

Tracer study report – Philippines November 2016

Partners: Stairway Denmark (SDK) and **Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI)**

The objective of this Tracer Study to tell a story of change and CISU's contribution to these changes by tracing stories of **Stairway Denmark (SDK)**, a member organisation of CISU, and its partner in the Philippines, **Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI)**.

Sister-organizations based on personnel relations and strong commitment to vulnerable children

Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI) in Philippines was founded by a Danish/American couple living in Philippines in 1990 where they established a sort of 'holiday camp' for street children from Manila. They characterize themselves as a sister-organisation to **Stairway Denmark (SDK)**. It is registered as a non-profit organization and currently has around 30 staff members and a board consisting of 9 members.

From 1994 to app. 2002 SFI initiated the development of a 'child treatment home' and a so-called 'Residential Program' focusing mainly on strategic services that were supported by three DANIDA single grants from 1994 to 2002.

SFI tells the story of how they were overwhelmed at the 'child center' by the shocking proportion of the street kids who were victims of sexual abuse and realized that only few CSOs in Philippines were addressing this problem.

Since 2002 and until 2011 SFI has developed and used their own methods, training materials and practical experiences about awareness raising, prevention and aftercare counseling. Based on the experiences and results they decided to gather their efforts in establishing a Break the Silence (BtS) Program, which have been funded by four grants from mainly CISU and other donors like KinderNotHilfe, Leger Foundation and other partners.

Today SFI has developed into a Resource and Learning Center on Children's Rights, with its main office in Mindoro and a coordinating office in Manila that also manages its Break the Silence (BtS) Campaign. The SFI Manila office was established in 2010 and consists of 4-5 staff members. It serves as a secretariat for the CSAP (Child Sexual Abuse Program) as well as for the development of the national BtS network.

Stairway Denmark (SDK) was established in 1994 as a support - or sister association for Stairways Foundation Inc. (SFI) in the Philippines. It is a voluntary based organization with around 500 members.

In the early years SDK served as a pure funding organization for the Child Center for Street Children, but gradually they have 'developed into a more strategic partner of SFI', as they put it.

SDK carries out information work in DK through website, member magazines, presentations etc. and is now even using the SFI training material in Danish schools.

It became apparent during the time line session with SDK, how important the personnel relations have affected the establishment as well as the development of the partnership. For some of the volunteers it goes back to the days in primary school and for others in joining the Danish Civil Defense. They characterize the partnership as friendship based, all of them sharing the same drive and commitment. SDK emphasizes the creativity as the starting point and a key area for SDK e.g. when they from the very beginning started creating a partnership with an animation school in Viborg.

SDK in collaboration with SFI has provided numerous professional inputs like theater and film production, development of pedagogical tools and methods, technical assistance for building programs and not the least for the development of SFI organization, management, strategies, etc.

A mutually binding partnership that changes over time

From **SDK perspective** the partnership has always evolved around creating films or theater together with the vulnerable children and using this as the foundation of awareness-raising and capacity building of other stakeholders. They characterize the partnership as 'being good at grasping the unexpected opportunities' also with a negative starting point.

When SDK is looking back, they mention a crisis in the partnership in the beginning of 2000, when SFI had absolutely no money and staff was 'almost starving'. But somehow they managed to mobilize human as well as financial resources. They proudly characterize the partnership as never failing to see the huge potential in disseminating the many experiences and achieved results when working with the sexually abused children at the child center in Mindoro.

But SDK recognizes that partnerships change overtime and according to SDK it shifted from a friendship based to a more professional and strategic relationship around 2012, where the increased CISU funds and responsibility following this, made it more and more demanding. For SDK it became harder to get the board members to take up responsibility and engage in more administrative working tasks. As a consequence of this, the search for and entering of a new type of board members took place, which was 'less friends and more professional people'. A sad reflection was expressed by SDK board member, when he was looking back at the development of the partnership: "maybe we have lost something - and we somehow have to ask ourselves, whether we have fulfilled the mission of ourselves".

There are also moments where a certain mismatch between the partners occurs e.g. in periods where SFI is being very creative and coming up with lots of new ideas, then SDK have been faced by the challenge of making SFI holding on to an agreed plan.

SDK expresses a certain surprise - and pride in the fact that they "would never have thought it possible to achieve a turn over from about 400.000 d.Kr.in 2004 to 2.4 million d.Kr.in 2015".

From a **SFI perspective** the support from SDK is highly validated, especially in critical moments e.g. in situations when staff is feeling overloaded with work and they are being very supportive.

