

Ending well

Phase 1 Interim report

Longitudinal Evaluation of EveryChild's Responsible Exit Process

"Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it"

Macbeth Act 1 Scene 4

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

EveryChild (EvC) is a UK international development charity formed in 2001 through a merger of two organisations¹. Initially EvC implemented child protection and rights projects through country offices in Eastern Europe CEE/CIS countries. Over time EvC's strategy changed and in 2010-2011 EvC began to close or localise most of its country offices in Eastern Europe and initiated new programmes in partnership with national organisation in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

In 2011 EvC played a key role in establishing Family for Every Child; an international alliance of national organisations with a proven track record in child care and protection. In June 2012 EvC took the decision to close all of their international programmes through a carefully managed process, and to transfer its income and assets to this new global alliance. The aim was to increase the long-term impact on the lives of children.

Between 2013 and 2016 EveryChild is scheduled to exit from 18 partners and/or country offices in: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Guyana, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Georgia, Moldova and Russia. They were concerned to exit well. As one Country Director said: *"I have seen lots of International NGOs leave badly without any sustainability. Two years later there is nothing left. The manner of leaving can destroy years of good work"*. To mitigate the impact of the exit, EvC Programme staff developed a set of responsible exit principles accompanied by a series of tools. To hold themselves to account for how well they have kept to their own principles and to share learning with others, EveryChild commissioned an external evaluation of their post-2012 exit process.

1.2 Purpose

The evaluation focuses on the extent to which EveryChild achieved its aim of exiting responsibly from its country offices and partners from 2012 onwards. They wanted to find out:

1. Have we done what we set out to do? To what extent have EveryChild's responsible exit principles been achieved?
2. If we didn't achieve what we set out to, what were the reasons for this? Is there anything that we could have done differently? To what extent was the learning from earlier EveryChild partner/country office exits incorporated into EveryChild's responsible exit approach?
3. What implications do the findings of this research have for others overseeing programme exits in the future?

EveryChild commissioned INTRAC as external evaluators to find out from partners², staff and external stakeholders how closely they had kept to their responsible exit principles and what other international agencies could learn from EveryChild's experience.

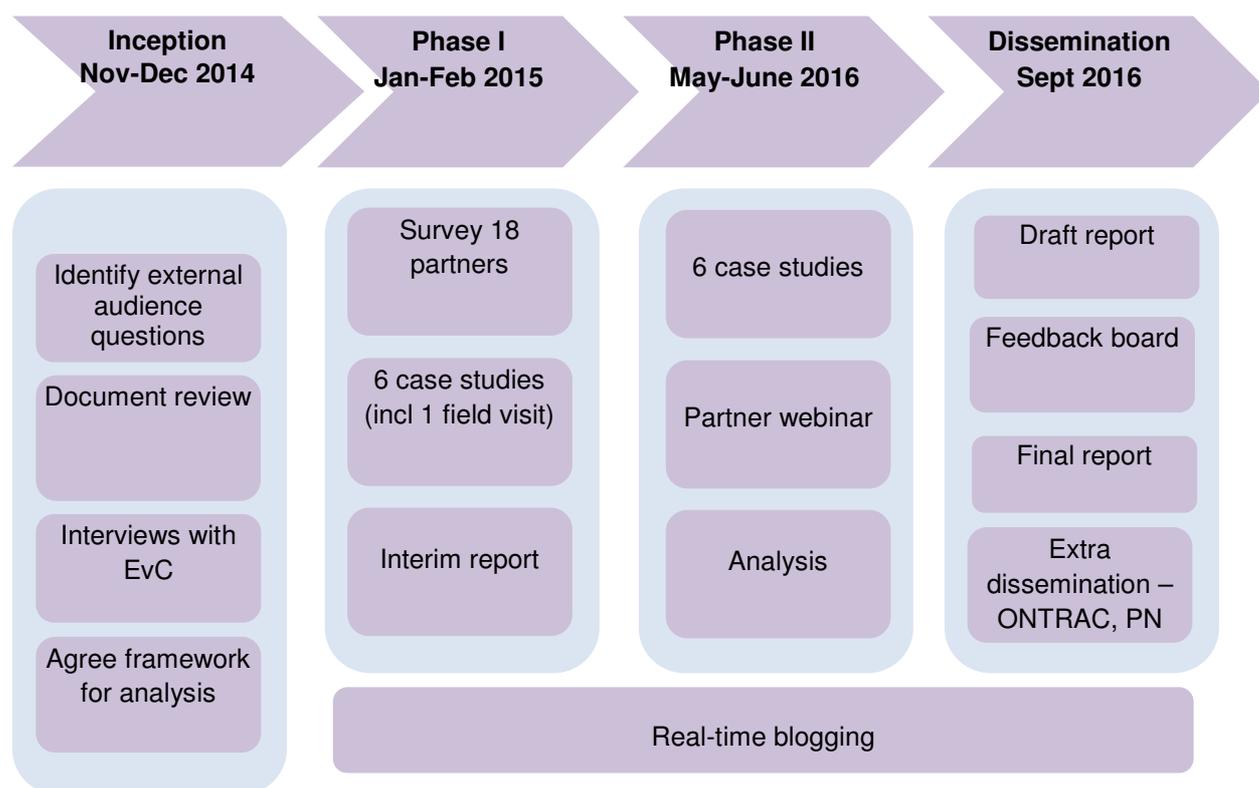
¹ Christian Children's Fund of Great Britain and European Children's Trust

² Unless otherwise stated in the report 'Partners' is taken to include Country Offices

1.3 Methods

The detail of methods used can be found in the Inception report, but in broad terms there are four main phases in this assignment:

1. Inception
2. Phase I Initial data gathering
3. Phase II Longitudinal data gathering and analysis
4. Dissemination



1.4 Limitations

There are obvious limitations to the depth and range of local perspectives that can be gathered from the largely desk-based methodology. In Phase 1 it was hard to access local stakeholders to get their external perspectives due to constraints of local language and communication technology. Furthermore because many of the exits were still in process it was not the appropriate time. We have tried to mitigate this by planning on-site visits from local consultants in Phase 2 in 2016.

To a considerable degree, whether or not EveryChild has managed to keep to its principles of responsible exit will be influenced by external factors outside of EveryChild's control (such as whether communities and local government have taken over responsibility or whether local NGO partners have been able to find new funders and thereby continue to deliver services). EveryChild is aware of this challenge which is why two of the exit principles start with the phrase 'as far as possible'.

Phase 2 of this research will take place between April and June 2016. This is still less than 15 months after exit for most of the case studies. It may be still too early to say what is genuinely sustainable.

2 Overall exit situation in January 2015

2.1 Survey feedback from all countries

The survey of the 18 partners in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, CEE/CIS countries and Latin America found EveryChild has worked with a wide diversity of organisations: some were local partners, others were localised field offices and three were still EveryChild Country Offices.

There were two broad groups of partners – ones they had worked with for one to five years and another group they had partnered with for more than 10 years and were relatively dependent on EveryChild. For the shorter relationship group with less dependence, exit was more straightforward and took between 3-12 months. The older partnerships were more complex and responsible exit took two to three years. Relationships were longer and deeper and the risks were higher. While they are still at different stages, 90 percent of respondents felt that their time scale was about right. Partners were particularly appreciative of the advance warning of closure. Although there were initially some mixed messages, they all found the exit principles helpful and the majority of respondents are either completely or mostly satisfied with the EveryChild exit.

2.2 Case studies

From the survey, six countries were selected as case studies to get a more in-depth perspective from diverse contexts and experiences.

- India and Malawi were both long-term country offices closing down as part of exit. India had been working through 10 NGO partners, but Malawi had been working directly with 10 communities. Both Country Offices relied heavily on child sponsorship income. They did not feel there was a genuine opportunity to localise.
- P4EC in Russia was distinct because it was an ex-country office that had started localising from 2009. The 2012 exit decision was part of a much longer process. It is not easy to disentangle the challenges of localisation with the process of exit.
- PKL had been a partner since early 2010, and EvC managed to hand-over responsibility for the extension and continuation of the Comic Relief grant to another UK NGO, ChildHope.
- CWISH Nepal had only received funding from EveryChild since 2011, so the global decision to exit came in the first year of a four year programme.
- LAC in Cambodia had worked hard to help design a new programme with EveryChild funded by the Big Lottery. Although the project eventually started after the global decision to exit, EveryChild felt they had to honour the work put in by LAC and not simply pull out. This means the project will not end before 2016. This programme is implemented jointly with another NGO Khemara but the case study focuses on LAC alone.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Malawi CO	Funding since 1995							
PKL Kenya		Funding since 2010						
India CO	Funding since 2001							
CWISH Nepal			Funding since 2011					
LAC Cambodia	Funding since 2008							
P4EC Russia	Localisation			Exit				
	<i>Localising decision</i>			<i>Exit decision in UK</i>			<i>Evaluation Phase 1</i>	<i>Evaluation Phase 2</i>

Comparing these six case studies with the overall survey, we see that these six represent the longer end of the spectrum in terms of length of exit. This is because the evaluation was specifically asked to focus on the more complex exits from longer partnerships. We intentionally excluded shorter ones such as Zimbabwe, Uganda or Ghana that only lasted just over 12 months (and were largely research-focused grants) and were therefore much easier and quicker to leave. Furthermore the case studies overly represent those who are later in exiting. Four of the sample case studies were still in the process of exit during the first phase data gathering in January 2015. In contrast, all but one of the other partners has completed their exit.

2.3 The question of localising

Before 2010 'exit' effectively meant localising field offices. EveryChild offices were leaders in the specialised field of reintegration of children from large institutions in contexts where there were few if any potential local partners. Consequently EveryChild offices localised in Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine and Romania. These were highly resource intensive and challenging processes. A number of mistakes were made leaving strained relationships and in some cases on-going bad feeling.

In March 2010 the EveryChild board made a conscious decision not to support further localising processes because they had found them expensive, hard-to-do well, labour and time intensive and some questioned whether it was really necessary or even supportive of the development of national civil society. But this decision was not well-communicated to the field. It did mean that when the global exit decision was made in 2012, localising was not considered as a viable option by EveryChild UK for its remaining country offices.

