

# REPORT

## South African Delegation Learning Visit to Sweden

### “Children and their Rights”

Stockholm, Sweden, 15-18 April 2019

16 April 2019

Meeting with  
Barnombudsmannen –  
Office Ombudsman  
for Children

#### *Discussion and key lessons learned*

The meeting started with introductions by the team from the Children’s Ombudsperson’s Office as well as from the Ministry of Employment. The expectation from the South African delegation was around the issue of child rights governance and how political will is maintained for children. The purpose of the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is to advocate for children’s rights and ensure that children are aware of their rights. The work of the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is similar to that of the South Africa Children’s Rights Commissioner housed in the South African Human Rights Commission.

Before the presentation by the Swedish Ombudsperson’s office started officially, the expectations from the SA Delegation for the meeting and the learning visit were discussed, as follows:

The South Africa delegation mentioned that SA is blessed with the best laws and policies, but states that many problems occur when it comes to implementation. It was mentioned that in the wake of democracy, an Office of the Rights of the Child was hosted in the Presidency that coordinated all issues pertaining to children which ensured that children’s rights received prominent political will and commitment. However, the delegation mentioned that after the second democratic administration, the ORC was moved to line departments, which has resulted in a decline in children’s issues and their rights being presented at the front of policy making, plans and programmes.

Henceforth, another expectation that was raised by the SA Delegation was how to obtain and maintain political will and commitment for children.

#### *Inputs from the South African Delegates:*

- The NACCW presented the concept of child and youth care workers and the safe parks model in South Africa, which exist in all provinces in the country and is being scaled up in the Lebanon and Syria.
- Save the Children SA shared its interest in the policy framework for children and their rights at the center of local government in Sweden.

- The Center for Child Law highlighted keen interest to learn how all partners in Sweden work together towards meeting all children's rights. Karabo indicated that some areas in South Africa have had a regression on children's rights over the past 10 years.
- Delegates from the South African Parliament indicated that SA does not have a particular structure for children in Parliament and was keen to explore how Parliament can add a portfolio on children and youth and stated there is a potential opportunity to put children first and obtain political will with incoming politicians in the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament after the elections on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. Interest from the researchers from Parliament was to learn about Swedish programmes for children and youth and how institutions work together: from the executive to the legislative as well as with civil society organisations. The delegation was keen to learn more about the role of Parliament in terms of quality oversight and accountability of stakeholders.
- Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation highlighted its work around the delivery of quality education, fostering of social cohesion and inclusion and supporting the government to meet its development goals and objectives. Expectation from the CRF was to learn more about the children's rights space and how governance can fulfill children's rights in totality through an inclusive partnership with all stakeholders including foundations.

A presentation was done by the legal officer in the Ministry of Employment on children's rights policy in Sweden, with policies, accountability and mainstreaming of children's rights. The presentation touched on the fact that Sweden is facing challenges similar to those faced in South Africa. The basis for the work of the Ministry of Employment is the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has been ratified by Sweden and will form the legal framework to promote and protect all children's rights. The Ministry has a children's rights coordination unit that works to ensure that government's work is in line with the CRC and which reviews all legislation proposals to ensure that all new legislation is aligned to the CRC. The Swedish government views the role of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children as very crucial as it holds powerful authority on children's issues in the country. The government's quality assurance on children's issues is mainstreamed through the coordination unit in the Ministry of Employment. The Ombudsperson is governed by the government and remains in close dialogue with the government and Parliament. The Ombudsperson submits an annual report on topics pertaining to children every year. Other delegates mentioned similar expectations as to learn how Sweden is implementing programmes for children and teach partners on children's rights.

Christopher Karlsson from the Ministry of Employment then stated that Sweden has put children at the center of its policies, emphasized accountability of duty bearers and mainstreaming of children's rights in all government policies and programmes.