SFI perceives SDK as an important partner in a partnership with many and different roles. In SFI “we identify the issues and problems to be addressed and they are bridging in SDK according to what they see as options. They are important in coaching us”. They are also important in relation to identifying new funders. SFI continues: “SDK is a partner that somehow articulates our concerns”. SFI mentions as an example, where they lacked technical expertise in psycho social matters in relation to sexually abused children. Then SDK makes it possible to send to us, two skilled psychiatrists to perform training and guidance for staff. In this way, SFI argues, they have continuously been able to develop their professional approach and methods in relation to sexually abused children.

In general SFI highly appreciate the atypical form of support provided by CISU, since it is **long-term** and giving space to organizational/strategic as well as professional development processes instead of focusing solely on activities and events, as most of other donors.

At present, SFI is facing a new professional challenge since they are being pressed on an upcoming issue in relation to how to tackle the very many, young sex offenders, which are typically victims themselves. As SFI put it during the Time line session, “there are so many open windows of opportunities, but the body can’t make it”. But having a partner like SDK is of vital importance to us.

Today SFI is convinced they have proven a strong capacity in relation to sexually abused children, but at the same time acknowledge the fact that they need a push forward in the advocacy work through a national network. They express a sincere hope and wish for more professional support for the national BTS network in order for the CSAP to become self-sustainable.

The change CISU create

Great success in establishing networks at local, national and regional level

SDK and SFI have to a high extent given priority to - and succeeded in expanding their knowledge and experiences through establishing networks at local and national and regional level in Philippines.

The Tracer Study revealed an overwhelming success in establishing local resource centers/local networks as a platform for building up a national network.

The Time Line workshops in Cebu, Negros and Manila with about 56 participants representing 30 CSOs and LGUs (Local Government Units) have given evidence of some remarkable changes and results which have taken place since 2011 and mainly during the implementation of the BtS Programme. The feeling of an outstanding 'team spirit' among CSOs and LGUs in the local networks made an impression.

The Break the Silence Project (2011-2015) has established a network of 52 CSOs strategically in 12 regions spread throughout the country. They are operating as local resource centers/networks on Child sexual abuse incidents and most of them are involved in case management for victims. They handle disclosures of child sexual abuse incidents and some are involved in case management for victims. The BTS network is now the largest on child sexual abuse in the Philippines in terms of geographical outreach.

The greatest achievement according to the local partners and to SFI Manila is the collaboration with PNP (Philippine National Police), DSWD (Department of Social Welfare Desk) and DepEd (Department of Education). The strategy of capacitating the above mentioned duty-bearers together with CSOs at local

level on the issue of the rights of Sexually Abused Children and even performing advocacy activities together has proven a very efficient strategy of not only holding the duty bearers accountable, but also to anchor the work in a self sustainable way.

During the Time Line workshops, it was discussed that the CISU funding as such, not directly is addressing the issue of poverty reducing results through Strategic services, but that it is a fact that more of the partners have been selected due to the high degree of legitimacy in working with livelihood interventions and even creating social enterprises alongside the CSAP program. The CISU funding has over the last 8-10 years mainly been targeting the capacity and advocacy work of CSOs and LGUs in order to reach the highest level of fulfillment of the Rights of vulnerable children.

At National level the SFI's training - and advocacy program with the Philippine National Police (PNP), DSWD and DepEd, has been most beneficial in the establishment and development of the local BtS network referral systems in relation to child sexual abuse cases. They already in 2006 took the initial steps to train and involve the law enforcers that carry the mandate to respond to the child abuse cases. Through this collaboration with Duty-bearers at national level, SFI has established a formal cooperation with the PNP, DSWD and DepEd in the local Districts.

At regional level SFI has shared their methodology and experiences through ToT in networks of children's CSOs in Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Cambodia and Pakistan funded by other donors and in Vietnam in cooperation with Danish Vietnamese Association and NGO Fontana (both members of CISU) funded by CISU.

In 2008 it was realized that working with others through network was the only way to sustain the achieved experiences and results. We had to practice the mobilization of different stakeholders (including GO) through advocacy work starting on local level. The Residential Program had to be targeted towards the capacity building of Manila based organizations and that we together had to work with the system. In general, the long term perspective of the intervention increased at that time. And it was made possible through long-term support from CISU.

The challenge in building a sustainable, national 'Break the Silence' Network

The BTS network is now the largest network on child sexual abuse in the Philippines in terms of geographical reach. The CSOs and LGUs are operating as local resource centers/networks on CSAP. The continuing experiences and results achieved at local level provide the national network with valuable input and a strong mandate to perform national advocacy work through the BtS network.

The challenge is now to find a balance in establishing a national network that is formalized on the one hand with well-defined roles and tasks (including leadership) among network core-partners and, on the other hand, secure a strong and dynamic network that is capable of quickly executing 'massive advocacy work' in a changing political context.

A strong commitment was expressed among the local and national partners met during the Tracer Study in continuing and further developing the local BTS networks as well as among the 6 core network partners to developing a national BtS network.

