkages between the local level and national policies

Local projects serve the purpose of demonstrating innovative approaches and solutions to problems that exist on a national scale. For UNICEF it is important to work at the two levels and to promote the linkages between local projects and national policies.

## 6.6 *With Regard to the Relations with the Private Sector*

### 6.6.1 Mobilizing the private sector

It is abundantly clear that without development and peace, trade and investment cannot occur and business will not grow. In today's globalized world economic power and social responsibility cannot be separated. With these statements the Secretary-General proposed the Global Compact between the UN and the world business community in 1999: The Compact asks the international business community to advocate for a stronger UN. It asks individual businesses to protect human rights within their sphere of influence, support the abolition of child labor and to take other such steps that also make good business sense.<sup>21</sup>

UNICEF has the most extensive corporate involvement of any UN agency (37 countries). It is only natural that the organization so far has looked for partners in business mainly in industrialized countries. However, it may not necessarily be so. The experience in Brazil shows that it is possible to make strategic alliances with the private sector also in developing economies. It may be just because corporations and businesses in these countries live so close to the problems of children and youth and are affected by them, that they are prepared to commit themselves to social causes. A case in point is the Abrinq Foundation in Brazil (see section 4.9).

## 6.6.2 Resource mobilization for the promotion of child rights

Influencing public policies is not as saleable as direct action, for example traditional health and education programs. UNICEF has lost a market of direct contributions to NGOs that still carry out work of a more traditional kind. It is therefore important that UNICEF now develop the concepts, find the arguments and develop modalities to persuade the public to support its new program approach.

## 6.7 *With Regard to the Media and the Distribution of Information*

### 6.7.1 Public media

Making alliances with the public media is crucial for UNICEF because they can be very positive and powerful tools for social mobilization. ANDI, Brazil, is a good example of a fruitful relationship.

### 6.7.2 Distribution of publications

It may be particularly effective to distribute reports and publications to areas outside the big

cities. In rural areas and towns, where the supply of information is limited, publications tend to be read more widely and have greater impact than in the big cities with its information overflow.

### ***With Regard to UNICEF's Management System***

#### **6.8.1 The strategic planning system**

For long term, process-oriented programs UNICEF's strategic planning system may not be the most appropriate. The structure is too rigid for such programs where it is often not possible to establish time-frames or define expected results ahead of time. Rather than a blue-print, the strategy is plan as you go and seize opportunities as they arise. Sometimes the process comes to a halt and UNICEF has to wait. At other times the process picks up and substantial input of funds and human resources are required with short notice.

Another problem is that while the UNICEF planning system devised is on a one-year basis, these processes often stretch over several years and do not always show results in just a year's time. If the country offices are required to show results for such short time spans, there is a risk that they will hesitate to use a process-oriented approach and return to traditional program support.

#### **6.8.2 Emergency assistance as a lever for structural change**

An emergency program may provide unique opportunities to change obsolete structures in society and to create new and more equitable models of development. This is a window of opportunity that should not be missed. Venezuela after the emergency situation caused by the inundation in December 1999 is a case in point.

The problem is that in order to mobilize emergency from the international donor community, at an early stage UNICEF offices have to define what goods or services are needed. The support received in due course will then be tied to the delivery of the defined specific goods and services, while by this time the priority needs may have shifted. It would be a great advantage if donors would agree to give general contributions trusting the ability of the local UNICEF office to determine how to best use the funds. This way, emergency programs could be used as a lever for structural change.

### **6.9 *With Regard to the Capacity of the Country Offices***

#### **6.9.1 Capacity for analysis and reflection**

The transition to the new approach requires an enhanced ability to analyze and develop new concepts and to adapt them to the political, economic, social and cultural reality of the country. The staff needs to have theoretical knowledge and practical ability and to combine the two. Documenting, systematizing and analyzing experiences, developing theoretical frameworks, constructing innovative models and unconventional solutions are all important parts of the work of the UNICEF staff.

Time and space must be allowed for exercises that will promote learning at all levels of the organization.

## **CHAPTER 7            TOWARDS CITIZENSHIP FOR CHILDREN – THE ROAD AHEAD**

In the years ahead the construction of citizenship for children inspired by the principles of the Convention is the fundamental objective of UNICEF and constitutes the basic framework within which the organization operates. The principle of citizenship is an integral part of a socially inclusive developmental model where justice, equity and the exercise of rights constitute central values.<sup>22</sup>

This approach will, out of necessity, include many different tasks and areas of work and will have to be adapted to each specific country. Some lines of action that deserve high priority in the coming years on UNICEF's agenda are brought up in this final chapter.

