

Harvesting Outcomes on Societal Level: A Learning Review of results 2017-2019 from five organisations supported by SMC



Out of the ten identified key outcomes, eight are outcomes at national level, one at district level, and one at global level.



1. Front cover of a report published in 2018 by Justapaz and others on conscientious objection in Colombia during the first year with the new recruitment law.
2. The former Cabinet Secretary for Education of Kenya, Amb. Dr. Amina Mohammed, with ICL Africa's CEO Mike Mutungi. Photo: Sheila Mwanja, ICL.
3. Alcohol sachets now banned in Uganda and other countries. Photo: unknown
4. Supreme Court of India. Photo: Subhashish Panigrahi, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)
5. Hafsa Ahmed, a Sustained Dialogue moderator, addresses the UN Security Council on the role of youth in peacebuilding. Photo: Life&Peace Institute

Acknowledgements

This report is not the product of one person's work, but of a collective effort.

I would like to thank all SMC member organisations and their partners who have contributed to this learning review, identifying outcomes and deliberating on their significance and the contributions of different actors. I will mention the respondents, mindful that they might have consulted other colleagues: Nikita Sarah and Tina Mendis from TLMTI, and Allan Ekstedt from TLMS. Juliet Namukasa and Fortunate Wanican of IAS Uganda, and Milward Mwamvani and Kam Koolash at LM HQ. Mike Mutungi, Gibson Mwaita, Esther Nthuku, Monicah Wanjiru and Shadrack Biwot of ICL, and Chelimo Njoroge and Mercy Muriqi at CM in Nairobi. Ayten Birhanie from PDC, and Jody Henderson and Hannah Tsadik of LPI. Martin Nates of Justapaz, and Marci Hernández Martínez at SweFOR.

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Karin Bodin, April 2020

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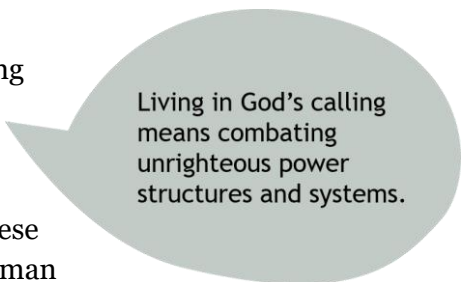
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CM	Children's Mission (Skandinaviska Barnmissionen)
HQ	Headquarters
ICL	I Choose Life
LPI	Life and Peace Institute
LM	Läkarmissionen
MoSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ethiopia)
PDC	Peace and Development Centre
SD	Sustained Dialogue
SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (Kristna fredsrörelsen)
TLMS	The Leprosy Mission Sweden (Lepramissionen Sverige)
TLMTI	The Leprosy Mission Trust India
UN	United Nations


1 Introduction

“Living in God’s calling means discerning and combating unrighteous power structures and systems hostile to life, such as discrimination, inequality and other forms of oppression. God is a God who gives power to the powerless and restores rights to the oppressed.” These very powerful sentences are from SMC’s policy for a human rights perspective.¹ But how does SMC contribute to changing unrighteous power structures and systems?



Living in God’s calling means combating unrighteous power structures and systems.

The purpose of the review is to explore outcomes at societal and/or systems level that SMC, our member organisations and their partners have contributed to, and that have occurred during the period 2017-2019. These outcomes contribute to the first programme goal of SMC's development cooperation programme:²



Programme goal 1: A sustainable, just, peaceful, equal and democratic society in which human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

1.1 Influence on laws and other political decisions, and government agencies’ implementation of the same.

1.2 Changed attitudes and behaviours in society.

1.3 Increased trust and interaction between different groups in society.

Specifically, we searched for outcomes on international, regional, national and sub-national levels, rather than local level.

The entry point of the learning review has been the long-term development work of five cooperating partners, financially supported by SMC through its member organisations, with Sida funding.³ The organisations were selected on the basis of an appreciative approach, as well as an aim to include different contexts and member organisations in the study.

¹ [SMC’s policy for a human rights perspective](#)

² See [SMC’s application to Sida for long-term development cooperation 2017-2021](#). Note that SMC member organisations and their cooperating partners formulate their own goals and theories of change, in line with aid effectiveness, and do not necessarily relate to SMC’s programme goals, while SMC analyses the relevance of the interventions and the programme as a whole with regard to the programme goals.

³ Sida funding for long-term development is available through the [Strategy for Support to Swedish organisations in the civil society of the Swedish government](#) (in Swedish), in daily communication called Sida Civsam funding.

The five selected organisations identified a few key outcomes each, that we then delved deeper into. What is the significance of each outcome? How did we contribute to them? These questions guided our joint exploration.

The learning review will give input to a learning process, with the aim of deepening our understanding of how outcomes at societal and/or systems level come about, and how SMC, its member organisations and their partners can contribute to such outcomes. Another purpose is to give recommendations on how SMC can identify and verify outcomes at this level. Finally, the learning review will contribute to SMC's results report to Sida for 2017-2019.

2 Methodology

This learning review was conducted between February 1 and April 14, 2020. It was a participatory process, led by Karin Bodin, Advisor for Capacity Development at SMC. The review was done in accordance with the Terms of Reference drawn up by SMC (see appendix 1).

2.1 Evaluation Questions and Limitations

The following evaluation questions guided the review:

- Have the organisations contributed to outcomes at societal and/or systems level?
- If so,
 - What was the plausible contribution of SMC, its member organisation, and the implementing partner, to each outcome?
 - Why are these outcomes significant?
 - How (from what sources) was the information about these outcomes found?
 - How could these outcomes, and the contribution of SMC, its member organisation, and the implementing partner, be verified?
- If there was a lack of outcomes, or negative outcomes, what factors might have contributed to that?

Important delimitations:

- The scope of the study was limited to outcomes on societal and/or systems level, and more specifically outcomes on international, regional, national and sub-national levels (rather than local level).
- The outcomes selected must have occurred in 2017-2019, though the contribution to them might have occurred earlier.

- Actual verification (substantiation⁴) of the outcomes with third parties was not part of the assignment, but could be done at a later stage.

2.2 Outcome Harvesting: A Participatory Method

In line with the SMC Policy on Learning and Evaluation⁵ and the Terms of Reference, the learning review has been a participatory process, focusing on identifying outcomes, understood as behavioural change. We chose to use the method Outcome Harvesting for the review.⁶ This method of evaluation lends itself well to exploring outcomes that are both intended and unintended rather than measure progress towards predetermined objectives. It is also useful for learning about changes that an intervention influenced indirectly – which is mostly the case of SMC's contribution to outcomes in the countries where our member organisations and their partners work.