From donor dependency (crisis) to a variety of other funding options

SDK has worked actively to support SFI on access to and use of funding opportunities from a variety of other donors as well as SFI has supported their local CSO partners in getting support from other donors and in particular by Government programs.

DANIDA funded SDK/SFI with 3 single grants of app. 7.9 mill.D.kr from **1994 to 2002**. CISU has funded SDK/SFI since **2004** and onwards with 6 grants with a total amount of app. 8,650.000 D.kr.

The last grant from 2015 is a 2nd phase of the BtS network. SDK has also received a small grant from Oplysningspuljen (CISU) for the award winning video: "Red Leaves Falling".

SDK started in the 1990s by collecting app. 500.000 D.kr. a year from various private sources. Now they have a turnover of 2.4 mill d.kr. As volunteers they have been successful in collecting funding from Tips and Lotto, Lauritzen Fund etc.

The idea of creating a local and national BtS network came after the CSAP Pilot project which started in 2008. From there on SFI started entering into a much more 'strategic regime', as SDK put it.

SFI is claiming that without the support for long term development work through CISU and (KinderNotHilfe) it is not possible to sustaining the advocacy work and achieved results.

At present the financial challenge for SFI is how to finance the 'running costs' of the BTS secretariat in Manila for continuing the capacity development of CSOs and duty-bearers and to ensure the national BtS network is running. SFI argues that donors are focusing on activities and events only, not the core-costs of the organisation. The local level networks seemed to be running without depending on future funding, as planned by SFI, although the continuation of capacity building was considered necessary by most stakeholders.

How CISU create change

The role of CISU in capacity building of SDK

CISU has provided a number of capacity building activities during the period of the last 12 years.

SDK has been a member of CISU since 1996 and has since 1997 participated in 38 trainings with 44 participants including the obligatory annual experience sharing sessions and in 42 advisory services. A peak of participants in trainings and advisory services can be registered during 2002, 2004, 2007 and 2014 in relation to initiation of the Break the Silence Program phase 1 and 2.

As mentioned by SDK, the **change triangle** has created a valuable precondition for the partnership in focusing on capacity development in relation to prevention and treatment of Sexually Abused Children in combination with organizational strengthening of SFI and to use this as a platform for the advocacy work. The **Danish Civil Society Strategy** has also been of vital importance in the development of the partnership and intervention, it is argued by SDK.

CISU's joint 'learning visit' with advisor and assessment consultant in 2006 contributed with valuable insights and concrete input to the advisory service (both at project and organizational level) as well as to

the process of assessing future appraisals from SDK. The purpose of the visit was to improving the process of the external Assessment Committee and the CISU advisory services.

A CISU monitoring visit in 2012 did not address any particular issues in relation to the CISU funded projects. The 'Good advices' from the Assessment Committee and responses from Advisors to Status and Final reports have been used by SDK for inputs and focus to the projects applications and development .

Creating change through synergy

Tracing the processes and results over the last 12 years in relation to the CISU contribution, one reflection is that the **combination** of our funding and capacity development interventions together with the assessment system and supplemented with the thematic and monitoring visits, provide CISU with an in depth knowledge on strengths and challenges in the partnership as well as in the interventions. We believe that through that synergy, changes have taken place according to the Theory of Change of CISU.

Reflections on assumptions

Long term development is essential, so that members, partners and CISU continuously can improve and develop the capacity development of partnerships and international development work. The CISU funding is, as mentioned again and again by SFI, remarkable in the sense that partnership processes and long term advocacy work only can develop overtime, based on learning from experiences during implementation.

As stated by SFI during the Tracer Study, a strong independent Civil Society is an important balance to state and market. Given the recent political context in Philippines and a concern over the future space for Civil Society, we were faced with a strong need and wish to meet with other Danish supported CSOs and with the Danish Embassy, not only to expose and disseminate the work and results, but also to ensure more impact for ensuring rights of vulnerable children and exploring new ways of collaborating with other types of stakeholders including the private sector, as suggested by SFI. The need to explore relevant SDGs and share the implementation with other relevant partners in future was another concern.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Terms of Reference
2. CISU's Theory of Change 2014
3. CISU's Theory of Change – Outcome Challenge
4. Interview : PADS staff
5. Focus Group discussion and interview: GWAVE + LGUs
6. Time line: Kapaski and LGUs from Bayawan and Mas-bibo and Siaton
7. Time line: Kapaski and LGUs from Guihulngan and Tayasan
8. Timeline: BCDCl and LGUs
9. Timeline: Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI)
10. Interview using the Time Line: Stairways Denmark (SDK)
11. Interview BtS network core partner: CAPIN (Child Abuse Prevention Intervention Network)
12. Interview BtS network core partner: LINGAP

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