3 Exit process 2012 onwards

3.1 Who made the decision to exit and why?

EveryChild's decision to exit was not driven by financial crisis, but was an ideological and strategic one. They believed that with their limited resources they could have more impact on children's lives globally if they supported the development of a global alliance, rather than simply continuing as a medium-sized UK funder.

The decision to exit was made at a senior level within EveryChild UK in June 2012. A month later, the EveryChild Programmes team in London developed three principles to define and guide what responsible exit would mean in practice:

- i. As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable – this could be a continuation of services or lasting changes in children's lives.
- ii. Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work.
- iii. As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost.

These decisions were made in the UK. As one Country Director said: *"Although I was consulted, the decision had already been made in London. Our influence was really in 'how' exit should happen, not whether it should happen"*. Partners and Country Offices did feel that they had a meaningful influence on the process of exit. For example, as Country Offices were consulted, they felt they shifted the discussion from: *"one about exit to one about sustainability"*, helping partners to identify the support they needed to become more sustainable. Partners led the process of applying these three principles into their contexts and prioritising their programmatic response to the challenge of sustainability.

This level of engagement helped partners and Country Offices develop ownership of the process. Some adjusted their thinking remarkably rapidly, developing their own exit and sustainability plans. They quickly rose to the challenge of leading a fundamental change process in their countries. LAC in Cambodia also knew before the project started that EveryChild would be exiting. But for others, like CWISH in Nepal, it took much longer with previous leadership slow to address the imminent change.

Of the case studies only P4EC only Russia never really owned the post-2012 exit process, due to the breakdown of trust during the previous localisation process. They see the exit process as belonging to EveryChild rather than P4EC – it is *"their process"*, *"their milestones"*, *"their agenda"*. P4EC see the term is one-sided, reflecting EveryChild's agenda rather than their own. After all as they say, *"one side's 'responsible exit' is the other side's ongoing struggle for survival, sustainability and impact"*. P4EC staff do not use the term 'responsible exit' and claim they are unfamiliar with the Responsible Exit Principles

3.2 To what extent was the learning from earlier exits incorporated into responsible exit approach?

EveryChild had difficult past experiences of attempting to exit Country Offices under the guise of localisation. In the Eastern European or Former Soviet Union countries

like Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Albania and Ukraine the previous localisation processes had not been smooth. EvC learnt *“learnt how incredibly difficult it was to leave and how easy it was to do badly”* according to one staff member.

In Russia, in particular, the localisation process did not go well. P4EC Russia felt subjected to three separate due diligence processes (to take over the EU grant, to become an EveryChild partner and to join Family for Every Child). While only one of these was required by EveryChild, the processes were time-consuming and left P4EC feeling deeply distrusted. This lack of trust was exacerbated by staff turnover at EveryChild before 2011, confusion about ownership of outputs and poor communications about transfer of assets. Peru also stands out as a painful experience. EveryChild tried to complete the exit from their country office in just two to three months (influenced by financial pressures and the need for budget cuts). Because it was rushed and underfinanced, however, actual exit dragged on and became more costly with legal fees, tax complications and extra staff time required.

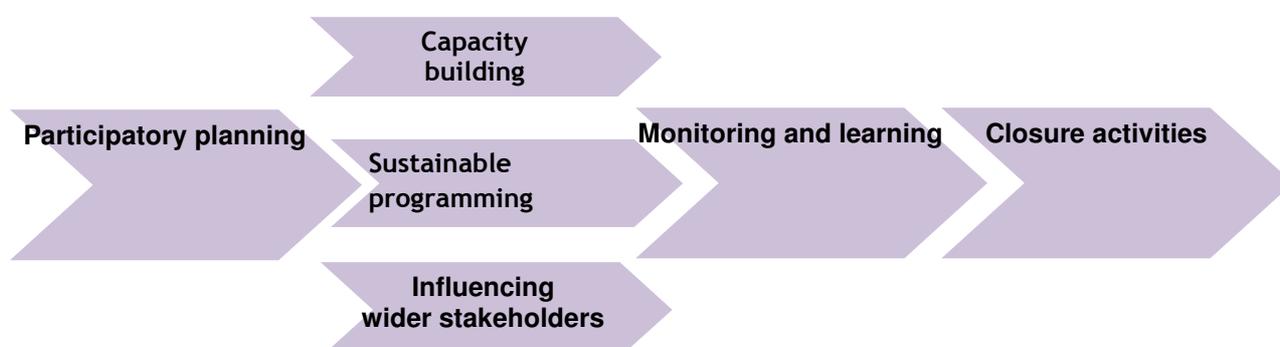
As EveryChild staff themselves admit: *“Through experiences like this, EveryChild have learnt the importance of investing time and resources into exits and planning them thoroughly. We have also learnt to be open and transparent during the exit process. Earlier approaches were more secretive and decisions were made from European offices without much prior notice. Later approaches have been much more collaborative.”*

3.3 Core elements to all exits

The case studies illustrate a number of elements common to all exit processes. Clearly each example used different quantities of these ingredients. Not surprisingly these elements reflect the responsible exit principles:

Elements of exit

- i. Participatory planning for exit
- ii. Rigorously sustainable programming
- iii. Capacity-building of local partners (NGOs, CBOs of local government)
- iv. Influencing wider stakeholders at community, district and national level
- v. Systematic learning, documentation and sharing of good practice.
- vi. Institutional/Partnership closure activities



Participatory planning for exit

Having taken the decision to exit, EveryChild faced a huge challenge in getting partners and Country Offices to develop and implement their own strategy and operational plan for exit. They achieved this local ownership remarkably well in most cases.

EveryChild invested considerable time in communicating as openly and honestly as possible why the decision had been made and what was happening. In an uncertain situation, this initially led to some confused and mixed messages, but what was clear and repeated again and again was that exit would be taking place. Furthermore EveryChild committed to maintain (and in many cases increase) levels of communication and support during the exit process, which mitigated partners' fears of being abandoned.

The Responsible Exit principles also helped reassure partners that children's well-being remained paramount. These principles were not a detailed blueprint plan, but simply three value-based aspirations. These enabled each of the partners the freedom to develop their own plans that applied to their specific context.

EveryChild supported partners to develop their plans for exit through staff visits. During these visits EveryChild staff played a facilitative role, asking the difficult questions but leaving it up to partners to make decisions and prioritise. For example in Malawi, EveryChild UK staff visited the country office in July 2012 and then again in December to assist them develop an exit plan. The exit strategy involved a fresh look at outcomes, not just continuing existing activities. EveryChild Malawi actively engaged local communities. Having informed them about the impending exit, they convened an initial two-day meeting with community members to rank and prioritise activities. The resulting strategy was translated into annual operational plans and budgets split into six-month intervals.

Objectives	Activities	Strategy	Milestones 6 monthly	Extra funding	Justification	Risk	Mitigation

The plans were revisited internally every three months and updated during the EveryChild UK visit every six months. EveryChild UK has provided oversight to ensure the exit strategy was implemented properly and adjusted in the light of learning.

In other cases, partners were slower to respond. For example with CWISH in Nepal throughout 2013, *"EveryChild kept asking us for our post-project plan"*, but it was not until April 2014 CWISH finally developed its own sustainability plan and exit strategy.

Another important element of the planning process was risk assessment. EveryChild facilitated a workshop with each partner to identify the risks that might increase for children once a project ends and the actions that could be taken to mitigate them.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigating action	Who responsible	By when

This risk management workshop proved to be a key moment for Pendekezo Letu in Kenya. Not only has it helped them adjust their programming, but it has given them confidence that they can continue without another donor if necessary.

Rigorously sustainable programming

The most important element of exit was making the programme work much more sustainable. As one Malawi staff member said: *“Programme work defines responsible exit. It is about what happens in communities when you leave”*. In the planning process partners identified:

1. Unsustainable programmes to stop
2. Sustainable programmes to handover to communities
3. Not yet sustainable activities which NGO partners and communities need to fundraise for

Stopping

Most NGO strategies are good at identifying new activities to start, but are notoriously poor at identifying which activities to stop. The exit process forced partners to be rigorous in naming the activities that they would stop doing because they would never be sustainable.

For example in Malawi, this included dropping plans to engage more with children living on the streets and not implementing one of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices studies. Some of the past activities, such as providing farm inputs were also discontinued.

Handing over

Each of the partners also looked at which of their existing activities could be taken on by local stakeholders. For example in Kenya teachers who had already been trained by Pendekezo Letu were encouraged to take the initiative and pass on their knowledge to new teachers. In Malawi the work on Early Childhood development focused on catalysing 120 Community-based Childcare Centres (CBCCs). They have also continued to stimulate and support community-led initiatives such as Children’s Corners; Child Rights Clubs in schools, Mothers Groups and HIV support groups. The same is happening in Nepal where staff believe that sustainable exit: *“is all about coordinating with existing structures”* as one put it or as another said: *“We are making community structures take more responsibility so that results are more sustainable.”*

Fundraising for

Some of the critical activities, however, require further financial inputs if they are to continue. So EveryChild is helping partners identify and connect with potential future funding sources. The neatest example comes from Kenya, where EveryChild was able to transfer responsibility for the Comic Relief grant to another UK NGO, ChildHope, to ensure no break in funding when EveryChild finished. As well as signposting to other international funders, EveryChild has helped partners identify local sources of funding. In India for example, rather than look for international funding EveryChild has encouraged and supported partners to seek funding from within communities and from government authorities, as well as Indian NGOs. In Malawi, communities have accessed support from the National Aids Commission.

Capacity building of key stakeholders

As part of exit and to enable handover of activities, EveryChild has focused even more on capacity building of partners, communities and local stakeholders. EveryChild India, for example, supported all partners to develop specific exit plans tailored to their needs. Partners were invited to participate in a Leadership Training Programme, which focused on areas such as strategic planning, programme management and M&E. The 12 month programme had monthly modules. Alongside this, EveryChild India helped partners to develop organisational development plans, strategic plans, and fundraising plans. They also supported partners to improve their documentation, and created opportunities for partners to meet with new donors and other local and international agencies.

Similarly in Malawi EveryChild provided tailor-made training to community based organisations in:

- Participatory Action Research so that CBOs could identify priority issues
- Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Resource mobilisation, including proposal development and grant management.
- Financial management
- Leadership and management
- Inclusion/disability.
- Child protection policy development.