A couple of important definitions:

- An *outcome* is an observable change in a societal actor's behaviour, e.g. changes in actions, relationships, policies or practices. An outcome could be expected or unexpected, intended or unintended, and could be positive or negative.
- A *societal actor* could be an individual, group, community, organisation, or institution. The two latter could (in this specific case) include civil society organisations, churches, businesses and government agencies, as well as the judicial system, for example.

As is the practice in Outcome Harvesting, a format for outcome statements was drawn up (see appendix 2). It included a description of the outcome, a narrative description of the significance, and a narrative assessment of the plausible contribution of SMC, the SMC member organisation and the cooperating partner.

The main sources have been the change agents who were involved in influencing the outcomes: the SMC member organisations and their partners. Therefore, the most important part of the process was interviews with staff of the selected member organisations and their cooperating partners, as well as with responsible SMC staff, in which key outcomes were identified. Project documentation (reports and evaluations) complemented the interviews. The outcome statements were then completed and reviewed in continued dialogue with the respondents, mostly in writing, and in most cases we have sent them back and forth several times.

⁴ In Outcome Harvesting, verification with independent third parties is termed substantiation. The outcomes have been verified, but not substantiated; cf section 7.

⁵ [SMC Policy on Learning and Evaluation](#)

⁶ For those not familiar with the method, please refer to this short brief: [Outcome Harvesting](#) by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt (2013) Ford Foundation.

My role as internal evaluator was to ensure that the outcome statements were credible, i.e. that they complied with the SMART criteria as defined in Outcome Harvesting:

S
M
A
R
T

Specific (sufficiently detailed), **M**easurable (containing verifiable information), **A**chieved (the plausible contribution of the change actors is sufficiently described), **R**elevant to the overarching goals (in this case, the SMC Programme Goal 1) and **T**imely (occurred within the time frame of the study).

In Outcome Harvesting, an outcome statement is often very short and concise. However, in this review, we opted for longer in-depth outcome stories. In some cases, several behavioural changes, and sometimes even changes in several societal actors, have been clustered in the same statement (i.e. technically, some of them include more than one outcome), and summarised as an ‘umbrella outcome’. In total, ten outcome statements form the basis of the report. The outcomes are summarised in section 3.⁷

Interpretation and analysis of the outcomes were made with the aid of an Excel database,⁸ tentatively drawn up before collecting the evidence but revised during the process. This was used to categorise outcomes and contribution strategies.

A webinar with the involved member organisations and SMC staff also gave input to the Learning Review.

2.3 Selection of Organisations, Interventions and Outcomes

In general, results on societal and/or systems level are not frequently reported from SMC-supported interventions. However, SMC staff’s experience from monitoring trips and dialogue with member organisations, as well as an external evaluation in 2015,⁹ suggest that there might be more results on this level than those reported in intervention reports. One of the purposes of this learning review is to explore that assumption.

To do so, SMC opted to study five implementing organisations that received funding through SMC during the period 2017-2019 as the entry-point of the learning review. The selection was made by SMC, in dialogue with the relevant member organisations and their cooperating partners.

The selection was made with an appreciative approach, i.e. with the presumption that the work had contributed to outcomes at societal and/or systems level. The reasoning behind this is that the main purpose of the review is learning from

⁷ The full outcome statements are available on request. These contain more detailed information on the outcomes, their significance and the contributions, as well as information on intervention number, links to documentation, and similar.

⁸ Available on request.

⁹ *SMC Impact Evaluation 2015: Final Report/Note*, December 2015, Pontus Modéer, Liz Goold.

positive examples, rather than a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of our intervention portfolio. Other criteria were that the selection should represent different member organisations, interventions in different countries, and interventions concerning different thematic areas.

The following organisations were selected:¹⁰

SMC Member organisation	Collaboration Partner/Implementing Organisation	Country	Thematic Area
The Leprosy Mission Sweden (TLMS/ (Lepramissionen)	The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI)	India	Health, Disability
Läkarmissionen (LM)	IAS Uganda (regional office of LM)	Uganda	Rural Development , Alcohol
The Children's Mission (CM) (Skandinaviska Barnmissionen)	I Choose Life (ICL)	Kenya	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Youth participation
Life and Peace Institute (LPI)	LPI (regional office) in collaboration with local partner Peace and Development Centre (PDC)	Ethiopia	Peace-building; Youth participation
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) (Kristna freds rörelsen)	Justapaz	Colombia	Peace-building; Non-violence

In the case of IAS Uganda (regional office of Läkarmissionen) and Life and Peace Institute, the SMC member organisation is also the implementing organisation.

The outcomes were identified and chosen in dialogue with the cooperating partners/implementing organisations, using the interventions funded by SMC as an entry-point. However, the outcomes were not necessarily a direct result of the supported interventions. In the learning review, we have tried to establish the plausible contributions, whether direct or indirect, of SMC, its member organisations and their partners to the identified outcomes.

2.4 Challenges and Limitations

There are, of course, many challenges and limitations when undertaking a learning review such as this. I will mention three:

¹⁰ A full list of supported interventions is available on request.

Ideally, a learning review like this would be highly participatory and include both workshops and field visits with the implementing organisations, as well as communication with third parties to substantiate (verify) the outcomes and the contributions. That kind of resources have not been available to us, but it has been possible to interact directly, through meetings on skype and e-mail, with the staff of the five implementing organisations. However, time constraints – in combination with other priorities, not least the response to the covid-19 pandemic – have limited the participation of SMC member organisations and their partners. The outcome statements have been verified with the implementing organisations, but they have not been able to respond to all questions or comments.

SMC chose to do this as an internal learning review, rather than an external evaluation. The advantage is that I am knowledgeable about SMC's programme and network, and has facilitated access to relevant information. However, I am not an experienced evaluator or Outcome Harvesting practitioner. Therefore, SMC contracted Kornelia Rassmann, experienced Outcome Harvesting evaluator, as method advisor.

Finally, shrinking civic space has affected the learning review. In the case of one of the implementing organisations, some plausible contributions could not be included in the study, since it would represent a risk to their work. In the case of Justapaz, serious death threats¹¹ limited the time and energy available for the learning review, and only one outcome statement was finalised.