#### **Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

Sweden approved a national strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden. The country is in a process to incorporate the CRC into Swedish law. Sweden was among one of the first countries to sign and ratify the CRC and it will be part of Swedish legislation from January 2020 as declared by the Prime Minister. Children's rights had not had sufficient impact on political processes before, neither were children's issues sufficiently recognised at

local levels especially in area of migration. Parliament has voted positively for this proposal to have all laws pertaining to children aligned to the CRC and the implementation process is underway. Government has communicated a package for this to the public and is training all provinces and municipalities on how to integrate children's rights in local policies and plans.

**The presentation by the Children's Ombudspersons team was done by Fanny Davidsson and Amanda Bertilsdotter Nilsson.**

They explained that the Ombudsperson for Children is a government agency representing children in Sweden regarding their rights and interests in the CRC. The mission is to listen to children and young people and advocate for the realization of children's rights. The Vision of the Office is to ensure that children know their rights and know where to turn to in case their rights are violated; with particular emphasis for children in vulnerable situations (children living in institutional care, displaced and migrant children; children living in township and rural areas)

The office of the Ombudsman is governed by government and works in close dialogue with government departments and Parliament. Sweden ratified the CRC in 1991 and established the Ombudspersons' office in 1993. The office is regulated by the Children's Act. The Ombudsperson can criticize but not litigate government. At this moment in time, 25 persons work for the Ombudsperson's office in the admin unit, communication and legal and research unit. The office is working at a general level as it does not have a role of supervision and may not intervene in individual cases but has a reporting duty to the social services if individual cases get reported to them. The office has the legal authority to call for information from and meet with authorities at all levels in Sweden. The core of their functions is centered around three themes: Listen, Monitor, Advocate.

The Ombudsperson's Office ensures: that children are heard in telling their stories about their lives; monitor that legislation and regulations are consistent with the CRC and push for implementation of the CRC at all levels.

The experience from the children is that they are happy that finally someone is listening to them: they are often satisfied with the fact that they can tell their story. A report from the Children's Ombudsperson goes regularly to the Minister and an annual dialogue is organized between the Minister and children themselves.

The office of the Ombudsperson can investigate children's rights violations and raise these with the executive. Based on the type of allegations, the Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Employment then decides what to do with the case and refers the case to the respective line ministries. Thereafter the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children follows up directly with the government authorities.

The Office of the Ombudsperson undertakes a lot of teaching on children's rights with the municipalities, and local authorities and finds innovative ways to reach out to people and share information; it has an e-learning site and creates many dialogues on children and their

rights through its website.

The Office of the Ombudsperson maintains constructive collaboration with Parliament and civil society.

Difficulties municipalities still face is not necessarily knowing how to interpret the CRC as to implement it well and do navigate power relations between parents and children.

In 2015, Sweden faced a difficult situation as many migrants came over the border including many unaccompanied minors. This influx led to a complete collapse of the social services as they could not cope with the situation at all. So, the Office of the Ombudsperson heard 600 children that time and issued a special report on UACs. In the end, many UACs left in the same way as they had come, and nobody really understood where they went.

**Some of the Key Lessons:**

- Children are given real opportunities to engage with high level individuals and in important settings where their voice voices are being heard and influence policies and programmes;
- The Office of the Ombudsperson does not have a power to litigate the State but works in close collaboration with the executive through the Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Employment, with Parliament and civil society;
- Office of the Ombudsperson works closely with decentralized authorities to teach them how to interpret the CRC for daily implementation;
- A lot of insight to be learned on how to use social media and e-learning to reach many people with awareness on children rights.

***Discussion and key lessons learned***

The purpose of the meeting with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to get an understanding of how Sweden is promoting and protecting children’s rights, especially in its foreign policy. International law is everything that Sweden respects and its international reputation has been built on their respect for human rights. Sweden has an official human rights ambassador in place. Swedish government views international law seriously and has committed itself to promoting children participation in issues that concern them in international fora such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

- Normative Work:**
- Part of the Third Committee at the Human Rights Council
  - Uses a rights-based approach building on a child rights perspective
  - Has a feminist foreign policy
  - Sweden aims to make both boys and girls visible in all resolutions
  - Ensures that prohibition of corporal punishment is integrated in all its resolutions
  - Are most concerned about complex sexual reproductive health and rights issues in international cooperation: child marriage, violence, HIV infections.