The capacity building emphasis has been repeated in other countries. EveryChild has often used Resource Alliance to assist on fundraising. As PKL in Kenya attest: *“Through EvC, we were able to be trained in advocacy, research, resource-mobilisation – these are skills that we didn’t have before. We can live with these skills for many years.”*

Collaboration with government and national networks

As part of this focus on more sustainable programming, EveryChild has tried to build broader coalitions for change with wider stakeholders at community, district and national levels. As one respondent said: *“In exit external relationships with local stakeholders are key because they are there after you have left”*. For example in Malawi at a community level, EveryChild has focused on working with community structures on Child Protection, including a focus on child marriage. At a district level, they have cooperated closely with District Councils and District Executive Committees. At a national level EveryChild has sought to maintain the momentum for change by supporting national networks, such as Girls Not Brides and Better Care Network. They have also assisted the Government develop a national policy on street children. Similarly in Cambodia, LAC has lobbied hard with Government on the Juvenile Justice Act which it hopes will be adopted in 2015.

Systematic monitoring and learning

A key characteristic of this exit process has been the relentless monitoring and learning that EveryChild has driven. This has happened at all levels. Partners monitor their sustainability plan regularly, looking at the activities and milestones. The EvC Programmes Team in the UK has had six-monthly team reflection meetings to review and identify on-going learning about the exit processes globally.

As part of its exit process, EveryChild Malawi has invested considerable time and financial resources in analysing and documenting programme learning. The Malawi office has produced national reports on programme learning about: 'Approach to ending child Marriage' and 'Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations'. They have also contracted an external consultant to document the Journey of EveryChild Malawi highlighting achievements, lessons and best programme practices of working with children without parental care in Malawi. They also commissioned a video documentary for distribution to key government officials and international NGOs.

This evaluation itself is a further indication of EveryChild's desire to document and share learning from their experience with a wider audience.

Institutional or Partnership Closure activities

A final key element in each of the exits has been the activities specifically relating to the ending of the partnership or the closure of the country office.

As well as the expected final reports (both narrative and financial), EveryChild developed a number of tools to assist them exit well and capture learning. These include the Partnership Completion Report; Letter of Recommendation to potential funders; Partnership Completion Final Skype Call, and Partnership Completion six-month Follow-up Call. In particular, partners found that EveryChild's initiative to do a follow-up call six months after exit, both unique and helpful for closure.

In both India and Malawi, EveryChild hosted a one-day Legacy Conference to mark and celebrate the closure of the country office. The aim was also to share learning with local stakeholders from Government and NGOs. Partners and communities had the opportunity to reflect on their progress and take responsibility for next steps.

For country offices such as India and Malawi other institutional closure activities include:

- Final communication with children
- Destruction of child sponsorship data
- Handing over documentation to pass onto Family for EveryChild.
- Finalising human resource contracts.
- Disbursing legacy grants to CBOs
- Finance – valuation and disposal of assets and finally closing bank accounts
- Legal de-registration
- Communication to auditors, tax authorities, and the general public.
- Leaving the office and returning the keys to the landlord

4 To what extent were three principles of responsible exit achieved?

The core questions for this evaluation are: Has EveryChild done what they set out to? To what extent have EveryChild's principles of responsible exit been achieved?

As four out of the six exit case studies have not been completed yet and the other two only took place in the last year, it is obviously too early to answer this question. This will be the focus of the Phase 2 data gathering process in April – June 2016.

Whether or not these responsible exit principles are achieved, however, is outside of EveryChild's control. Responsible exit for EveryChild requires 'responsible entry' of others. Local stakeholders will need to step up into new levels of responsibility. As the Director of Children's Affairs in Malawi said: "*We have a workable exit strategy, but the challenge is on the government, chiefs, MPs and communities to ensure activities continue*". Although EveryChild can encourage this, it is not something they can ultimately determine.

Except for P4EC in Russia, all partners were very aware of the three principles. The principles were used to guide decision-making throughout exit. Although sometimes interpreted slightly differently by partners, having just three simple principles was extremely helpful. In some places, partners gave more weighting to some than others – for example in Cambodia LAC has placed more emphasis on principle three.

4.1 As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable – this could be a continuation of services or lasting changes in children's lives

Principle 1 is about long-term sustained impact, where past activities continue to bear fruit beyond exit.

PKL in Kenya has been the least affected by exit as ChildHope secured funding for a follow-up grant from Comic Relief (which EvC helped draft the proposal for). So up until January 2015 services have continued as funding has continued. PKL attest that "*So far there have been no negative changes as a result of EvC exit.*" Reports suggest that child protection structures are already becoming embedded into formal and non-formal schools. Furthermore, cases of child labour are reported and reducing. The community structures are also helping to trace parents who changed locality. The proof of on-going sustainability, however, will only be seen when ChildHope exits too.

In Malawi there have been particularly positive changes in community attitudes to child marriage; child protection; child abuse and child labour. There is every hope that these attitudes will continue as lasting changes. One Malawian community leader colourfully put it: "*EveryChild's departure is like the end of the tarmac road. The dirt road continues. It will be slower and bumpier, but we will get there all the same*". And a dirt road may be easier for communities to maintain on their own in the future. Furthermore exit has encouraged increasing numbers and activities of community groups like Village Savings and Loan Associations, Community-based Child Care Centres; Children's Corners and Child Rights Clubs in schools. In January 2015 communities were very positive about the on-going resilience of these structures, though time will tell whether or not they are sustained at such a high level.

Where financial inputs for services are required, however, there is greater uncertainty about the ability of communities to sustain the services. As one community leader said: *“If we receive extra funding, we will be able to continue the same level of services to children”*.

In India sustainability was a challenge due to the 100% dependence of some partners on EveryChild. Yet most programmes and services are continuing although not all of them, and not necessarily in the same way. Some projects and programmes were only due to run for a limited period and came to a natural end at the time of exit. Others have been scaled back or are being implemented in different ways either due to a lack of funding or a lack of community support (such as where there is a strong and influential presence of Hindu nationalist groups). The continuation of programmes will be supported in three main ways. The first is through community support facilitated through the establishment of Child Rights Protection Committees (CPRCs) in villages. The second is through securing funding from other support providers such as the Indian or State governments, or other NGOs. Third, EveryChild will be providing three legacy grants to three of the Indian NGOs to give them more time (6 -12 months) to raise funds independently of EvC.

In Nepal CWISH is still in the early stages of the exit process. CWISH predict that EvC's exit will cause *“a slight imbalance in the communities. But it is manageable. We are in contact with community mechanisms and are confident that they will take these issues forward”*. In Phase 2 it will also be important to investigate whether CWISH managed to handover implementation successfully to communities and whether the local stakeholders like District Education Office, the District Child Welfare Board, the teachers, the cooperatives and the Home Workers' Union have taken up the responsibilities as planned.

In Cambodia LAC believes that services to children are likely to reduce without EveryChild funding. They are hoping to secure replacement funding through another funder, though Cambodia is not presently a priority for donors. However, they are optimistic that their exit plan will go some way to mitigate this.

EveryChild's exit from P4EC in Russia has reduced the reach of some of their services. While P4EC have found other funders, including St Petersburg City Government, their services are at a reduced level and there are shortfalls in the core budget (which they are meeting through consultancy work). Services developed under the Prevention, Protection and Reintegration Programme continue, but have been scaled back until longer term funding is secured. But the Loss of Parental Care Index developed as part of the EveryChild support is still going strong.

4.2 Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work

This principle can be paraphrased as 'do no harm' to children and communities through exit. One way in which this has been interpreted is through the emphasis on ensuring continued child protection.

In Kenya the programme is on-going with no adverse effect. Child protection policies in schools have helped retention in education. Pendekezo Letu provides continuous training to the community-based child protection committees and offers support on issues such as legal representation and capacity building.

In Malawi early indications on child protection are positive. In the exit process, EveryChild trained all CBOs in child protection and helped each of them develop their own policy. They helped all ten CBOs to highlight protection risks in exit and put in place mitigation measures. Furthermore, child protection systems have become strong at community level with Child Protection Committees, by-laws, and government agents. There are clear procedures for reporting to police any child abuse as a criminal act.

In Nepal 30 Child Protection Committees and 45 school management committees/PTAs have received training to develop action plans to protect children in their community. It will be important to monitor the extent to which these CPCs and school committees have genuinely taken on responsibility post-project and EveryChild exit.

In addition to continued child protection there is also the question of whether children and communities are adversely affected as programmes are scaled back.

While PKL in Kenya is still unaffected, the other country case studies reveal that exit is likely to diminish services to children in some ways. In Malawi for example there is a likely loss to children of education bursaries. In India there is likely to be a detrimental impact because local NGOs will be able to support fewer children without EveryChild support. In Cambodia it is likely that the children and communities that LAC works with will be affected but it is not yet clear to what extent. It is unlikely that government will take over these services as it is not a priority yet.

In Russia children are affected by EveryChild's exit as P4EC cannot carry out the same level of service provision. They believe that had EveryChild continued funding they would have not only been able to keep existing systems going, but would have been able to replicate these models elsewhere. But 'Do no harm' is not the same as saying 'You should have done more good'.

It is hard to determine the extent of this detrimental impact, especially if you take into account the counter-factual argument above. What is clear is that EveryChild and partners have worked extremely hard to minimise adverse impact. For example in India, although children and communities were initially upset about exit, and struggled to understand it, respondents hope that the actual effect on children and communities will be minimal as the vast majority of child-focused services, particularly the Child Activity Centres (CACs) will continue in some shape or form. In some cases children and communities have even stepped in to run CACs, increasing their participation and ownership of these activities. Efforts by EveryChild India to link partners, CRPCs, and individuals within communities to sources of local government support alongside work to raise awareness of entitlements has also helped to ensure negative effects of exit on children and communities are reduced.

4.3 As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost

This third principle focuses on wider changes in society and sectoral change. Once again time will tell whether this principle has been realised.

Many of the case studies had invested time and effort in catalysing, supporting and strengthening local NGO networks such as Girls Child Network in Kenya and Girls Not Brides and Better Care Network in Malawi. In Russia collaboration between the

three networks developed under the EveryChild programme is continuing, although some are more active than others.