3 The Outcomes: A Summary

Ten key outcomes have been identified by the five implementing organisations. The outcomes, including their significance and the contributions of SMC, its members and the implementing organisations, are summarised below. Each outcome is also given a designation: the abbreviation of the organisation and the number of the outcome, to facilitate reference to them in later sections of the report.¹²

¹¹ See <http://www.justapaz.org/noticias-justapaz/somos-informacion-justapaz/justapaz-hoy/563-llamado-a-la-noviolencia-comunicado-a-la-opinion-publica-frente-a-nuevas-amenazas-al-sector-religioso> (Justapaz, March 2, 2020); <http://www.justapaz.org/noticias-justapaz/somos-informacion-justapaz/justapaz-hoy/565-carta-de-apoyo-en-respuesta-a-las-amenazas-de-muerte-contra-justapaz> (Mennonite Central Committee, March 19, 2020; in English).

¹² Full outcome statements are available on request. These contain more detailed information on the outcomes, their significance and the contributions, as well as information on intervention numbers, links to documentation, etc.

3.1 TLMTI: Changed Legislation Directives to Eliminate Discrimination of People Affected by Leprosy in India

The Leprosy Mission started its work in India in 1874, and the Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) was registered as a society in 1973. The organisation works to counter discrimination of people affected by leprosy in India. Two related key outcomes that occurred during the period of study were identified by TLMTI. In summary:

**TLMTI KEY
OUTCOME 1:**

TLMTI 1: On September 14, 2018, the Supreme Court of India issued a directive to both state and central governments to take action to eliminate discrimination and promote social inclusion of people affected by leprosy.

**TLMTI KEY
OUTCOME 2:**

TLMTI 2: On February 13, 2019, the Indian parliament passed the Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, so that leprosy is no longer a ground for divorce in the country.

These outcomes, in turn, are related to an earlier outcome: the 2015 Report 256 of the Indian Law Commission. The report included a draft bill to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of leprosy, and recommended affirmative action. The bill in its entirety is still pending in the Indian parliament, but the two outcomes identified are, according to TLMTI, a significant step in the right direction.

The directive of the Supreme Court has given civil society opportunities of immediately taking the issues forward in their work to support people affected by leprosy. Even without legislation, it makes it possible for rights-holders to hold the government accountable. The amended personal laws also have immediate effects on the ground. For example, TLMTI cites a case, in a community where they work, in which a discriminatory divorce was avoided due to the changed law.

TLMTI took an active role in advocating for both changes, using several different strategies, ranging from supporting people affected by leprosy to participate in advocacy, to taking the lead in a civil society network at national level. They also prompted members of parliament to bring the issue up in sessions, as well as provided the government with evidence from communities and hospitals. The contribution of TLMTI is recognised in the report of the Law Commission.¹³

The contribution of TLMTI is recognised in the report of the Law Commission.

The Leprosy Mission Sweden (TLMS) was founded in 1985 and has partnered with TLMTI since then. TLMS did not engage directly in advocacy for these changes, but both TLMTI and TLMS are part of the global Leprosy Mission

¹³ See <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/Report256.pdf>.

Fellowship that engages in advocacy to the UN. The resulting global policies have probably influenced the outcomes indirectly.

TLMTI assesses that the capacity development projects supported by TLMS (with funding from SMC) from 2012 to 2017 led to important changes at organisational level, leading to a more rights-based and community-centred approach, and strengthened systematic advocacy work on all levels. Additionally, much of the evidence used in advocacy at national level – that contributed to the outcomes – has been gathered in the community development work supported through the SMC-funded interventions. SMC's insistence on the human rights-based approach has also been an important factor.

3.2 IAS: Regulations on the Production and Sale of Alcohol to Combat Poverty and Gender-Based Violence in Uganda

IAS Uganda, a regional office of Läkarmissionen¹⁴, has worked with integrated rural development in Northern Uganda since 2008. Their work is an example of linking humanitarian and development work, in areas that have been affected by armed conflict. IAS identified two outcomes, related but at different levels (district and national level), concerning the production and sale of alcohol:

IAS KEY OUTCOME 1:

IAS 1: During 2018 and 2019, Agago District and Pader District in Uganda issued limitations on the sale and production of alcohol.

IAS KEY OUTCOME 2:

IAS 2: In 2019, the Government of Uganda banned the production and sale of alcohol in sachets in the country.

Alcohol abuse is prevalent in many communities in Northern Uganda where IAS works. Alcohol abuse is related to gender-based violence, as well as to high rates of poverty. Alcohol in sachets is cheap and easy to transport, and therefore easily affordable. Both outcomes are important steps in regulating access to alcohol. However, according to IAS, there is need for a more comprehensive legislation on the production, distribution and sale of alcohol. Such a policy has been developed and passed, but it is as yet unclear if it has been signed by the government.

IAS Uganda, as vice chair of the national civil society network Uganda Alcohol Policy Alliance (UAPA), participated in the committee that drafted the national ban and the policy.

IAS Uganda participated in the committee that drafted the national ban and the policy

¹⁴ Before 2019, IAS Uganda was part of International Aid Services, IAS, also an SMC member organisation.

However, while recognizing the significant development at national level, IAS Uganda underlines the importance of their development work with communities: the change at national level would not have happened without it. On the one hand, evidence (research and examples) from the community level has been important for the success of the national level advocacy. On the other, IAS has worked to raise awareness and empower rights-holders and local religious leaders to advocate for change at local and district level. Their demands have led to local regulations, as well as to district councils petitioning the national government for national regulations, thereby increasing the pressure on the government.

According to IAS Uganda, monitoring done by IAS headquarters and SMC has played an important role in developing the quality of the work, not least because it contributed to learning and to consistent reporting. In particular, IAS headquarters articulated a joint accountability framework that stressed downward accountability. These indirect contributions have significance for IAS Uganda's legitimacy as an advocacy actor.

SMC has funded the community development work done by IAS Uganda since 2009. In particular, a so-called Value Added Intervention in 2012 gave IAS Uganda the chance to pilot responses to alcohol abuse. This contributed to IAS undertaking advocacy actions related to the sale of alcohol, starting in 2014. Another important contribution of SMC was that it introduced IAS Uganda to the Swedish and global movement for alcohol prevention (IOGT-NTO/Movendi), of which IAS Uganda is an active member, and which has supported UAPA.