**Development Cooperation**

Development cooperation is an integrated part of foreign policy with 1% of GDP dedicated to development cooperation. Poverty and Human Rights Based Approach are two perspectives

**Meeting with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

*Purpose:  
How to promote children’s rights especially in their foreign policy*

which get analysed in all areas of Swedish development cooperation. There is a strong and popular support to uphold 1% of GDP to development aid.

The ambassador of human rights made a presentation on the stance of Sweden with regards to human rights and explained that the rights perspective derives from a set of all universal human rights principles based on respect and accountability. Therewith Sweden also applies the EU guidelines on the protection and promotion on the rights of the child. The ambassador explained that human rights is basically what Sweden sees to do in the world; being mostly associated with the protection of women and children's rights. The Ambassador expressed her frustration that sexual and reproductive health and rights and LGBT rights are increasingly challenged.

SIDA: The Swedish International Development Agency finances and manages development projects all over the world with 700 staff working all over the world. There is a lead specialist for democracy and human rights based in Stockholm. SIDA prefers to finance targeted interventions on children's rights that are based on a human rights-based approach to development. It will be interesting for all to read further up on how SIDA applies a human rights-based approach to programming in their development aid. 25% of SIDA's contributions have children as targets.

The main sectors that SIDA is financing are: health, education, social and child protection and humanitarian support. More and more support from SIDA is being channeled through the UN and UNICEF, as UNICEF is an important partner for SIDA on children and their rights and as humanitarian actor.

Additionally, Sweden has a person in place to work solely on the situation of children in armed conflict around the world as they consider children as priority who should be treated primarily as victims in a situation of armed conflict.

In the Security Council, Sweden has four priorities;

- 1) Children's ability: their right to be heard: their voices should be heard
- 2) Children's right to education
- 3) Children's health

Sweden took over the Presidency on Children in Armed Conflict. Every year, the Minister of Foreign Affairs hosts consultations with the children; recommendations from these consultations are integrated in the recommendations to the UNGA with the Prime Minister present. Lastly, Sweden is launching a drive for 'democracy' which they consider as the best system for governance and they are seeking for partners to align in this drive. Sweden enhances collaboration with civil society in foreign policy and promotes work with the media and civil society equal to working with government.

**Meeting with Lars**

***Discussion and key lessons learned***

## Arrhenius –Light Refreshment

Läkarmissionen is an Aid Organisation that promotes poverty alleviation from a rights perspective. Support to the weakest of societies usually women and children. Läkarmissionen helps fight poverty from a rights perspective, social care, education and self-sufficiency programmes. 2018 Dr Dennis Mukwege Nobel Peace Prize Laureate – Läkarmissionen supported his medical education, his work and the building of the hospital (Denis Mukwege is a Congolese gynecologist). He founded and works in Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, DRC where he specializes in the treatment of women who have been raped by armed rebels. Lars helped develop the legislation around Anti Bullying in the school system.

### *“How to Create an Effective Anti-Bullying Legislation”*

**Background To The Anti-Bullying Legislation** – Sweden like many countries, had a very high level of bullying cases reported and in Sweden this came to a pinnacle when a young girl (13) committed suicide Johanna Grund from the bullying. Her family wanted compensation and so did the family of Måns – a 12 year old boy committed suicide. Grund and Måns brought bullying to the fore and this law and the establishment of the anti-bullying law as well as the establishment of the Child and Education Ombudsman (BEO.) (Lars Arrshenius was the first BEO)

Anti-bullying 2006 was put into the Discrimination Act this was then enacted in the Education Act in 2010.