In many countries, exit involved a greater focus on advocacy on broadening the momentum for change into national and government circles. For example in Malawi EveryChild helped the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare develop a strategy for working with children on the street. In India the advocacy involved strengthening legal frameworks for child rights. In Cambodia LAC has focused on ensuring that the Juvenile Justice Act is passed as this will put more responsibility onto the government for the legal representation of juveniles (however LAC is worried that they won't have the resources to continue pushing the government). In Nepal, CWISH has worked closely with Village and Municipal Development Committees so that no one employs Child Domestic Workers through what they call the Green Flag movement for creating child labour-free zones.

Sustainability of partners

The sustainability of partners was intentionally not mentioned in the responsible exit principles. This was seen as something beyond EveryChild's remit and capability and secondary to the focus on sustainable services and impact with children.

Nevertheless, there has certainly been some progress towards sustainability of partners. PKL for example has been able to diversifying its income streams (having talked about it for some time). Other partners too like CWISH in Nepal have also been able to develop a resource mobilisation strategy through the exit process. LAC in Cambodia is fairly confident that when EveryChild leaves they will have secured replacement funding. Although they understand that there is a possibility that this might not happen, the knowledge that EveryChild is looking for new partners for their work gives them more confidence.

In India the impact of exit on the sustainability of partner NGOs is mixed, although it is expected that most will continue to operate in some form following the exit of EveryChild India. Many NGOs have been highly dependent on EveryChild, though the recent shifts towards raising resources from within the communities has been encouraging. Although these NGOs will struggle post-exit, as one respondent said: "*It is a good struggle*" because they will no longer be dependent on one donor; many will be partly community funded; they will have become better at fundraising; and they will be in a position to take advantage of government schemes. If these partners are able to survive in the short to medium term, they may even become more sustainable organisations following the exit of EveryChild India.

5 Learning conclusions from EveryChild's exit experiences

5.1 An impressive exit process encouraging sustainability

This is an extremely impressive exit process by EveryChild. They have managed to close down operations and end partnerships in 15 countries. Most partners are fulsome in their praise for the way in which EveryChild has gone about such a difficult process.

For example in Kenya Pendekezo Letu feels that EveryChild *"did the best they possibly could. They did things that no other donors have previously done"*. They believe that EveryChild went the *"extra mile"*. In Nepal CWISH staff said: *"They were not interfering. They always respect the group realities. We appreciate this most. There were flexible in response to challenges and learning."* The LAC respondents from Cambodia also say that *"EveryChild has done all they could"*. Even in Russia where the relationship was already undermined before the exit process began, they felt EveryChild did what they could from 2012 onwards. When exit did eventually take place, *"the partnership came to an end quietly and smoothly"*, according to EveryChild staff.

While respondents did highlight a few areas for improvement, most echoed the sentiments of the CWISH Director who when asked with the benefit of hindsight, what EveryChild could have done better in exit, replied: *"They have done an amazing job. Together we have achieved very significant results."*

Most encouragingly the exit process has shifted EveryChild's partners towards more responsible and sustainable programming. Many now engage more intentionally and productively with government and other NGOs. Ironically those partners that have struggled most with exit may be in the best long-term position for survival. Partners like P4EC in Russia may ultimately be more sustainable because they have had to look locally for support rather than being passed on to another international funder. In India EveryChild decided not to just pass on their NGO partners to other international donors, but to actively encourage them to link up more with local government and local fundraising. Consequently, many programmes and activities (such as Child Activity Centres) are at least part funded by local communities. As one respondent said: *"community fundraising was particularly successful and partners came to feel very proud of this"*. Furthermore this has resulted in increased community ownership. As another respondent said: *"It would have been good to involve the community and ask for contributions from the beginning of the project. If this had been done, activities would be sustainable by now"*.

Exit has encouraged EveryChild to take the capacity building of their partners even more seriously. The emphasis of the capacity building was not so that partners could manage the funder's grants more efficiently (as is the case with so much 'compliance-oriented' capacity building) but was genuinely focused on helping partners become more autonomous and self-sustaining. Thus there was less self-interest in EveryChild's capacity building during exit than tends to be the case in other INGO's capacity building³.

³ See James and Hailey 2007 'Capacity Building for NGOs' INTRAC

All partners highlighted a variety of capacity building benefits. P4EC in Russia for example pointed out the experience gained through taking over management of an EU grant; LAC in Cambodia found the emphasis on M&E particularly helpful. Others mentioned the value of technical support in fundraising and business planning; while others talked about documentation support - helping partners to record their past work and communicate it to new funders. In India partners especially appreciated the leadership training programme which *“gave partners the opportunity to explore alternatives and take ownership over their organisations and their work. They felt prouder and stronger”*.

5.2 Carefully planned, owned and contextualised change process

The three principles of responsible exit proved invaluable. They created a safe space to discuss exit and understand the underlying reasons behind it. The principles reassured staff, board, partners and communities that this was a considered process that prioritised children’s welfare and meant that EveryChild would not suddenly walk away. They helped allay any partners’ fears that they would be treated differently from others. The three principles were simple, memorable and applicable across all work. They provided good framework for decision-making. As one staff member also said: *“Having principles helped us to be very conscious and put extra effort into following them.”* They also were a motivating force. The overarching principles, however, were not too prescriptive. They allowed the partners the space to identify their own priorities during the detailed planning process.

Initially the EveryChild programmes team spent a lot of time explaining and listening to partners, encouraging them to give feedback that they took on board. There was considerable up-front preparation. *“Exit was initially a big shock for many, but the Country Director worked closely with them to alleviate fear and see the opportunities within exit”*. The exit planning process in the India and Malawi Country Offices was a highly participatory process involving staff. This was particularly important because country office staff were obviously most affected by the exit decision as they would be losing their jobs. On the face of it, getting them to own and support a process that would end up with their own redundancy was a huge task, but one which they largely achieved.

The participatory planning process involved not only staff, but also local partners, communities and children themselves. This helped each come to terms with the impending exit. Partners were actively encouraged to develop their own measurable exit plans and to seek community participation in the process. For example in India, staff supported partners to develop a range of tailored plans that enabled partners to identify and articulate the capacity building support required, and begin to think carefully and strategically about what they would like to do following exit and how this would be resourced. Exit planning was cascaded down to communities who also developed their own sustainability plans which resulted in communities becoming more active in continuing activities through Child Rights Protection Committees for example.

Some partners took longer to respond to the impending exit. CWISH in Nepal for example were quite reluctant to face the reality of exit. As one staff admitted: *“We should have focused more on sustainability at the start. We only began to take it seriously in Year 3 of the 4 year project. It could have been earlier”*.

An inclusive participatory process was not only essential to promote ownership, but it also enabled partners to develop more contextually appropriate responses. EveryChild found out *“We need to recognise that although we have certain ideas about how support should be provided, they might want to do things differently and this can work just as well. Need to respect this. Although we had the responsible exit principles, we took a different approach to exit in each context and this worked”*. In Cambodia, for example, LAC were not willing to have their grant transferred to another international NGO as they believed that the different style of grant management from potential funders would not be appropriate to their context.

Some partners mentioned however that EveryChild’s exit would have been even better if there had been more contextual nuance. For example the Malawi office still feel that London did not appreciate the depth of personal cost to staff who chose to stay on in a jobs-scarce economy (only 5% of the population is in formal employment). In Russia EveryChild failed to understand some of the legal issues surrounding track record and copyright which meant that P4EC had to start from scratch in certain areas.

EveryChild helped partners develop detailed exit and sustainability plans with clear indicators and milestones every six months. Breaking the plan into bite-sized, six-monthly chunks made it less overwhelming and also helped maintain the urgency (as two years can seem like too long away off). Partners appreciated these plans as it meant none of the important milestones were intentionally missed. *“Exit indicators helped us keep on track both time-wise and to monitor our progress against our responsible exit principles”*.

Yet despite the clear plans, they were not rigid, but were continually adjusted in the light of experience and learning. The plans were flexible in adapting to changing local circumstances, such as PKL’s support through ChildHope, P4EC Moldova’s extension of USAID project and Malawi’s support to the government strategy on street children. Whilst pushing deadlines, EveryChild retained some flexibility over final exit dates.

EveryChild was less flexible, however, on the issue of localisation of field offices. After the difficulties of localising in some countries in Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union, EveryChild was unlikely to support the Malawi or India office to localise. As these offices are on the point of closing in early 2015 and EveryChild will be losing great staff and effective programmes, some staff question the wisdom of that decision. Localising would have been difficult and expensive, but in the long term it may have been a better option. After all, despite all the challenges with the others, most localised offices are still functioning almost five years on.

5.3 Given enough time and money and staff support

EveryChild resourced the exit process generously. In particular they gave exit enough time. Most exit processes were planned over two years. This meant that partners felt they had enough notice and were not taken by surprise. The long lead time gave them enough time to identify and mitigate risks.

Many partners described how other funders suddenly announced that they were ending the relationship, leaving them unprepared and feeling powerless. The long lead time also helped late starters like CWISH still have enough time to be more intentional and focused on responsible exit. Because the process was not rushed, this gave partners sufficient time to genuinely involve their staff and communities.

Communities in particular needed enough time to prepare for exit, to develop and implement their own plans on how they can sustain the services.

As well as time, EvC provided sufficient financial resources. P4EC in Russia for example, particularly appreciated being allowed to use exchange rate gains to cover service provision costs during the exit period. The EvC leadership resolutely protected the partner budgets during exit, withstanding the pressure to cut costs and transfer the extra savings to Family for EveryChild.

The financial resources were reduced gradually. P4EC Russia valued that EveryChild tapered out P4EC Russia's funding over 2 years and 8 months rather than stopping it in one go. These 'parachute payments' gave them time and the incentive to seek alternative funding, and softened the blow to organisational finances, giving them security over the exit period.