### **7.1     *Ensure National Commitment to the Convention***

In all countries, whatever the level of development, it will be a central task for UNICEF to ensure that the political leadership remains committed to implementing the letter and spirit of the Convention and to allocating the resources required to implement universal public policies for children and adolescents. Related to this challenge is that of ensuring that the institutions called for by the CRC and the new national laws are indeed established and have the capacity and the resources to defend children's rights. This involves work not only with national and local authorities, but also with families, communities, and civil society in general to build a culture of rights.

### **7.2     *Support Progressive Social Policies***

In an era of globalization, social and economic spheres are becoming increasingly interdependent. There is now broad consensus among policy makers that sustainable development requires not only economic growth but also human development. This renewed emphasis on human capital formation means that effective social policies are necessary prerequisites for successful participation in the global economy.

UNICEF could and should mobilize support for more progressive social policies based on equity and universality and advocate for increased social expenditure, both of which are imperative if countries are to avoid being caught in a downward spiral of poor human development and insufficient economic growth.

### **7.3 *Create Awareness of Rights and How to Demand Them***

The empowerment of people as possessors of rights is an essential part of the process to guarantee their fulfillment.

One of the greatest challenges now is perhaps to make the public aware of their legal rights and those of the children, and of the mechanisms for demanding these rights. People must learn and understand that they have rights, that they are entitled to services and that they are not asking for favors. This requires a change in attitude and practices. Therefore social mobilization and social communication must continue as priorities for UNICEF.

To have people actively demand their rights and denounce denials and violations will require well informed, organized and confident citizens who are prepared to make use of the mechanisms created for the purpose. It also requires a change of institutional culture whereby the individual citizens or their organizations are received by the proper authorities and treated with respect.

#### ***Adapt the Supply of Services to the Demand***

Social policies for children were traditionally conceived in terms of service supply which did not necessarily respond to the demand. An informed, organized and explicitly expressed demand will help develop a more adequate supply of services responding to the specific needs of children and their families. This mechanism will work particularly well at the local level.

### **7.5 *The Empowerment of Adolescents and Children***

The Convention recognizes an active role for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents should be taught what rights and obligations they have and learn to demand their rights, should they not be granted. This means that children should have opportunities to express their opinions and be listened to when national policies are defined and local programs designed.

This is far from reality today. It appears that children and adolescents rarely have an opportunity to influence decisions that affect them in the family, the school or the community. This may have to do with the traditional and authoritarian style of parenting, education and management of community affairs that still prevails. This area needs continued attention.

### **7.6 *Strengthening the Decentralization Process***

Another important area of work for UNICEF is to support the decentralization process and the development of local service capacity, so that children and adolescents can be attended to in their own community. Of particular significance is the development of a variety of socio-educational measures based in the community for adolescents in conflict with the law. Developing local services should be a shared responsibility between public institutions and civil society.

### **7.7 *Strengthening the Systems of Rights Guarantees***

Strengthen the systems of rights guarantees will be another future priority. Among other things, this will require training of the main actors: Prosecutors, child and youth judges, the public defense, lawyers, and members of the guardianship councils and rights councils, among others. Also teachers, youth leaders and the parents, not the least, need to be trained.

The local Guardianship Councils, which are provided for in the Convention and in national child legislations, will have a key role to play in the protection of child rights. If councils are formed and can be made to work as intended, it would be a giant step forward in the protection of child rights. So far, only a limited number of councils have been formed. Therefore, UNICEF should make it one of its priorities to support the formation of new councils, the elaboration of educational modules and the training of new council members.

Today there is a lot of confusion about the role of the two kinds of councils: Rights Councils and Guardianship Councils. The representatives of civil society, in particular, appear to lack a clear understanding of the mandate of the respective councils, and the role and functions of the civil society representatives.

### **7.8 *Monitoring of Child and Adolescent Rights***

Overseeing that rights guaranteed by law and reflected in public policies are observed and respected is a shared responsibility between the citizen, the civic organizations and the State. It requires an institutional framework for the monitoring and control of the exercise of public policies and the denouncing of denials or violations of rights.

Public monitoring should primarily be oriented towards the application of laws and public policies, the performance of public and private institutions in relation to the citizens, and social relations between individuals (relations within the family, gender relations; intergenerational relations, labor relations and relations between members of the community).

In a full-fledged system there are many different institutions that have a role to play in

ensuring that child rights are protected and fulfilled. The following can be mentioned: government institutions in charge of public policies, local governments responsible for the implementation of social policies, Guardianship Councils, universities and research institutions monitoring the impact of public policies, the national “ombudsman” institutions, which have a broad based mandate to ensure that citizens receive fair treatment by public institutions locally based “ombudsmen” or defensorías” that promote and defend child rights. As a last resort for the denouncing of denial or violations of rights, there is the justice system.

Also civil society is a guarantor of rights. NGOs created to promote social development and defend human rights are important because of their neutrality, legitimacy and political independence. Civic organizations, such as professional organizations, student associations, labor movements and social community organizations, may find a new role for themselves exercising civil control of public policies. Last but not the least, the public media can promote new images and values related to the culture of rights and also by denouncing omission or inability by the State to fulfill rights guaranteed by law.