3.3 ICL: National Guidelines for Sexuality Education and Youth Mentorship in Kenyan Schools

I Choose Life (ICL) has worked with HIV prevention since 2004, and piloted models for life skills and sexual education in Kenya since 2011. They identified two key outcomes that involve development of national educational guidelines:

ICL KEY OUTCOME 1:

ICL 1: The Government of Kenya (including several government agencies, spearheaded by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development) developed a policy and guidelines on Life Skills and Human Sexuality, for both formal education (2017) and non-formal education (2019).

The main achievement could be summarised as a national consensus on the need for comprehensive sexual education, as part of a life skill curriculum, and practical guidelines for implementation. Many different actors, including powerful religious actors and UN agencies (UNICEF and UNFPA), were part of the process. The guidelines, when implemented, have the potential to reduce HIV prevalence while increasing young people's access to services related to sexual and reproductive health.

ICL KEY OUTCOME 2:

ICL 2: In 2019, the Ministry of Education of Kenya instituted a policy and guide on Early Learning and Basic Education Mentorship Program.

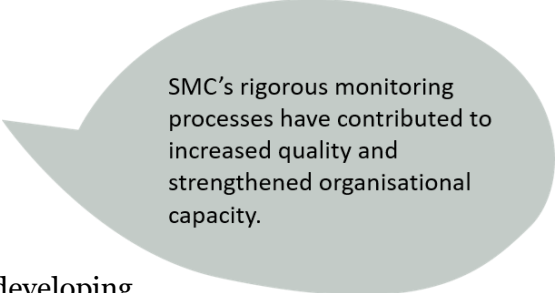
The policy and guide will provide direction for an evidence-based mentorship programme in all primary and secondary schools across the country, and has the potential to improve academic performance and motivation as well as enhance life skills, which in turn can lead to reducing teenage pregnancies.

Both outcomes imply the institutionalisation, at national level, of methods originally piloted by ICL with the aim of increasing life skills among young people in Kenya. ICL has developed different models of working with life skills since 2009, notably the holistic so-called SEALs¹⁵ model of peer support, which is the foundation of its programmes and includes a significant component of youth engagement. Sexual education and mentorship are parts of the model.

ICL approached the government to adopt these models in schools across the country. The organisation has worked directly with different government agencies, participating in several so-called technical working groups (led by the government), providing evidence from the ground, and making sure youth were consulted in the process. It has also provided space for consultation between key stakeholders. Most notably, both Christian and Muslims religious leaders who had been opposed to sexual education in schools, were brought on board together with rights-based organisations and government agencies.

The Children's Mission, and especially its regional office in Nairobi, has played an important role in strengthening the organisational and programmatic capacity of ICL, through trainings (including the topics rights-based approach and advocacy), support in development of proposals, and joint monitoring, thereby strengthening its credibility as an advocacy actor.

SMC was the first donor to fund the SEALs project, which has since then been replicated and now has funding from other international donors as well. According to both ICL and CMA, SMC's rigorous monitoring processes have also contributed to increased quality and strengthened organisational capacity, including integrating gender aspects and developing a rights-based approach.



SMC's rigorous monitoring processes have contributed to increased quality and strengthened organisational capacity.

¹⁵ SEALs stands for Sexual and reproductive health, Economic empowerment, Academic and career mentoring, Leadership and governance, and Sports, spiritual foundation and talent nurturing.

3.4 LPI: Expanding Space for Civil Society through Peace Dialogue at Ethiopian Universities

Life & Peace institute (LPI) and its partner Peace and Development Center (PDC) have worked with peace-building in Ethiopia for more than twenty years. For the period 2017-2019, LPI has identified three key outcome stories:

LPI KEY OUTCOME 1:

LPI 1: In 2018-2019, four state universities and two ministries supported and promoted the method Sustained Dialogue (SD) in universities in Ethiopia. Four universities decided to fund SD from their own budgets. The Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs (MoFPDA) stated its support for SD, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) agreed to co-host a symposium on SD and a culture of peace, inviting the heads of all public universities from across the country.

The universities in Ethiopia are spaces where young people from different ethnic and religious groups study together. Mistrust, reflecting conflicts in society, often leads to physical violence on the campuses. However, there are also opportunities to meet and build trust and tolerance.

Sustained Dialogue (SD) is a tool to mitigate conflicts and build a culture of trust between students. It is significant that state actors – universities as well as the ministries – are promoting and taking the ownership of SD, giving more students the opportunity to participate in SD and become agents for peace in society after graduating. The mentioned symposium was unfortunately cancelled due to violence on some university campuses during this time of political transition in Ethiopia. However, LPI continues in dialogue with MoSHE on developing relevant tools.

LPI has developed the SD method within the Ethiopian context, and together with its local partner PDC introduced it at Addis Ababa University in 2009. Since 2013, PDC, with the support of LPI, introduced it at another five universities in the country, with a total of over two thousand participants each year. LPI and PDC secured space for SD at the universities by building relationships with the government, and has consciously lobbied with universities and the MoSHE for a sustainable, youth-led, expansion of the SD model.

LPI KEY OUTCOME 2:

LPI 2: On March 2, 2018, the UN published the report “The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security”,¹⁶ based on discussions with young people and research, surveys, mapping studies and country or thematic contributions, including conclusions from work with youth engaged in LPI’s Sustained Dialogue (SD) projects.

¹⁶ See <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>.

LPI submitted a study, “Being and Becoming a Peacebuilder”,¹⁷ to the UN, which built on insights from LPI’s work with youth in dialogue – using different versions of SD – in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya.

Several of LPI’s recommendations are included in the UN report. Apart from being a recognition of LPI’s work, this shows that it is possible for civil society organisations and the people they represent – in this case young people from the three countries – to engage in, and influence, global processes, including recommendations to make these processes operable.

LPI KEY
OUTCOME 3:

LPI 3: In the years 2017-2019 different agencies and bodies of the Government of Ethiopia have increasingly consulted with civil society organisations on a range of sensitive issues.

For example, in 2017, the Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs requested LPI’s support to help conceptualise a national Peace Council in Ethiopia, and in late 2019, the new Ministry of Peace asked LPI to hold forums on the new Pastoralist Policy of the government and thereby garner broad support for it.

This gives more groups in society the chance to participate in political decision-making and can make for broader support for political changes. It is particularly significant considered that the policy space around peace issues has been very restrictive.