As well as finances, EveryChild has provided intensive staff support to the process. They invested considerably in maintaining relationship. According to one partner: *"EveryChild has listened more than of our other donors and have taken on board our suggestions."* During the exit process EveryChild staff have visited partners regularly – at least twice a year. In many cases they have also set up regular Skype calls to check in on progress (every four to six weeks with country offices). As well as frequent visits from the programmes team, EveryChild UK has provided high profile leadership support. For example in Malawi alone the then Executive Director visited in July 2013 to communicate about exit with Government ministries and community leaders; one of the EvC board member's visited in November 2014 and the current Executive Director also attended the Malawi Legacy Conference in January 2015.

Some partners believe that EveryChild could have done even more to support the development of fundraising skills and capacity prior to and during the exit process. Although some support was provided, one partner would have liked EveryChild to allow them to use funds to pay the salary of a fundraiser. Another mentioned that *"EveryChild should help us find another donor"*. In another case, however, EvC's main concern was that the partner had been too successful at fundraising and might have too much money to absorb.

5.4 Open and honest communications

EveryChild knew from prior exits and learnt again quickly the importance of open and honest communications.

Soon after the exit decision in 2012, EveryChild tried to be open with partners, but because of the uncertainty and confusion within EveryChild at that time, this resulted in mixed messages. As one staff member admitted *"It was very difficult as we were not sure what was going to happen. At what stage do you communicate? If you tell people early you risk losing them. Our mixed messages in 2012 caused hiccoughs and awkward moments, but no lasting damage; though we had to spend a lot of time reiterating and rebuilding"*.

The main area of confusion was about Family for Every Child. When initially envisaged it was assumed that most of EveryChild's partners would become part of the global alliance. CWISH in Nepal understood that they would be part of the founding membership (though this may have been a misunderstanding). But as the concept developed, members of the alliance opted for a more exclusive approach to

retain quality and allow for manageable growth. CWISH were not initially invited into the inner circle (as the scoping for Nepal has not yet taken place).

This meant that the carrots of becoming part of a global movement and also learning from peers were no longer there for some partners. For countries like Malawi there is no EveryChild continuity yet as there is no local NGO member of the Family to compensate for the closure of the Country Office and loss of on-going learning.

From 2013 onwards, however, communications improved. EvC worked hard to ensure that communication was more consistent with people sending the same message and documenting what had been said. They tried to explain clearly why decisions made and who made them. Drip-feeding information to partners on a regular basis and providing updates face-to-face worked well as messages were not always fully understood the first time round.

LAC in Cambodia for example appreciated that EveryChild *“were clear from the start”* with them and that they always kept LAC informed about the restructure and exit plan. EveryChild staff tried hard to *“get things out on the table and not duck difficult conversations.”*

The trust they placed in partners with their open and honest communication was rewarded. EveryChild feared that partners would not really understand the ideological reason for exit. But in India and Malawi in particular, not only staff, but also partners have embraced the reason for change. As one community member in Malawi said: *“I was very happy because EveryChild told us why they were pulling out. Our community had already benefitted. It was high time that other children in the rest of the world benefitted.”*

5.5 Relentless monitoring, evaluation and learning

The constant monitoring is a striking aspect of the exit process. The six-monthly review and update of each partners' exit plan revealed partners and EveryChild areas where decisions and change were necessary. Frequent monitoring kept the momentum going and meant that plans did not slip unduly and deadlines were met. The monitoring also meant that the exit processes were constantly adapted and improved. They learnt along the way.

This learning from an individual partner level was consolidated within EveryChild through six-monthly reflection sessions with the whole Programmes team as well as senior management. As well as looking at project work, they reviewed progress on all the partners plans for sustainability, identified what was going well or not so well, reflected on exit principles and highlighted any learning around exit and closure. In addition they intentionally tried to learn from others by joining an Action Learning Set of UK NGOs involved in exit.

Within EveryChild, including the Malawi and India offices, the human resource department also conducted regular staff surveys (initially every two years, but from 2014 this was increased to six-monthly) to check how people were feeling about exit. This helped ensure that staff were able to cope with the considerable changes.

As part of the final stage of exit, EveryChild staff conducted a 'Partnership Completion Final Skype Call' and also wrote up a 'Partnership Completion Report'. Six months after the official exit, EveryChild also does a 'Partnership Completion Follow-up Call' to find out from partners how things are going and what could have

been improved with the exit process. While one partner found all this attention a bit much, the majority found these calls extremely helpful, not only to consolidate learning, but also for healthy closure.

For some of the partners, Malawi Country Office in particular, analysing, documenting and disseminating learning was a key element in the exit process. Other partners, like PKL in Kenya would have liked more of this. They suggested exit would have been improved if they had *“made a documentary about the exit strategy to have been created, which would celebrate the journey made”*. They would have liked more opportunities for exchanges and also learning from other EveryChild partners through more global and some regional meetings.

5.6 Quality of exit depends on the quality of relationship

There is a clear correlation between the quality of exit and the quality of the pre-existing relationship with the partner. EveryChild realised this from their rocky localisation processes. This was why continuity was an accepted principle of exit. *“There was another unwritten criteria for exit which was to maintain existing partner management relationships within EveryChild’s team wherever possible in order to sustain existing relations between partners and their EveryChild focal points and EveryChild’s own institutional memory about projects and to minimise disruption to partners and communities by extension.”*

EveryChild had focused on strengthening its approach to partnership particularly since 2011. It developed a considered and comprehensive process which allowed for an annual two-way monitoring of the quality of the relationship. Pendekezo Letu in particular appreciated the opportunity it allowed for the organisations to evaluate each other and identify agreements and disagreements between the two organisations. Healthy pre-existing relationships and corresponding *“high levels of trust with many partners meant we could address challenges linked to exit constructively”* according to one staff member.

5.7 Quality of relationship depends on quality of people

The quality of relationship and quality of exit was heavily influenced by the particular individuals in each of the organisations. How well partners responded to exit was closely correlated with the leadership, their personalities and their appetite for managing change. In some countries, like Ethiopia, leadership proved a block to change, whereas in Malawi and India leadership was particularly forward-thinking. The Country Directors provided exemplary leadership and as one respondent said: *“He got the big picture. He understood the global rationale for EveryChild’s exit. He was able to transmit this understanding to staff and them to communities”*. The fact that EveryChild managed to retain his services to the end made a big difference. It contributed to staff remaining motivated and working to the end.

The same is true for EveryChild UK. One of the outstanding aspects of this evaluation has been the quality of EveryChild staff. They have led by example – such as the Programmes Director making herself one of the first people to be made redundant (as she felt strategic work was complete, and numbers of partners had reduced by that point in line with agreed plan). As senior staff have left, others have been promoted into greater responsibility in what appears to be a relatively seamless process. With fewer staff programmes exits have continued at the same pace. Staff have risen to the challenge and taken on opportunities for development. What is

perhaps even more remarkable is that at a time of closure and ending, EveryChild has managed to maintain staff energy and enthusiasm. It is relatively easy to do this at a time of expansion, but much harder at a time of ending. Credit for this must go to the individuals involved. As one staff member admitted: *“It would not have happened a few years ago when the programmes team was very different”*.

6 Top tips: implications for other INGOs

What implications do the findings have for others overseeing programme exits in the future?

6.1 Clarify purpose – see exit as opportunity for sustainability

EveryChild is unusual in that its exit from 2012 onwards was not driven by financial pressures. This is a key factor in enabling them to do it well. A major lesson for others is:

- **See exit at as opportunity to take sustainability seriously.** Exit focuses the mind on genuinely sustainable development. Exit can be framed positively as an opportunity to do good development. As one partner said: *“Exit promotes sustainability”*.

Responsible exit forces top-quality development that few have the courage to implement. Exit thinking should be in place from the start because it is an intrinsic to an international NGO’s understanding of and approach to development. It should be part of their theory of change. *“Exit forces you not to be lazy and just pay lip-service to sustainability”* as one respondent said, *“It accelerates the process and sharpens the mind”*. It is not just addressing exit but also life beyond exit, how will you work towards creating programmes (and even organisations) that are sustainable?

Exit is likely to focus programmes on improving engagement with local stakeholders. As one respondent said: *“Different community structures will be there for ever and so we have to be responsive and reactive to them, focusing on how to strengthen them.”* Development becomes about building better relations with local communities and government. Exit can encourage partners and international NGOs to aim high by including governments in sustainability strategies and finding ways to work with them.

At a minimum exit helps partners address issues of dependence and the need to diversify funding sources. Ideally resource mobilisation can be done more from within communities and countries, but it can also help partners develop a more balanced resource mobilisation portfolio (as happened with PKL in Kenya).

6.2 Start now and give it enough time

Conventional wisdom says plan for exit from the start, but this is unrealistic in most cases as the start has already happened some time ago. This should not be an excuse for doing nothing, but an encouragement to start now. The lesson is to:

- **Start now** and take a proactive approach to exit enables you to allow enough time for planning, implementation and capacity. If you wait until a funding crisis forces you to address exit. This will be too late. It will mean that exit will necessarily be rushed and under-resourced and done badly.

Starting now can give partners time to get used to the idea as well as sufficient notice and time to plan for their own exit from communities. It is important to plan in advance how you will successfully exit. Organisations don’t necessarily need to know when the exit will happen from the beginning of the relationship, but they should have an idea of the triggers.

With any new partnerships, programmes or projects, it is possible to be clear from the start and prepare the partner. Make sure that they are aware that the donor will only be there for a certain time and that they need to plan for their exit.

- **Allow sufficient time – up to two years.** In the EveryChild experience, with partners of more than five years, they estimated two years for exit. The length of partnership and the extent of dependence should affect the length of exit.

6.3 Plan carefully and inclusively

- **Develop shared principles for exit that build on your core values.** Exit principles that highlight the core values in exit proved very useful in the EveryChild experience. They helped clarify what EveryChild was trying to achieve from exit, creating a common vision and vocabulary. They provided reassurance to a wide variety of stakeholders in the process. In particular they helped get buy-in from senior management, assisting programmes staff protect partners' interests at management level. They also gave strong guidance to the partners' planning processes.
- **Let partners lead an inclusive planning process.** It was also very important to let partners identify their own strategic priorities and develop their own operational plans for exit (in the light of these underlying principles).

One of the key success factors was developing a participatory, engaging and meaningful management of the change process. Where possible involve communities and beneficiaries (such as children in EveryChild's case). Listen intently to the communities, as they will be the ones to continue the work post-exit. Adapt plans accordingly to respond to the local context.