### ***7.9 Monitoring and Evaluation. The Need to Identify New Indicators***

For years UNICEF country offices in collaboration with national institutions of statistics and social research institutions have developed, maintained and improved data-bases of indicators related to child development. Until recently, most indicators have been quantitative and related principally to survival, health and education.

With the transitions that are taking place in the world, the political, economic and social situation has changed to such an extent that these indicators are no longer sufficient. They only reflect part of the reality in which children live and the new complex phenomena that they are facing. New indicators that will better reflect new areas of intervention, attitudes and practices, participatory processes and issues of inequality are urgently needed. Furthermore, the data need to be further disaggregated by gender, type of household and geographical area etc. in order to assess the situation of various sub-groups.

In the LAC region there is a certain lack of essential data. Neither the actual level of coverage, nor the level of unsatisfied needs, is entirely known. A more sophisticated analytical framework needs to be developed and some new indicators identified which are directly or indirectly related to the observance or non-observance of rights. In the past, quantitative data have usually been perceived as more reliable than qualitative data. Qualitative methods are however generally more appropriate for assessing complex situations. The best result will be achieved if quantitative and qualitative methods are combined for the monitoring of the impact of laws and public policies on the situation of children and adolescents.

UNICEF supports work on the development of indicators and the construction of data bases for the monitoring of child rights but results are slow in coming. In 1998, UNICEF

supported a meeting that brought together international experts in development, statistics and human rights to promote the development of methodologies and appropriate indicators.<sup>23</sup> It would seem worthwhile for UNICEF to follow up on this initiative.

### ***7.10 Explain the Rights Approach to the Donor Community***

The strategic reorientation of UNICEF which the transition to a human rights approach implies may not be fully understood by all parts of the international donor community. While a few international development agencies are also adopting a human rights approach to development, others maintain a more traditional approach.

In order to gain acceptance and support from the donor community for the ideas of rights based programming UNICEF should explain and give visibility to this approach by illustrating how it can work in practice and by showing some successful results.

### ***7.11 A Longer-term Guiding Vision***

Working with a rights approach must have a long-term perspective because it implies profound transition not only of the national policy framework, but also of values and attitudes. The work of UNICEF and its allies is guided by the vision of a society where child rights are respected, protected, facilitated and fulfilled and where children are valued citizens.

(Final Version 00/07/01)

- 1 Press release 17 July, 1998: Secretary-General pledges 'Quiet Revolution' in UN and presents reform proposals to the General Assembly.
- 2 See Article 45 of the Convention.
- 3 From Marta Santos Pais: A Human Rights Conceptual Framework for UNICEF.
- 4 From Marta Santos Pais: A Human Rights Conceptual Framework for UNICEF.
- 5 Alison Raphael: Guaranteeing Child Rights in the Southern Cone.
- 6 Burki Shahid, J, Opening Speech at the Second Annual Bank Conference on Development in LAC, Bogotá, Colombia, 1996.
- 7 E. Bustelo and A. Minujin: Evasive Social Policy (unpublished paper).
- 8 Seminar on Public Policy and Children, Costa Rica, July, 1997.
- 9 From Eduardo Bustelo and Alberto Minujin (TACRO): Evasive Social Policy (unpublished paper)
- 10 E. Bustelo, A Minujin: Evasive Social Policy, (unpublished paper).
- 11 Final Report, Meeting of Focal Points, Children's Rights Area, Paipa, Colombia, 1993.
  
- 12 From Marta Santos Pais, A Human Rights Conceptual Framework for UNICEF.
- 13 In the public administration structure in Latin America, the municipality is the local administration unit corresponding to the local government. The municipality is led by a mayor (alcalde), usually elected by popular vote.
- 14 UNICEF, Report on a Seminar on Public Policy and Children, San José, Costa Rica, July 13-18, 1997, p.110.
- 15 Earlier there were projects managed by the regional office for Central America in Guatemala.
- 16 UNICEF, Report on a Seminar on Public Policy and Children, San José, Costa Rica, July, 1997, p. 98.
- 17 Instituto Latinoamericano de las Naciones Unidas para la Prevención del Delito y el Tratamiento del Delincuente, based in San José, Costa Rica.
- 18 E/ICEF/1999/11
- 19 Telephone interview with Antonio Carlos Gomes da Costa, 27 January, 2000.
- 20 June, 2000: Website [www.unglobalcompact/](http://www.unglobalcompact/)
- 21 Public Policy and Children, Report of the Seminar in San José, Costa Rica, July 13-18, 1997, p. 107 (Marta Maurás).
- 22 E/ICEF/1999/11, paragraph. 44.