Factors contributing to the change include LPI’s long-term trust and relationship-building over time with the Government of Ethiopia, seeking out the spaces within the government where constructive engagement was possible, and showing that LPI and their partners (PDC and the Interreligious council of Ethiopia) had relevant knowledge that aligned with needs of government actors. LPI’s conflict-sensitive strategy also included building relationships with other political actors who are now in power.

LPI’s conflict sensitive strategy included building relationships with other political actors who are now in power.

The SMC share of the funding for LPI’s Ethiopia Programme is small. However, LPI states that the fact that SMC was willing to fund their work in Ethiopia even when this involved considerable risk and other donors were hesitant to do so (particularly 2014-2015), made it possible for LPI to continue working with peace-building in the country. This laid the foundation for the recognition, and the larger funding, that LPI and its partners have today.

¹⁷ <https://life-peace.org/resource/being-and-becoming-a-peacebuilder/>

3.5 Justapaz: Protecting the Right to Conscientious Objection through Legislation in Colombia

Justapaz was founded in 1990, and has worked for the right to conscientious objection from military service since 1995. During the period 2017-2019 there was a major breakthrough:

JUSTAPAZ KEY OUTCOME 1:

JUSTAPAZ 1: On August 4, 2017, the Congress of the Colombian Republic approved the Law 1861, which recognises the right to conscientious objection from military service, and includes procedures for its application.

The legislative process started in 2015, when the Ministry of Defence issued a first draft of a new law to regulate military recruitment, which did not recognise the right to conscientious objection.

Justapaz, together with a broad alliance of civil society actors, advocated strategically for changes in the draft legislation. The changes that they achieved are aligned with international human rights provisions, statements of the Ombudsman's Office of Colombia and precedents of the Constitutional Court. Among other things, the alliance lobbied with individual parliamentarians and the congress' Unit for Technical Legal Assistance¹⁸. Justapaz has worked with the issues for 25 years, focusing on conscientious objection on religious grounds. Together with local churches, they have accompanied conscientious objectors in legal processes, which contributed to legal precedents in 2009 and 2012 that were used in lobbying for the new legislation.

Justapaz has worked with the issues for 25 years, focusing on conscientious objection on religious grounds.

SweFOR has partnered with Justapaz for the past 20 years. Initially, Justapaz participated in South-South exchanges facilitated by SweFOR, developing the capacity of Justapaz in the areas of conflict analysis and non-violent strategies. SweFOR has also trained Justapaz on security issues. From 2006 onwards, SweFOR has supported several of Justapaz's projects financially with SMC funding, including resources for advocacy on conscientious objection.

SMC's long-term funding is important. Since 2011 SweFOR receives programme funding from SMC, which is perceived as flexible and effective.

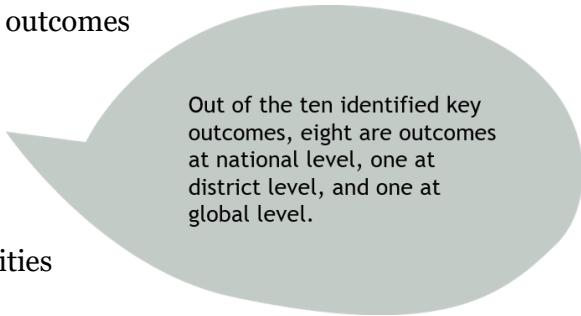
4 Analysis: Outcomes

As seen above, we were able to identify outcomes at societal and/or systems level (as defined in the introduction) for each of the five implementing organisations.

¹⁸ Unidad de Asistencia Técnica Legislativa

4.1 Societal Actors and Levels of Change

Out of the ten identified key outcomes, eight are outcomes at national level, one at district level, and one at global level.¹⁹ Mostly, the societal actors that changed are government bodies, e.g. ministries, and local government, as well as legislators. The other societal actors include the Supreme Court of India, Ethiopian state universities and a UN secretariat.



Out of the ten identified key outcomes, eight are outcomes at national level, one at district level, and one at global level.

4.2 Significance of the Outcomes

The implementing organisations were asked whether the outcomes were positive or negative, as well as how significant they were and why.

All of the outcomes were categorised as positive by the implementing organisations. Several of the outcomes are assessed to be major breakthroughs, while the others are also seen as significant. This is mostly a consequence of the design of the study, since the selection of organisations was appreciative and the implementing organisations were asked to identify a couple of key outcomes.

However, when studying the outcome stories in detail, there are important nuances that strengthen the credibility of the outcome statements. For instance, though IAS Uganda sees the national ban on alcohol in sachets as an important step forward, they are very clear on the need of more comprehensive legislation (IAS 2). Similar caveats are present in most of the outcome statements.

Looking further into the dimensions of significance, four of the outcomes (TLMTI 1 & 2, IAS 2, and Justapaz) clearly represent a change in legislation or other kinds of policy changes. These can be used to hold duty-bearers accountable and give rights-holders access to justice and/or change the situations in families and communities. To take one example, in the first 15 months after the law 1861 was passed in Colombia (Justapaz), 422 youth applied to be recognised as conscientious objectors. That is more than double compared to the years before, and a majority of them got a favourable response.²⁰ This example also shows the importance of awareness raising among rights-holders for these changes to actually have effect on the ground – to be able to hold duty-bearers accountable, rights-holders need to know about the changed regulations. Several of the

¹⁹ Note that one other implementing organisation mentions global advocacy, not as an outcome but as part of its contribution. However, this cannot be discussed in the report since it implies a risk for the organisation.

²⁰ See Informe La Objeción de Conciencia en el primer año de aplicación de la nueva ley de reclutamiento (ACOOO, Justapaz 2018), which can be downloaded from <http://www.justapaz.org/noticias-justapaz/somos-informacion-justapaz/justapaz-hoy/543-informe-la-objecion-de-conciencia-en-el-primer-ano-de-aplicacion-de-la-ley-de-reclutamiento>.

implementing organisations combine advocacy with awareness-raising among rights-holders, which contributes to effective change.

Another dimension of significance is the scope of the outcomes: as mentioned, eight of the outcomes are at national level, reflecting changes that potentially have impact for communities well beyond the reach of the implementing organisations.

Several of the implementing organisations combine advocacy with awareness-raising among rights-holders, which contributes to effective change.

A third aspect is sustainability. In at least three of the outcomes (TLMTI 1, ICL 1 & 2, and LPI 1), models piloted by civil society organisations have been adopted and will be run by public institutions, rather than with international funding.