6.4 Invest in open communication, visits and capacity development

EveryChild found that frequent communication helped considerably in allaying fears and motivating positive responses.

- **Be as open as you can about exit.** EveryChild found that as they trusted staff with information as soon as possible about what was happening, why, and when, this trust was repaid as staff and partners reacted responsibly.
- **Increase levels of support to partners during exit.** Communicate frequently through Skype, email and best of all face-to-face visits.

EveryChild invested considerably in ensuring that there was also continuity in the partner relationship – at times taking back staff on a consultancy basis to enable continuity. Healthy exit needs adequate human and financial resourcing. It is not a way of saving money in the short term.

- **Provide tailored capacity development support to partners** and local stakeholders so they can take more responsibility for their future sustainability.

EveryChild found that capacity building worked better when it was not just about grant management compliance, but responsive to the demands of the partners and focused on the future of their work with communities.

6.5 Push Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- **Relentlessly monitor exit implementation.** The EveryChild experience demonstrated the value of keeping on top of the partner's exit plans. They were able to ensure that deadlines were met and maintain healthy pressure to reach milestones. This energised the difficult change process.
- **Apply and share learning from experience.** EveryChild learned from partners' experiences of exit and consolidated this learning internally every six months. This mean they were able to make constant improvements during the process and modify the plans accordingly.

6.6 Strengthen existing partnerships

- **Prepare for healthy exit by focusing on developing healthier relationships with partners.** The quality of exit will reflect quality of pre-existing relationship. Dependent partners will find exit difficult.

EveryChild found that the partnership review and self-assessment strengthened relationship between EveryChild and partners, *"so when we did come to communicating exit to them, they trusted us and realised we were doing this for genuine reasons"*.

7 Conclusions

Exit may ultimately be more important to long-term development than entry. Yet most NGOs usually pay greater attention to the latter. EveryChild is exceptional in how much attention they have given to exit. This may be because it decided to exit for ideological reasons of potential impact rather than due to financial crisis. EveryChild had the commitment as well as the resources to do it responsibly.

It is too soon to analyse the legacy of EveryChild post-exit. Phase 2 in 16 months' time may prove more revealing, but even then we will not know what would have happened if EveryChild had continued to function as a 'normal' UK NGO. To a large degree what happens now is out of EveryChild's hands. It depends on the ability of local stakeholders to step up and take greater responsibility for addressing the needs of children without parental care (or in danger of losing it). As one staff respondent said: *"Ultimately it is not up to us, but we have to give them the best chance of doing it themselves."*

Early indications are that there may well be some loss of coverage and services to children as a consequence of EveryChild's decision to exit. There is no escaping the truisms that 'exit is exit' after all and there is likely to be a negative impact in terms of reduced services.

But it may be that the more fundamental change in attitudes amongst children and communities remain strong. Exit has made a definite positive contribution towards more sustainable programming in communities. In the medium to long-term exit may even be beneficial. There is now greater community ownership and a broader focus on working with others, including local and national government.

The question that EveryChild asked was how closely they had kept to their principles of responsible exit. Whether or not these exits prove successful and justify the decision to close down globally to divert resources to Family for Every Child is a different question.

Having decided to exit, EveryChild has gone about it in a considered and careful way. They applied their learning from their difficult previous experiences with localisation. Although exit was a decision made in the UK, they managed to involve most partners in meaningful way that has encouraged ownership and community engagement. EveryChild has clearly tried to do its best for its partners with a genuine concern that children should not lose out

Overall the exit process is impressive. It provides a practical example to other NGOs that given the right staffing, attitudes and resourcing exit can be done well, particularly from already healthy partnerships. EveryChild developed a good set of processes to monitor, learn and improve the exit process. They invested heavily in communication and support to partners. Most importantly, they had high quality staff; willing to step down or step up into new duties. Ultimately it is individuals within EveryChild **and within their partners** that are ensuring that exit is as responsible as possible.

8 Appendix 1 People consulted

EveryChild UK

Robert Graham-Harrison (Trustee)
John Bines (Chief Executive)
Lucy Morris (Head of Programmes + feedback on Cambodia case study)
Tracey Martin (ex-Programmes Director)
Maria Tsang (HR adviser)
Katherine Sargent (former EveryChild Programme Team + feedback on India, Nepal and Russia case studies)
Laura Fisher (former EveryChild Programme Manager + feedback on India and Russia)

Malawi

Brussels Mughogho (Country Director)
Thomas Moyo (Project Manager)
Boniface Mandele (Evaluator)

EveryChild Malawi Legacy Conference 23rd January 2015

Field visits 24th January 2015 to

Mndolera CBO
Aubrey Nyangu (Programme Manager)
McJason Moale (Director)
Village Headman Chikumba
Kasamba CBO
Samuel Chaola (Chairman)
Yohane Bowa (VSL Coordinator)
Rafael Banda (CBCC Coordinator)

India

William Gali, Country Director EveryChild India
KM Chandramouleswara, HR/Finance Manager EveryChild India
Laura Fisher, former EveryChild Programme Manager

Kenya

Sarah Mbira Executive Director PKL
Magdalene Munuku Social Worker PKL
Esther Mwangi Social Worker PKL
Okari Magati Social Worker PKL
Adam Smith (ex-EveryChild Programme Officer)

CWISH Nepal

Saroj KC Director
Dhruba Lamichane
Prapti Adhikari

Cambodia

Touch Chiva LAC Project Manager
Pav Vannak LAC Legal Assistant
Kong Chhan Ministry of Social Affairs
Soyorn Choun EvC Justice for Children' Project Coordinator
Lucy Morris (EveryChild)

Russia

Jo Rogers, Director P4EC
Lyudmila Sorokina, P4EC

9 Appendix 2 Methodology

Inception (November 2014)

During the inception INTRAC undertook the detailed design of the evaluation. This involved:

- Identifying the key questions about exit from the prospective external audience.
- Reviewing key EveryChild documents,
- Short semi-structured interviews with key EveryChild staff and board members

From this data, INTRAC developed a detailed methodology for the assignment, including:

- Developing criteria for selecting sample case studies.
- Developing a protocol for the data gathering interviews; and
- Presenting these proposals to EveryChild for discussion and approval.

Rationale for choice of case studies

After discussions with EveryChild staff and board we prioritised the following key criteria for selecting case studies:

- Geographic spread – need CIS; need Africa, Asia
- Country Office (Malawi, India) + localised (Russia) + independent partner
- Balance towards longer term partnerships
- Stage in exit process (Cambodia latest)
- FFEC and not FFEC
- Mix experiences from survey (include negative feedback) and those who gave insightful answers (Russia)

The following were suggested to and agreed by EveryChild:

Malawi – country office heavy investment and engagement (required by EveryChild)

Nepal (CWISH) – on-going relationship, significant inputs from EveryChild

India – country office heavy investment and engagement (required by EveryChild)

Russia – ex-CO; localised; CIS, FFEC, insightful survey feedback,

Cambodia (LAC) – South East Asia, intermittent partnership, dependent, exit on-going

Kenya (PKL) – local partner; 4 year engagement, ChildHope model takeover

We tried to contact Ethiopia, by email and phone but EveryChild indicated that as senior management had recently changed, this would not be an appropriate choice.

Initial data gathering (December and January 2015)

Survey of all 18 partners

We undertook a short online survey with all 18 partners to gauge the stage they are at in the exit process and their use and application of the principles and tools. The findings informed the choice of case. Because of the small population (18 partners) and timing we could not pilot the survey, nor could it be anonymous.

Six case studies

We are writing up six case studies by means of:

- Review of partner exit reports
- Semi-structured interview with EveryChild staff (or ex-staff) responsible for exit
- Semi-structured Skype interviews with 3 partner staff from different levels
- Skype interviews with key national stakeholders, ex staff members/partners and community-based organisations (where possible and appropriate)
- Analysis and brief partner report

Field visit to Malawi

We also undertook a short field visit to Malawi from 21-24th January to observe the EveryChild Legacy Conference, and gather data from two communities (Mndolera and Kasamba) using participatory methods (focus group discussion and bus-stop exercise).

EveryChild Malawi Exit

January 2015

Initial situation

EveryChild has been operating in Malawi since 1995 (previously as Christian Children's Fund of Great Britain). EveryChild increasingly took a rights-based approach to focus on children without (or at risk of losing) parental care. In 2004 they began to work in six communities in Mndolera and in 2006 in four communities in Bulala. The 2009 mid-term review emphasised the importance of sustainability, working through and enhancing community-based structures.

In 2012, when the EveryChild decision to exit was made in the UK, the Malawi office had 26 staff. As the Country Director said, *"Although I was consulted, the decision had already been made in London. Our influence was really in 'how' exit should happen, not whether it should happen"*. Prior to 2011, other EveryChild country offices had been given the opportunity to localise and form their own local NGO, but while they were given the opportunity to make the case, the Malawi office did not feel it would be encouraged from the UK. It was felt that a localising process would consume too much time and energy and distract from the process of exiting responsibly from communities.

The Malawi team were obviously concerned that exit would mean that some planned programmes would be curtailed. They were worried that many of the gains, such as getting children back into school, would be lost. As the Country Director said: *"I have seen lots of International NGOs leave badly without any sustainability. Two years later there is nothing left. The manner of leaving can destroy years of good work"*. The responsible exit principles, however, both reassured and motivated them.

The Malawi staff were obviously worried about their own personal futures in a context where only 5% of the population are employed and good opportunities are scarce.

How did EveryChild Malawi go about responsible exit?

The exit process in Malawi involved seven key elements:

- i. Planning for exit and external communication
- ii. Rigorous focus on sustainable activities (and stopping unsustainable ones)
- iii. Capacity-building of community-based organisations, supporting them to develop exit plans and linking them to potential funders
- iv. Influencing wider stakeholders at community, district and national level to consolidate gains and maintain energy for change.
- v. Systematic learning, documentation and sharing of good practice.
- vi. A participatory internal change management process addressing staff retention, motivation, and support
- vii. Institutional closure activities

i. Planning for exit

In July 2012 the Programme Director of EveryChild UK visited the Malawi office to assist the Malawi team start working on an exit plan. So instead of the annual country planning process in December 2012 the Malawi office developed a two-year exit strategy (starting April 2013).