### **Brief about the Anti –Bullying Act**

- Bullying was given Zero Tolerance in all the schools and universities.
- The teachers were expected to see and notice the signals – the wider definition, rough treatment and help needed regardless of type of bullying – teacher must act immediately even if it’s happened once only and not only after many times!!!
- A very clear responsibility put on teachers to look out for signals, like a lonely child sitting alone investigate do something about the act
- Every school had to have an Equal Treatment Plan the plan is about how to work on a preventative basis and who is responsible for upholding certain rules, who should be protecting the child, what role and who is responsible in the processes.
- As a lawyer and BEO they could sue for damages, taking schools to court for neglecting the children, during their watch.

### **Key Lessons:**

- **The Role of the Child and Student Ombudsman (BEO):**
  - To protect the interest of the child
  - To bring information of the act, to all
  - To advice, interpret the law
  - To examine complaints
  - Litigation done and complainants paid out by the owners of the school for allowing the bullying
  - Representation was free to the child
- **Have the numbers of bullying decreased?**

This is now a part of the education department to do an analysis every three years. The percentages are rather low and been kept on a low level, especially compared to other countries.
- **Has the legislation created greater awareness amongst children and parents?**

In 2010 - 300 cases (complaints) and the figure then went up that was to show in 2018 - 2000 complaints received from children so the awareness made a real difference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Has the legislation made a difference at a school level?</b> Numbers show that schools are working actively against bullying 1993 it was very low and it has steadily gone up. Every school has to have an equal treatment plan</li> <li>➤ <b>Prevention could still improve – much debate continues if this is the best way of dealing with Bullying in the School.</b></li> </ul>
Meeting with Bris	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussion and key lessons learned</b></p> <p>The Bris is an NGO Similar to ChildLine/Lifeline South Africa, which provides a children’s helpline where children can call in and be assisted with different issues. It is one of the biggest organisations in Sweden advocating for children’s rights. Founded in 1980, it is funded by corporate organizations and the calls are subsidized by corporate as well. The main purpose of Bris is to strengthen the rights of the child by supporting, mobilising, advocating and fundraising. The organisation hosts annual school campaigns with high profile people to spread awareness on children’s rights such as bullying and sexual harassment.</p> <p>Public engagement is conducted on children’s rights through visiting schools and local politicians and builds a child rights network who will advocate for the realisation of children’s rights. Every year, based on the data from Helpline, the Bris compiles an annual report where they present their findings to high level authorities and politicians. There are 5 network meetings a year across Sweden with key practitioners. Most of the topical issues that children raise is linked to mental health including self-harm, depression, and suicide. BRIS works to identify the network of family members around the child who can play a vital role in the life of the child.</p> <p>Through the helpline, it was discovered that the most frequent reasons for contact are: Mental health, family and family conflicts, Violence, abuse and harassment with the most common callers girls aged 14 years.</p> <p><b>Key Lessons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The NGO receives its funding from corporate entities through their Corporate Social Responsibility with the title <b>“How do you care for children”</b>.</li> <li>➤ BRIS has 3-5,000 appearances in the press every year as they can build their advocacy based on data by analyzing the incoming calls;</li> <li>➤ Children can call, chat send mails anytime a day.</li> <li>➤ Bris is looking for more international cooperation to discuss innovative solutions through technology.</li> </ul>
Meeting with UNICEF National Committee for Children	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussion and key lessons learned</b></p> <p>There have been great developments around children’s rights and advocacy for children’s rights in Sweden. The country has also witnessed progressive developments on migrant children, who are on the move and are most vulnerable. It was highlighted that children who are not documented or registered should not be excluded from enjoying their right to education and health. The exclusion of undocumented children from their rights to basic services results in a large number of children being denied the opportunity to vital elements contributing to their development, which include good health, quality education and social protection.</p>