Significance also depends on the context. That government agencies consult with civil society organisations is obviously more significant in a situation where civic space has been extremely restricted (cf LPI 3), than in contexts where government regularly consults with civil society.

4.3 Expected or Unexpected Outcomes

Most of the changes were expected, at least to some extent. All were intentional in the sense that they were the result of a conscious effort by the implementing organisations, whether as part of interventions supported by SMC or as part of the broader strategy of the implementing organisations. This is not surprising, but it is relevant to underline that positive changes at societal or systems level do not just happen randomly, but can be influenced strategically. The implementing organisations have consciously identified gaps on the relevant levels, and found fruitful strategies to close those gaps.

4.4 Relevance to SMC Programme Goals

Out of the ten outcomes, I have categorised nine as relevant to SMC **Programme Goal 1.1**, “Influence on laws and other political decisions, and government agencies’ implementation of the same”.²¹ This is seen by the SMC as the clearest indication of change at societal and/or systems level, and so, in the selection of organisations as well as in my probing questions, this was the kind of outcomes we mainly searched for.

Another reason most of the identified outcomes belong to this category is that this kind of change is easy to identify and document. In comparison, it is probably more unclear, and more difficult to identify, the kind of changes that would be outcomes relating to “changed attitudes and behaviour in society” (goal 1.2) and

²¹ It should be noted that all the outcomes relate to changes in legislation and policy, not to implementation of the same.

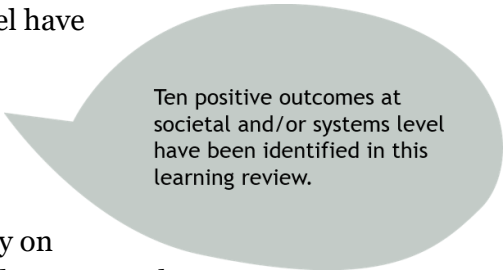
“increased trust and interaction between different groups in society” (goal 1.3), especially on national and international level.

I have categorised the remaining outcome (LPI 2, which describes how the Government of Ethiopia increasingly consulted with civil society) as a contribution to **programme goal 1.3** “Increased trust and interaction between different groups in society. ” This outcome shows that the programme goal relates to civic space, not least to the opportunities of civil society organisations to participate in constructive dialogue with government agencies.

Of course, the categorisations are not clear-cut. The three programme goals are interconnected, and it is not always clear which one an outcome contributes to. For example, it could be argued that the development of a policy and guidelines on Life Skills and Human Sexuality in non-formal education in Kenya was possible because of changed attitudes among leading religious actors at national level (cf ICL 1), a change relevant to goal 1.2, and which could have been identified as an outcome in itself. Likewise, the personal laws in India were amended (cf TLMTI 2) partly because of increased trust and interaction between, on the one hand, civil society organisations in the network led by TLMTI, and, on the other, the Indian government, relating to goal 1.3.

5 Analysis: Contribution Strategies²²

Ten positive outcomes at societal and/or systems level have been identified in this learning review. How then did the implementing organisations, SMC’s member organisations and SMC contribute to those changes?



Ten positive outcomes at societal and/or systems level have been identified in this learning review.

Before going into the analysis, let me comment briefly on the different levels of contribution. In the SMC model, SMC member organisations based in Sweden usually partner with local implementing civil society organisations in developing countries. However, and as mentioned in section 2.3, two of the implementing organisations that participated in this review are actually regional offices of SMC members: IAS Uganda is part of LM,²³ and LPI, though it has local partners, has been directly involved in implementing the work that has contributed to the outcomes. Below, I have tried to distinguish between the more direct contributions at the implementing level (section 5.1) and

²² See the Outcome Database (available separately) for detailed tables on contributions.

²³ IAS became part of LM in 2019; before that, IAS Uganda was a regional office of International Aid Services (IAS).

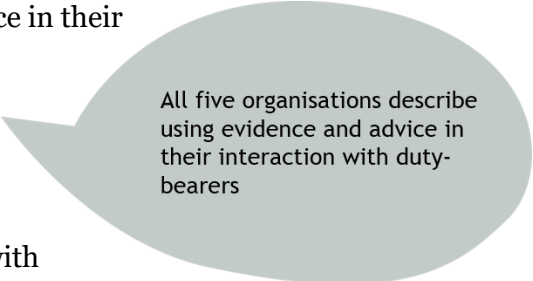
the more indirect contributions of member organisations (section 5.2).²⁴ In section 5.3, I have summarised and analysed SMC's contribution.

5.1 Contribution Strategies at the Implementing Level

Not surprisingly, the implementing organisations use many different activities and strategies to contribute to the outcomes. However, considering the variations in contexts, there are striking similarities.

To analyse the contributions at the implementing level, I used a typology of activities to influence policy change proposed by Harry Jones, which distinguishes between three main approaches: 1) evidence and advice, 2) lobbying and negotiation, and 3) public campaigns and advocacy.²⁵

All five organisations describe using evidence and advice in their interaction with duty-bearers. For instance, ICL has piloted methods for life skill education that they then presented to the authorities, Justapaz has provided legislators with advice on legal precedents and TLMTI has researched the prevalence of leprosy in India. Both TLMTI and IAS underline the importance of working with communities, making advocacy both evidence-based and rooted.



All five organisations describe using evidence and advice in their interaction with duty-bearers

All five organisations also lobbied and negotiated, mostly in combination with the evidence and advice approach. For example, IAS sat on the committee that drafted the ban on alcohol in sachets (IAS 2), and LPI built long-term relationships with government ministries by giving them technical support, even when civic space was severely limited.

With a couple of exceptions, the organisations have only mentioned public campaigns and advocacy in passing. Justapaz reports using media campaigns, and IAS and TLMTI have worked a lot with awareness-raising at local level. However, when asked about their contributions to the outcomes, these are not the actions that the organisations highlight.

In sum, less confrontational approaches – evidence and advice, and lobbying and negotiation – are underlined by the implementing organisations. One reason for this, though not mentioned by the organisations, could be limitations in the space available to civil society organisations. With the time available for the learning review, we have not been able to explore further how, when and why each approach has been used.

²⁴ It is not within the scope of this study to analyse the value and disadvantages of SMC member organisations being involved in implementation, and the study has not suggested any readily available answers to that query.


²⁵ Jones, Harry (2011) *A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence*, ODI: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6453.pdf>, accessed 2020-03-24; the typology I refer to is described on p. 2.