For the Malawi staff: *“Programme work defines responsible exit. It is about what happens in communities when you leave”*. The exit strategy involved a fresh look at outcomes, not just continuing existing activities. EveryChild Malawi engaged local communities from the start of this process. Having informed them about the impending exit, they convened an initial two-day meeting with community members to rank and prioritise activities. The resulting strategy was translated into annual operational plans and budgets split into six-month intervals. Over the course of the exit, EveryChild Malawi has had at least five exit communication meetings with CBOs, local leaders and community development structures.

EveryChild Malawi received support from EveryChild India as well as the London office in how to go about this with a further visit in July 2013 and four further visits in 2014.

ii. Sustainable Programming

When EveryChild Malawi analysed their programmes they split them into:

- Unsustainable programmes to stop
- Sustainable programmes to handover to communities
- Not yet sustainable activities to assist communities raise funding for

Stop ‘unsustainable’ ones

The Exit strategy identified six planned activities that they would stop doing. This included terminating a problematic partnership with a local NGO AYISE in a different part of Malawi; not implementing planned baseline studies and evaluations; dropping plans to engage more with children living on the streets; and pulling out of supporting regional and national Children’s Parliaments. Some of the past activities, such as providing farm inputs to support for CBCCs were also discontinued. (Some of these activities would have been stopped anyway and were not directly linked to exit)

As the Malawi programme relied on child sponsorship, responsible exit also involved working closely with the UK sponsorship department to disenroll children. The existing community sponsorship committees helped ensure this process was consistent and did not disadvantage the most vulnerable. It meant that a number of children who previously received bursaries for their education would no longer do so.

Sustainable programming –

The shift towards even more sustainable programming focused in particular on supporting the development of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) to help mobilise resources in their own areas. The income generated by community members has also helped support community structures like Community-based Childcare Centres (CBCCs), reinforcing the Government Early Childhood Development initiatives. EveryChild had helped catalyse 120 CBCCs in their two impact areas. EveryChild continued to stimulate and support community-led

initiatives such as Children's Corners; Child Rights Clubs in schools, Mothers Groups and HIV support groups.

Not yet sustainable activities

EveryChild was aware that some of its activities could not be sustained without further inputs. For example, they were particularly worried about how sponsored students would continue their education. They hoped to link 40 students to district bursary funds through the National Aids Commission. They also produced 6000 certificates for children to encourage them to keep attending school. They also hoped that CBOs would be able to secure further funding from local donors like National AIDS Commission as well as Village Savings and Loans Associations raising funds for education support.

iii. Capacity Building of CBOs

A core element in this shift towards sustainable programming was the increased emphasis on capacity building of local structures. The aim was to leave behind strong CBOs that could sustain services for vulnerable children. Initially EveryChild conducted an assessment of the 10 CBOs to identify skills gaps.

Over the next two years they provided tailor-made training in:

- Participatory Action Research so that CBOs could identify priority issues on their own.
- Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. Each CBO was assisted not only to develop their own strategic plans but also trained in how to monitor and evaluate them.
- Resource mobilisation, including proposal development and grant management.
- Financial management including book keeping, preparations of vouchers, bank account management.
- Leadership and management – as well as training, there has been some coaching and mentoring support
- Inclusion/disability, All 10 CBOs have been supported to mainstream disability within their programmes and increased the involvement of women and children on their governance.
- Child protection policy development and child protection risk assessment.

As part of the capacity building initiative, in July 2014 EveryChild gave small grants (based on their action research) to the 10 CBOs to give them hands-on experience of applying for and managing grants. These were monitored on a monthly basis. As part of its 2015 closure, EveryChild is intending to award another 'Legacy Grant' to each CBO (disbursed by a commercial bank and monitored by the District Council).

EveryChild also worked with the CBOs to link them to alternative sources of funding. Of the 10, three have already made successful applications to the National Aids Commission (NAC) and one has secured funding from Firelight Foundation.

iv. Influencing wider stakeholders (advocacy)

As well as working on more sustainable programming, EveryChild has tried to build broader coalition for change with wider stakeholders at community, district and national levels.

At a community level, EveryChild has focused on working with community structures on Child Protection, including a focus on child marriage. They have successfully helped community leaders develop child protection systems with a process to assist traditional leaders deal directly with the police in cases of child abuse. They have also raised awareness in communities about the dangers of child marriage, culminating in community leaders developing and implementing by-laws which make child marriage punishable with fines. EveryChild also assisted two CBOs become registered members of Girls Not Brides Malawi Chapter where they will continue learning and sharing best practices of ending child marriage. EveryChild has supported CBOs with advocacy activities to mark international awareness days such as Day of the Girl Child, or AIDS Day.

At a district level, EveryChild Malawi strengthened Early Childhood Development Network and partnerships between CBOs and decentralised Area Development Committees to enable children to access Government social protection programmes. In Dowa district EveryChild lobbied government and other NGOs to support continued operations of District Child Protection Network, but this has not gained much traction. EveryChild has supported Dowa and Mmbelwa District Councils and other partners to understand the framework for Children without Parental Care. They have also engaged the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare as well as District Executive Committee in their trainings and in monitoring their interventions, so that they will be able to provide on-going support to CBOs and communities in the future.

At a national level EveryChild has sought to maintain the momentum for change by supporting national networks. For example, EveryChild is chairing the Girls Not Brides network, which grew by 114% in the six months between April and September 2014 (35-75 members). EveryChild has been active in facilitating GNB regional meetings and raising financial resources for the network.

EveryChild is also in the process of handing over its leadership of the Better Care Network (BCN) – a UNICEF initiated network of NGOs involved in childcare programmes. EveryChild has sought to orient the BCN towards good practices for children without parental care.

EveryChild has also sought to preserve the momentum for change at a national level by providing technical and financial resources a national strategy for children living in or working on the streets. This has now been finalised, but is awaiting launch and implementation.

v. Documenting and Disseminating Learning

As part of its exit process, EveryChild Malawi has invested considerable time and financial resources in analysing and documenting learning from its programmes.

They have produced national reports on programme learning about: 'Approach to ending child Marriage' and 'Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations'. At a community level they have had review meetings with four CBOs to document their learning and a symposium in Mzimba for Bulala CBOs is planned for 2015.

They have also they commissioned an external consultant to document the Journey of EveryChild Malawi highlighting achievements, lessons and best programme practices of working with children without parental care in Malawi

EveryChild Malawi also commissioned a video documentary which has been distributed to key government officials and international NGOs. It will also be aired on Malawi TV.

They have taken the Director of Children's Affairs and Officials from Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare to visit their programmes. The aim was for them to learn best programme practices from our project communities and to pre-test and pilot Children's Corner Guide. As the Director of Children's Services at the Ministry said at the Legacy Conference "*The policy direction has come from our visits to the communities EveryChild has worked with*".

With the Girls Not Brides Network, EveryChild is preparing a symposium in the Central Region to share good practices of ending child marriage to the general membership. EveryChild has also had the opportunity to share these lessons in GNB international meetings in Tanzania and Kenya.

In January 2015, EveryChild hosted a one-day Legacy Conference hosted with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community, and inviting the Ministry of Education, District councillors, District Social Welfare officers, Police, media, church leaders, local NGOs and international funders to listen to the stories of change from communities. One of the main aims of this event was to disseminate learning and create better linkages for the future. Further legacy conferences are planned for the two districts.

vi. **Participatory change management process,**

EveryChild Malawi has taken a very considered and planned approach to managing this organisational change process. The incremental two year process enabled EveryChild to involve staff in a highly participatory way, enabling them to gain ownership and commitment to the responsible exit process. As part of this EveryChild trained its staff in leadership and change management. They identified and worked closely with early adopters to engage them as agents of change with their colleagues.

They managed this process intensively with regular reviews and staff surveys. The exit plan has been regularly monitored and updated in all-staff meetings. This consistent and regular engagement of the team helped considerably in guiding and improving effective and smooth exit. It helped team members to feel that they are part of the decision making process, fostering ownership of both the processes and outcomes. The change process has also been managed through one-to-one meetings with individual staff members which followed up on exit plans. During this exit process, the frequency of one-to-one management meetings increased from monthly to fortnightly.

Retention and motivation

A core component of successful exit required keeping staff both retained and motivated. The Country Director was critical in setting an example. As he pointed out: "*If I'm going to motivate the team I have to be motivated myself. I had to demonstrate passion and enthusiasm, by identifying what I could learn from this experience. I became excited about experience of managing change. I was able to plan a two year exit strategy. I had to remain always cheerful in the office, listen and talk to the team and how to move forward together*". Staff members continued to gain learning

opportunities from meaningful and interesting work. As some people left, more junior staff have had opportunities for promotion.

EveryChild encouraged retention of key staff by offering various incentives including:

- 'Golden handcuffs' a bonus of up to months' salary if they stayed on until the end of their contract (with EveryChild paying the tax liability).
- Supporting staff development programmes including subsidising and giving time off for Masters, Bachelors and diploma courses. Individuals looked at their own aspirations and needs with the costs budgeted into the exit process.
- Exposure opportunities such as attending international and national meetings, building their confidence.

While this has not had 100% success, it has meant that the majority of key staff continued until their scheduled departure, minimising disruption to programmes.

Training staff in dealing with change

EveryChild has gone further to help staff deal with change by training them in change management and transition. They have also conducted stress management training to equip them with skills to identify and manage stress during transition to exit.

Career development support

Another way in which EveryChild helped staff in exiting responsibly was to provide them with support in finding their next job. The HR Director from EvC in the UK trained the Malawian staff in writing CVs, application letters and interview techniques.

vii. Institutional closure

A final important element of the exit process is the institutional closure which is taking place in the first quarter of 2015. This includes:

- Final communication with children
- Destruction of child sponsorship data
- Handing over documentation to EveryChild in the UK to pass onto Family for EveryChild.
- Finalising human resource contracts.
- Disbursing legacy grants to CBOs
- Finance – valuation and disposal of assets and finally closing bank accounts
- Legal de-registration
- Communication to auditors, tax authorities, and the general public through a press release.
- Leaving the office and returning the keys to the landlord

What was the role of EvC UK in this process?