**Key Lessons:**

- UNICEF National Committees raises funds from the private sector, promote children's rights and secure worldwide visibility for children threatened by poverty, disasters, armed conflict, abuse and exploitation.
- Sweden UNICEF National Committee supports all aspects of CRC implementation, with a focus on migration, eliminating violence against children (especially domestic violence), social exclusion, use of Swedish ODA for children, CRC in schools.
- The Natcom uses evidence/reports, gets views of children, talks to decision-makers, engages with media and campaigns and provides training for social workers.
- Examples of achievements (working with others) includes incorporating the CRC into law, education and health of migrant children, and the use of best interest of the child assessment for assessing migration cases, establishing firewalls between departments when dealing with migrant children.
- UNICEF Natcom in Sweden works with others such as the children's ombudsman and is a key partner of the Swedish government on ODA and SCF and Bris on campaigns. Piloting work on child-friendly cities.
- UNICEF often takes time to assess evidence and does not speak out before understanding and evaluating different positions – can be a strength as well as a weakness at times.
- Raises about \$100m from corporates and public annually.
- The country has demonstrated clear steps to focus on basic care for children, especially those that are not documented.
- South Africa needs to focus and advocate for the special care of undocumented children as there are many children, especially whose parents are foreign nationals that do not have access to basic education and health due to absent documentation.
- UNICEF Sweden has shown strength with regards to children's involvement in many programmes, which South Africa could learn from to ensure that plans and programmes reflect children's ideas and needs.

**17 April 2019**

**Meeting with World Childhood Foundation**

***Discussion and key lessons learned***

World Childhood Foundation was founded by Queen Silvia in 1999 with the aim to prevent violence and child sexual abuse. It is a small flexible organization with offices in Sweden, Brazil, Germany and USA with a network of co-founders, advisors, donors and corporate partners. The foundation Identifies, assesses and supports local and international projects that prevent violence against children, sexual abuse and exploitation. Support is offered to projects financially, strategically and through capacity building and networking opportunities.

It acts as an incubator and invest in 'fire souls' and new methods, responding to identified gaps in the system. There are approximately 100 current projects in 16 countries. The thematic areas of focus include protective family environment; child safe travelling and tourism, child safety online, child friendly social and legal response.

**Discussions and key points:**

- Swedish laws help create a safety net for children by creating the context for collaboration and cooperation of all role-players. The observation made was that services in South Africa are fragmented in comparison.
- The child index project exists in 40 countries –an 'out of the shadows' program for child sexual abuse is funded by Oak foundation and the Economist. The project aims to identify areas to focus on in preventing child abuse and identify gaps.
- Sweden is a feminist government and holds both child participation and involvement of all parents as very important, recognizing that a protective family environment promotes early bonding and strong families. Moreover, there is a promotion of parenting programs involving fathers.
- In the child safety travelling and tourism program, there has been a focus on South East Asia. When Swedes travel to these countries, they are able to identify, and report abuses of children to Swedish police. A logo has been created to help children identify and access help from Swedes.
- Another program is the campaigning against the use of orphanages as tourist attractions, exposing the risk of attracting paedophiles and staff/ volunteers who abuse children.
- Preventative and on line therapeutic program of people who watch pornography (including a manual, movies, setting up virtual centres and face to face treatment for groups) is another interesting program within the foundation
- Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) is a programme for 0-6-year olds which focuses on passive smoking, depression in parents, different types of abuses and parents abusing alcohol.

**Key Lessons:**

- Sweden uses the Barnahus Model through the Children Advocacy Centre. This is a model that South Africa can adopt and utilize as a way of working to lessen the trauma for abused, high risk children. The protection of children is demonstrated as the model protects the vulnerable child to not feel like the victim and implements less traumatic ways of intervention.
- South Africa can explore a full partnership with the Childhood Foundation and ask to become one of the countries they support with the specific programs we need and can implement. The child safety travelling and tourism program for example can be adapted for national use in South Africa and promote the protection of South African children by tourists and South Africans who travel.
- Cyber responsibility: Swedish police officials have access to company laptops to gain access to criminal activities of criminals. This is a way of reducing crime as potential perpetrators