Adding to these three approaches, I would like to suggest a fourth, which is particularly relevant from a civil society perspective: at least three of the five organisations, TLMTI, IAS and Justapaz, are active members of national and international civil society networks or alliances that have undertaken joint efforts to influence duty-bearers.

Maybe most importantly, all organisations state that they have used several approaches, on several levels, targeting several different actors. In that sense, the most successful strategy seems to be one that combines several different approaches.

Time is another important factor. The direct contributions to outcomes that occurred in 2017-2019 were initiated two to six years earlier, and the indirect contributions, through long-term commitment for societal change in the same thematic area, go back many more years.

From a religious literacy perspective, it is also interesting to see how the organisations used their identity and capacities as faith-based organisations to contribute to the outcomes. IAS and Justapaz have raised awareness among religious actors, including churches, which helped put pressure on government and legislators. ICL has lobbied with religious leaders in their role as duty-bearers. On the other hand, while TLMTI bases its mission on Christian faith and values, in practice it underlines the secular nature of its work, a strategy that is appropriate in the Indian context. Practical strategies for religious literacy²⁶ in policy influencing could be an area of further exploration for SMC.



ICL has lobbied with religious leaders in their role as duty-bearers.

One of the organisations, Justapaz, contributed to an outcome related to one of SMC's prioritised advocacy issues: conscientious objection is part of the right to freedom of religion or belief.

5.2 Indirect Contribution Strategies of SMC Members

The contributions of SMC member organisations (at the non-implementing level) are, as could be expected, indirect. The contributions at first seemed quite diverse, but an analysis led to a few common categories.

Obviously, all member organisations channel SMC funding to the interventions.

They have all supported capacity development of the implementing partners, thereby strengthening them as strategic, credible and legitimate advocacy actors. In the case of LPI and SweFOR, their thematic expertise in peace-building and non-violence were important contributions. TLMTI, IAS, ICL and LPI all mention

²⁶ Please refer to [SMC's Learning Study on Gender and Religion \(2015\)](#) and our upcoming tool for religious literacy, which includes practical religious literacy strategies.

the role of the monitoring and evaluation of SMC members, as well as dialogue on proposals, as important factors that has improved the quality of their work. Opportunities for joint learning with other partners, in south-south exchanges, are also mentioned as important for developing organisational capacity.

Another important factor to mention are the long-term partnerships. TLMS partnership with TLMTI goes back to 1985, LPI has worked with peace-building in Ethiopia since 1991, SweFOR has partnered with Justapaz since the year 2000, IAS started their interventions in Northern Uganda in 2009, and ICL has been a partner of CM since 2013. Several respondents have highlighted that it takes a long time to achieve changes in society and/or systems on higher levels, and therefore long-term commitment and support, with possibilities of continued focus on the same topics, is crucial.

We note that only one organisation mentions the Swedish embassy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a dialogue partners: SweFOR is the only member organisation that mentions advocacy in Sweden. They have, among other things, facilitated meetings between Justapaz and Swedish authorities and have also raised concern for the safety of leaders involved in Justapaz's work with the Swedish government. It is however, not clear to what extent these efforts have contributed to the outcome.

5.3 Contribution Strategies of SMC

SMC mainly channels Sida funding, through its members, to the work of the implementing organisations, and takes initiatives to develop the capacity of its member organisations and their partners. The mandate of SMC does not include influencing outcomes in the intervention countries directly, though SMC may sometimes support the advocacy efforts of member organisations and their partners.²⁷

Probably, the most important contribution of SMC is the funding. Three of the member organisations underline the importance of the flexibility of SMC funding, whether through programme funding (e.g. the SweFOR programme that supports Justapaz among others, and LPI), risk-taking in restricted civic space (LPI) or through thematic flexibility, as in the case of IAS, which reports that it is difficult to find other donors willing to support alcohol prevention. Funding to pilot new approaches (IAS, ICL and LPI) and/or to build organisational capacity (TLMTI) has also played an important role in creating the preconditions for rights-based

²⁷ In the case of Justapaz, SMC has taken on a more active role, and accompanied Justapaz to the Swedish embassy in Colombia. It has, however, not been possible to verify with Justapaz whether they believe that this has contributed to the outcome.

and evidence-based advocacy. It should also be mentioned that SMC actively promotes long-term partnerships.

Other aspects of SMC's work that are highlighted by both member organisations and partners are the role of active and constructive dialogue in the monitoring process as well as capacity development, in particular on the rights-based approach. Several of the implementing partners maintain that this has helped them develop the quality of their work, which has contributed to their relevance and legitimacy as advocacy actors – and indirectly to the outcomes.

SMC promotes long-term partnerships actively.

6 Reports on the Outcomes

Out of ten outcomes, only one (LPI 1), has been (partly) reported into the SMC results database.

One reason for the lack of registered outcomes is that our system lags considerably. For reasons of aid effectiveness member organisations' yearly reports focus on deviations from the applications, and results are only reported in the final intervention reports. Therefore, 3-year interventions that were initiated in 2017 or later have not yet reported on results. This applies to five out of nine interventions related to the study, and six of the outcomes.

On the other hand, this is not the only reason the results have not been captured by our reporting mechanism. Let me try to sort out the main categories: ²⁸

Three outcomes (TLMTI 1 & 2 and IAS 2) are not directly related to the objectives of SMC funded projects. That is, according to the implementing organisations, SMC has contributed indirectly to the outcomes (see section 3.1-3.2 and 5.3), but the outcomes are the result of a long-term and multi-pronged strategy, in which SMC project funding is only one component. Indeed, the more direct contributions seem to be funded by as evidence from the ground and organisational development. These three outcomes confirm the assumption that outcomes at societal and/or systems level rarely are a result of individual interventions, but rather of the long-term strategic work of an organisation, often in alliance with others. With the current SMC reporting routines, it is unclear whether these outcomes should be reported to the SMC in the final intervention reports.

Five outcomes had actually been reported to SMC but not registered as results:

²⁸ See the Outcome Database in Appendix 3 for a detailed table. Note that 8 outcomes are mentioned, but the sum of (1) + (2) + (3) is 11. The reason is that three outcomes were known to SMC through two different sources.

- Three outcomes (LPI 2 & 3 and Justapaz) were briefly and/or partly mentioned in the final programme reports, but were not registered as results by SMC, maybe because they were not directly related to specific intervention objectives, and/or were not mentioned in the results section of the reports.
- Two outcomes (IAS 1 and ICL 1) were mentioned, briefly and partly, in annual progress reports.²⁹ As per SMC routines, progress reports are not scanned for results and therefore these were not registered.

Three outcomes (TLMTI 2, IAS 2 and Justapaz) were noted by SMC staff on monitoring visits, and mentioned in travel reports, but, following SMC routines, results found on monitoring visits are not registered in the SMC results database.

For those outcomes that were somehow reported (2), and/or were known to SMC through monitoring visits (3), the information was mostly incomplete and/or very brief. With changed routines, they might still have been registered as results, but to contribute to deeper understanding they would need to be explored further.

In sum, SMC somehow had documentation and/or knowledge, albeit very sketchy, of eight of the ten outcomes by the end of 2019, but only one was actually registered as a result. This indicates that there could be a lot more potential results/outcomes, if we can find effective routines to document them.

7 Verification

Verification of the outcomes and the contributions was not part of the learning review, though one of the evaluation questions was how the outcomes and the contributions could (potentially) be verified.

Some steps have been taken to verify the results of the learning review – see section 2.2. However, the final step of substantiating³⁰ the outcomes and the contributions with independent external respondents – for example duty-bearers or rights-holders – could not be done with the resources available for this review. In some cases, for example TLMTI 2, ICL 1 and LPI 2, there are readily available documents from external actors that, at least partly, confirms the contribution of the implementing organisations. In other cases it would be necessary to interview third parties first-hand. SMC encourages the involved member organisations and cooperating partners to substantiate the outcome statements with external respondents.

Concerning indirect contributions from SMC and member organisations, it is not possible to provide other evidence than the statements of the implementing

²⁹ The outcome ICL 1 was mentioned as a deviation from plan.

³⁰ This is the word used in Outcome Harvesting for verification with third parties.

organisations, as well as arguments from development theory on funding and capacity development.

However, my assessment is that the outcome statements are credible enough for the main purposes of this learning review, namely to explore outcomes that we contributed to and learn from them, without further verification.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Summary of the conclusions

First, let me summarise the responses to the main evaluation questions.

SMC member organisations and their cooperating partners, with the support of SMC, have contributed to significant outcomes on district, national and international level, relevant to SMC Programme Goal 1, during the period 2017-2019. In this learning review, based on a participatory process with a selection of five implementing organisations, we identified and verified ten key outcomes. However, nine out of the ten outcomes were not captured by SMC's reporting mechanisms – at least not yet.

When analysing the contributions of the implementing organisations to the outcomes, it is clear that all of them use several different approaches, but mainly highlight non-confrontational methods – such as providing evidence and advice, and lobbying and negotiation – to influence duty-bearers. These methods are less visible than public campaigns, but not necessarily less effective. At least three of the implementing organisations have been active in civil society networks, on national and/or international level, working together to bring about change. Another important contribution, albeit more indirect, is work on community level, ensuring that advocacy is rooted in the experiences of rights-holders. Persistent, long-term commitment is another crucial factor.

The indirect contributions of member organisations and SMC can be summarised as flexible funding, capacity development including networking, and long-term partnerships. The significance of these indirect contributions are underlined by the implementing organisations.

8.2 Recommendations

SMC took the initiative to this learning review, and therefore, the recommendations are aimed at SMC. Some of them confirm that the methods we are already applying should be continued, while others are areas for review.

1.

Explore the identified outcomes further: SMC could continue to examine the outcomes identified and described in the learning review, to get a deeper understanding of different aspects of our work. There are several

interesting questions that we have not had time to look into as part of the learning review. Some examples include:

- What are the risks and advantages of less confrontational approaches to influencing policy?
- What role, more specifically, has community development (or other interventions working directly with rights-holders) played in policy influencing, and how can communities and individual rights-holders be directly and effectively involved in the process of analysing and influencing policies on higher levels, not least on national level?
- How has capacity development and monitoring carried out by SMC and its member organisations, respectively, influenced the work of the cooperating partners more specifically (and, indirectly, the outcomes)?

2.

Networking: It is clear from the learning review that civil society networks often play an important role in influencing policy. SMC should continue supporting its member organisations and their partners to connect with horizontal networks, on both national and global levels.

3.

Capacity Development: The learning review indicates that capacity development at organisational level is an indirect but important way of contributing to relevant outcomes. SMC's new system for organisational assessment of its member organisations, launched in 2019, is expected to lead to capacity development plans at organisational level. For cooperating partners, it is important that member organisations and SMC continue promoting value added interventions for organisational development, as well as offer other opportunities for joint learning.

4.

Flexible funding: The learning review confirms that the different funding mechanisms have been important factors contributing to outcomes on systems and/or societal level. SMC should therefore continue to provide flexible funding, and consult with member organisations on what flexibility is needed.

5.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning + reporting (MEL+R): It is problematic in several ways that so many outcomes were not registered as results. For one, SMC wants to include relevant outcomes in our results reports to Sida. More importantly, we need to identify and analyse outcomes so as to learn and adapt our work continuously, in line with our Policy on Learning and Evaluation.³¹

³¹ [SMC Policy on Learning and Evaluation](#)

- SMC needs to review its MEL+R frameworks to ensure that we harvest and learn from the outcomes that we contribute to, and do so more continuously, without compromising development and aid effectiveness.
- In its guidelines and templates for intervention reports, SMC needs to ensure that there are instructions for reporting outcomes that are relevant to the overarching goals of the implementing organisation and that the intervention has plausibly contributed to, though not directly related to intervention objectives.
- SMC should review whether Outcome Harvesting or similar methods for MEL+R could help us bring in results that we do not capture in the current framework, as well as contribute to joint learning for SMC, member organisations and cooperating partners.

6.

SMC Results Reporting System: SMC needs to review and clarify its results reporting systems, including its programme goals, as part of the planning for next programme period.

Finally, let me return to the initial words of this report. “Living in God’s calling means discerning and combating unrighteous power structures and systems hostile to life, such as discrimination, inequality and other forms of oppression.” It has been inspiring to explore concrete examples of how SMC, member organisations and their cooperating partners, through our joint efforts, actually contribute to making these words a reality. I hope this learning review, in a small way, can contribute to strengthened work for social change.

Living in God’s calling means combating unrighteous power structures and systems.

Appendices (available on request)

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of the learning review

Appendix 2: Outcome Statement Format

The outcome database in Excel, full outcome statements, and a list of interventions, are available on request.