	<p>know that the police have access to their computers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children have access to a prevention game which aims to teach children on how to deal with adults trying to engage with them in an aggressive manner. South Africa can develop a similar game that aims to raise awareness on aggressive behaviour and how they can deal with people acting aggressively towards them.</li> <li>➤ There is a Virtual online therapy for perpetrators to allow them the opportunity to take responsibility to change their criminal behaviour and improve themselves anonymously without people knowing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meeting with Barnhälsovården (Child Health)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Discussion and key lessons learned</i></b></p> <p>The objective of the BVC is to promote child health and development, prevent diseases in children and focus on early identification and initiation of interventions for health, development and nurturing environment. Its health unit focuses on continuous training of staff, programmes in line with evidence, innovation, implementation, developing methods and guidelines, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation. There are 116 child health centers (69 private and 58 public), and 494 child health center nurses. It was further indicated that vaccination coverage for 2-year-olds in Sweden include; 97% Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Hemphill’s Influenza, Hep-B, 96.5% Pneumonia and 96.7% Measles, Mumps and Rubella. The presentation highlighted the need for needs-based finance models which focus on allocation of budgets based on the needs of the population and not necessarily its size. Furthermore, health professionals provide home visits to families with special needs to assist and ensure that they are helped accordingly.</p> <p><b><u>Key Lessons:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continuous support and training must be provided for staff working in health centers</li> <li>➤ Unlike child health structures in South Africa, which are primarily led by doctors, the BVC has entities run by nurses.</li> <li>➤ In terms of statistics, national statistics should not be used to generalise shortcomings or achievements for all groups of children. Disaggregated data must be analysed on a local or municipal level to make accurate inferences.</li> <li>➤ South Africa would benefit from a comprehensive child health programme like BVC, on which children are monitored and evaluated from birth to age 5.</li> <li>➤ There is a need to encourage fathers to participate in the development of their children and offer them parenting skills to be able to do so.</li> <li>➤ National statistics should not be used to generalise shortcoming or achievements for all groups of children. Disaggregated data must be analysed on a local or municipal level to make accurate inferences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meeting with Save the Children</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Discussion and key lessons learned</i></b></p> <p><b>Participants from Save the Children Sweden (SCS):</b>  Ola Mattsson: Director Domestic Programme, Sara Granath: Programme Director, Children in Migration, Ulla Armyr: Area Director Southern Africa and Ulf Rickardsson: Chief Strategy Officer.</p>

SC is turning 100 year this year and has been part of the evolution of Child Rights agenda from the Declaration of the Rights of the Child through to the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The development of Child Rights in Europe was outlined from the consequences of the 1<sup>st</sup> WW and the peace period that came with trade blockades of the loosing countries in Germany, Austria and Hungary. A 100 years later in many ways the world seems to be a better place for children.

SCS is a member based popular movement organisation with 65 000 members across 200 of 290 municipalities in Sweden fostering social contract of Swedish society. SCS has three thematic areas: Child Rights Governance (CRG), Child Protection (CP) and Child Poverty (CP). SCS with Save the Children International (SCI) works in 40 countries and is responsible for resource mobilisation and development of thematic issues in particular CP and CRG. There is greater emphasis on development than humanitarian support.

Municipalities, though quasi-independent, are seen by SCS as central for the delivery of Child Rights (CR). There are also disparities between municipalities and within individual municipalities in the delivery of services for children. This is also evident in SA given the structural inequalities that are historical and self-inflicted post-apartheid. The challenge for SA is how best we can bring to live the safer communities' framework that is in place as part of undoing the structural inequalities at municipal level.

The MDG/SDG has done a lot in bringing about improvement on Child Rights but still not enough having pockets of poverty even in Sweden. Countries that did not progress with the MDGs were in conflict creating vulnerabilities for children. As such, there is still a lot of activism work required within the sustainability agenda.

The challenge therefore, is to acknowledge the progress without being complacent. As CSO we need to rediscover new forms partnerships and explore new funding mechanisms that are more sustainable for CR than project based and short-term approaches.

In relation to CRC, SCS has been instrumental in monitoring the CRC together with children and adolescents with supporting the development and submission of complimentary report to the Committee. This component of monitoring the CRC is widespread even in SA. SCO's do submit complimentary reports to CRC and ACEWRC, but the question would be how best to involve more representation of SCOs' and children/adolescents.

SCS was active in advocating for the banning of corporal punishment, which happened even before the CRC. This change was strategic for SCS because the relation between children and adults is shown in how they choice disciplinary measures in bringing up children (migrant and non- migrants). Key issue is how we look at the relationship between adults and children as right holders and their development. This is an ongoing enterprise and needs constant reflection by children and activists given the ever-changing socio-cultural dynamics of communities/societies/countries. This forms part of the basis for Child Rights.

**Key Lessons:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is clear lobbying around the issue of unaccompanied children and clear simple step by step process of how to lessen the risk for vulnerable children. South Africa can explore as this is a key challenge we have and to engage on.</li> <li>➤ There is a programme called 'LANDING SAFELY' for children on the move. 'Landing safely' is about getting the children settled but also helping the legal guardians in their interaction with the kids. What to do when you get a child who speaks a different language, has different belief systems.</li> <li>➤ A lot of the Save the Children members are part of the volunteer system and the legal guardians' network. There is a general profile of people who are open to being part of the fostering or guardianship including former teachers and former social workers.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting with Corporate H&amp;M</b>	<b>Discussion and key lessons learned</b>
	<p>H&amp;M has a non-profit global philanthropic foundation funded by the H&amp;M founders. Its focus is on improving education, water and sanitation, equality and environmental awareness. It provides emergency relief for large scale disasters all over the world. They work in South Africa but now all work will go via H&amp;M South Africa. They have one donor, they have a small team, and they are revisiting their strategy.</p> <p><b>Key Lessons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The organisation plays an important role in child labour policies with their retail suppliers</li> <li>➤ It takes corporate responsibility around underage labour by ensuring that its suppliers do not encourage child labour and exploitation.</li> <li>➤ Set up policies that "Home" work e.g. beading, put basic systems, place</li> <li>➤ They enable youth development</li> <li>➤ Collaboration role helping organisations to approach things with a Collective Impact Approach – Doing a pilot in Bangalore, India, waste management system. Learning</li> </ul>

<b>Outcomes from the Visit and Way Forward</b>	
<b>Key lessons learned</b>	<p>During the debriefing on the last day of the visit, the following key lessons from the trip came to the fore by the delegates:</p> <p>The Swedes had made complex issues pertaining to children and their rights, simple. They have a lot of regulations but still had issues with coordination amongst various actors.</p> <p>It was noted that all agencies visited held children and their rights in high regard and understood their roles and responsibilities and that there was a clear understanding which organization is doing what, where and that many organisations used research as a basis for advocacy and decision making. Striking was that all organizations derived their credibility as a result of the voices of children through enhancing true participation. All delegates felt that children were at the center of policy making and that children's rights were truly embedded in the work these organisations were doing, which is different than in SA. In terms of the Ombudsperson's Office it was observed that the office did not have any power to litigate when children's rights violations occur but a great deal of influence in Swedish society with</p>

Parliament, government and civil society. Delegates felt there was a strong network of children's rights organisations in Sweden. Democracy was really functioning well in the matter of respect for each other's roles in the various departments and their work. All of Sweden's work in whatever field is Child-Centric.

All children and their rights: all rights are interdependent and indivisible

Different moments focus on different topics:

National footprint: mobilization around a common cause

Safety in homes/families

Safe schools

#### **What have we learned for SA?**

- 1) **Children's voices matter**: meaningful child participation and the need to institutionalise conversation with children in all matters pertaining to children;
- 2) The need to **embed children and their rights in our culture** as to put children first;
- 3) **Need to unite the NGO sector** working on children's rights; and better coordinate amongst NGO's as to ensure more effective use of resources and services that are being provided;
- 4) There is need to map services and programmes for children as to appreciate what SA already has and define **better coordination mechanisms** for more effective use of resources
- 5) Need to **scale up programmes** that work in the best interest for children and give small programmes space;
- 6) There is need to have programmes that respond to the complexity of the problems that children face;
- 7) **Strengthen the social service professionals** capacities; we learned there is a need for continuous education of all social service professionals;
- 8) We were struck by the effective **use of data for evidence-based advocacy**: something SA can improve on and do as often data and research is available;
- 9) We have to recognize that everyone in the country has a responsibility to meeting children's rights and **go back to the CRC**, African Charter on the Welfare of Children, Constitution and Children's Act;
- 10) There was a great yearning for **accountability** and through the Save the Children presentation, we learned that accountability for example at municipal level starts with good planning; very relevant for Parliament too
- 11) At municipal level there was **great collaboration between civil society actors and the corporate world** as a good example of meaningful social responsibility investments;
- 12) The need to **recognize that children face different issues** in different communities;
- 13) The need to **understand that children and human rights are cyclical** and that we are now facing a regression on children's rights in SA and in the world: need to take stock and understand how to influence public movements around children's rights;
- 14) The delegates recognized there is need for solidarity and coordination for improved implementation and **recognize SA's role on the African continent**, as role model and as Chair of the AU;

#### **The Delegates recognized:**

- It was a pity DSD did not join the learning visit; and that there was a need to intensify DSD's collaboration together with Civil Society on children's matters.

- The delegates recognized the importance to keep the group together and to keep the momentum going.
- Swedish return visits were discussed with representatives from the
  - Ombudsperson's Office,
  - World Childhood Foundation,
  - Senior Pediatric Doctor from BVC,
  - Lars Arsennius from Läkarmissionen.
- Trips to be coordinated bilaterally and through Children's Rights Commissioner.

**Overall it was observed that SA has:**

- A lot of important building blocks in place but that the case load is much heavier;
- Recognizing that households play a key role and that reading is important for children and their parents;
- SA has the best research institutions and
- There is a good dynamic and vibrant children's rights team in place and need to strengthen coordination and accountability.

The latter will derive from the structure the new Cabinet will decide to put in place as to coordinate children's rights and hold stakeholders accountability. ( this has to be advocated for)

The role of monitoring for accountability will be very important to support.

It was decided that there are influential leaders within the group and useful to identify a few pertinent issues we wish to achieve and win on.

**Madame Commissioner ultimately identified out all the important institutions we wish to see as an advocacy group and promoted:**

- 1) The re-establishment of the Office of the Rights of the Child in the Presidency
- 2) A Children's Portfolio Committee in Parliament
- 3) Collaboration with line departments
- 4) Put children and families first: families matter
- 5) Child Participation has to be taken seriously and accounted for.
- 6) Leave no one behind – children with disability have to be given space.
- 7) Need to speak with humility and from the heart: show that we care
- 8) A stakeholder strategy
- 9) Child participation: publish the children's manifesto and engage children in all decisions pertaining to them
- 10) Emphasis that the key role of the Rights of the Child Office (ROC) would be to coordinate the implementation of the National Plan of Action (NPAC) and provide oversight as to hold stakeholders accountable.

**Overall conclusion:**

- Need to discuss establishment of civil society coalition on children's rights
- Need to integrate meaningful child participation in all of our work
- Need to build a calendar of events with key milestones and social media and media platforms
- Identify champions for children's rights (political leaders/ political cadre) and build

young people who become champions for children's rights.

- Team should stay together, identify key stakeholders who were not part of the group and expand the group beyond this initial team; organize ourselves and create the right language and data for joint advocacy.
- Need for position papers for all new or strengthened structures we wish to see in place (ORC, Portfolio Committee in Parliament, and Civil Society Coalition on children's rights) as to invigorate these institutions.

Power point Presentations as received by various organisations and the 2 videos that were done.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XfQd4Eu-VcpF9YXuBI3Dfmn4h9rNovLu?usp=sharing>

**Thanks to all delegates for all commitment and contributions to making this trip most inspiring, meaningful, insightful, caring and fun.**