As a long-term country office, EveryChild UK was highly engaged in this process, including staff from all different programmes, fundraising, finance and HR (sometimes together).

As well as regular visits from the programmes team every six months, EveryChild UK has provided high profile leadership support. In July 2013, the Executive Director visited to communicate with Government ministries and community leaders. The current Executive Director visited in August 2014 and also attended the Legacy Conference in January 2015. A UK board member also visited in November 2014.

EveryChild UK has provided strategic and policy oversight to ensure the exit strategy was implemented properly and adjusted in the light of learning. They also fully funded the exit process.

Analysis of process

What went well?

According to the EvC Malawi respondents the key aspects of the exit that have gone well included:

- Engaging Ministry of Gender to ensure they understand and appreciate work they were doing, so they can continue supporting CBOs post exit.
- Village Savings and Loans Associations have worked really well.
- Capacity Building of CBOs, including the training, the coaching and the grant management experience.
- Linking CBOs to partners for funding.
- Exit communications has gone well – 98% of communities know the reason why EvC is exiting, have understood the exit messages.
- Keeping staff has gone well, although it's not been easy.
- Disenrollment has gone according to plan, and even finished early.
- Documentation of good practice/lessons

What were key success factors?

According to EvC UK staff the Country Director provided exemplary leadership and *“got the big picture. He understood the global rationale for EveryChild’s exit. He was able to transmit this understanding to staff and them to communities”*. The fact that EveryChild managed to retain his services to the end made a big difference. It contributed to staff remaining motivated and working to the end.

The exit process was given enough time to enable ownership by both staff and communities. Communities need enough time to prepare for exit, to develop and implement their own plans on how they can sustain the activities and services after EveryChild exits. The process was also done in a participatory way promoting greater understanding and ownership.

In this example, the joined up working from EveryChild UK sponsorship staff and programme staff helped considerably. Joint visits and joint exit communication made it possible to address both programmes and sponsorship related questions at the same time and clarify overlapping issues.

What did not go as well as hoped?

Some of the elements that did not go as well as hoped according to Malawi staff respondents included:

The experience of CBOs in grant management started late, so they have only had six months experience before the office officially closes. Only 40% have managed to access funding from other sources.

A proposed partnership with Find Your Feet did not work out. A series of positive meetings raised CBO expectations that support would continue. Although this was a challenge at the time, the CBOs have moved on.

Malawi staff believe that the London office did not fully appreciate the cost of local staff staying on until the end. Although the ex gratia payment helps, it does not remove the very real risk of not finding another job.

Impact - as of today, to what extent have principles of responsible exit been achieved?

This initial data gathering has been done in January 2015, two months before the office actually closes. It is therefore obviously too early to say. We will have a better idea in Phase 2 data gathering planned for May 2016 (though the proposed legacy grants may still be in operation, blurring the timing of the ending of the EveryChild programme).

The early indications are positive. Communities understand the rationale for exit. As one community leader said: *“I was very happy because EveryChild told us why they were pulling out. Our community had already benefitted. It was high time that other children in the rest of the world benefitted”*. Furthermore they are confident that activities can be sustained post exit, particularly the work around child marriage and VSLAs. EvC has helped communities develop three different scenario plans depending on the outcomes of their fundraising activities. Communities are surprisingly upbeat as some of these quotes indicate:

“EveryChild’s departure is like the end of the tarmac road. The dirt road continues. It will be slower and bumpier, but we will get there all the same”.
“EveryChild is not going away because they have left a legacy in our area. It is only the EveryChild staff who are leaving”
“EVC has not given us money. They’ve opened our minds’
“You are going, but this is not the end. We are going to sustain and build on this”

But as the EveryChild board member pointed out: *“We should not under-estimate the challenges for desperately poor communities – disadvantaged in just about every conceivable way”*. The on-going sustainability of the work may well be undermined by factors outside of EveryChild’s control such as:

- Mobility with migration from Mzima district estimated at 60%. It may well be that the more dynamic, young CBO leaders will move out.
- Education, literacy, health and livelihoods challenges remain in the country. Progress is slow in the wider context
- Malawi remains at risk of natural disasters as the floods in January 2015 illustrated.

i. As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable – a continuation of services or lasting changes in children’s lives

To a significant degree, whether or not EveryChild’s principles of responsible exit are realised is out of their hands. As the Director of Children’s Affairs said: *“We have a workable exit strategy, but the challenge is on the government, chiefs, MPs and communities to ensure activities continue”*. Some of the areas to investigate in 2016 include:

Community attitudes:

Hopefully some of the most sustainable changes will be in attitudes. The EveryChild programme has catalysed some very significant changes including:

- Child marriage – with prevalence dropping from 77% in Bulala in 2006 to 5% in 2014.
- Child protection – data indicates that in the impact areas 94% of children now feel they are living with good parental care (up from 52% in 2006)
- Child abuse cases have reduced from 24 down to 3, partially a result of community systems being in place and working.
- Child labour – in Kasamba community, they indicated in January 2015, they were 100% there and could maintain this.

Community structures

At the time of the EveryChild exit, community structures are active. It will be important to monitor how exit affects them.

- VSLA (in Sept 2014 Bulala had 65 VSLA and Mndolera 31)
- CBCCs – 43 CBCCs running independent of EvC in 2014 due to availability of local foodstuffs provided jointly by community members and VSLA.
- Children's Corners
- Child Rights Clubs in schools

The visits from EveryChild staff have been hugely motivating as communities did not want to be shamed by inactivity. What will happen when EveryChild is not visiting?

Funding for services

Where financial inputs are required, it is less certain that activities will be sustained. As one CBO said: *"If we receive extra funding, we will be able to continue the same level of services to children"*. That is a big 'if'. It will be important to assess

- How many of the 10 CBOs supported by EveryChild have managed to access further funding post 2015 (beyond the planned legacy grants)
- How are the relationships CBOs and government? Is the Ministry of Gender, Children and Disability and Social Welfare and the District Councils filling the gaps left by EveryChild?
- Have students been able to access bursaries to replace the support they received from EveryChild. Early indications are that NAC is failing to do this amidst allegations of corruption.
- As communities will no longer be benefitting from the farm inputs and vocational skills training provided by EveryChild in the past, it will be interesting to see whether the Goats-pass-on scheme is still functioning.

ii. Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work. Has it affected boys/girls differently?

The second EveryChild principle makes sure that the way in which they exited did not expose children to abuse. Early indications are again positive. They have done considerable work on child protection in communities. They have trained all CBOs in child protection and helped each of them develop their own policy. During exit EveryChild has worked with all 10 to highlight risks and put in place mitigation measures.

Child protection systems have become strong at community level with Child Protection Committees, by-laws, and government agents. There are clear procedures for reporting to police any child abuse as a criminal act. If the Child Rights Clubs and Children's Corners continue with their tools such as 'Me bags', children will continue to have ways to voice their concerns.

iii. **As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost**

At a national level EveryChild has worked hard to ensure that momentum for change will not be lost. They have invested considerable time in strengthening networks like:

- Girls Not Brides (GNB)
- Better Care Network (BCN)

In 2014 they were growing under EveryChild's leadership, but it will be important to see how they are doing in 2016.

EveryChild has also worked with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MGCDS) and District Councils to understand and monitor their work. The hope is that they continue supporting the CBOs and communities after exit... It will also be important to see whether the MGCDS strategy for working with children on the street (which EveryChild helped with) is being implemented.

It would also be good to find out in 2016 the extent to which other international and local NGOs have taken on EveryChild's learning. It was disappointing that the flood crisis in January 2015 kept many away from the Legacy Conference.

Implications for others

Some of the main learning from this exit process that Malawi staff would like to share with others include:

- Develop a participatory, engaging and meaningful management of the change process. Not just with the internal team, but with key external stakeholders. The local stakeholders who will be left behind after you go are essential in legacy. If they themselves do not own the change process, it will not be sustained post-exit.
- Having underlying principles of exit really helped us develop a clear plan. We shared this with other stakeholders like Government.
- You need to give it enough time: *"Two years was enough in this case"*.
- Regularly monitor change process – every quarter we go back to communities to monitor how well we are managing change

Conclusion

In a challenging context of high dependence, EveryChild has done remarkably well to prepare communities for exit. In my experience this is unusual, if not unique amongst NGOs in Malawi. There is clearly an element of sadness and fear of loss of services amongst communities, but also excitement and ambition to go beyond EveryChild.

There have been significant shifts in mind-set and attitudes to child protection, child labour, and child marriage in communities. Many community structures are trained and active. But whether delivery of services can be maintained through replacement funding remains to be seen. The contextual challenges in Malawi are huge.

EveryChild has done well to engage government at a national and district level to continue to provide support to communities and children post-exit. We will see whether they rise to this responsibility. EveryChild has done extremely well to document and disseminate its learning. Whether other agencies are open to learning from EveryChild's experiences is not so certain. EveryChild has done all that was possible, the rest is out of their hands.

The gradual close down of EveryChild Malawi after almost 20 years has been achieved with considerable effort and huge cost and yet without massive trauma amongst staff or communities. It is an impressive example of responsible exit.

EveryChild India Case Study

January 2015

Initial situation

EveryChild India is a Country Office of EveryChild. Its main target group is children without parental care (working children, children in kinship care, children in residential centres, and children on the street). EveryChild India's focus is around enabling these children to live in a caring family environment through state provided schemes, mainly playing a facilitative role. This involves protection work (building resilience and community support through Child Rights Protection Committees), building evidence (research, documentation, piloting models of intervention), and advocacy (policy implementation, sharing learning and capacity building, scaling up and mainstreaming).

At the local level, EveryChild India works with grassroots partners, Panchayats and District Governments. At the state and national level, it works with national advocacy partners, State Governments and Central Governments. Prior to exit, the Country Office supported 10 partner organisations (see Table 1).

Table 1: EveryChild India Partners

Partner	Date of exit	Description
NIMHANS	April 2014	National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience. EveryChild funded psychosocial work with children.
Sathi	April 2014	A national NGO working with marginalised groups. EveryChild funded work with children on railway platforms.
CRT	April 2014	A child rights organisation based in Karnataka State. EveryChild funded child rights advocacy work.
YCDA	January 2015	An NGO based in Orissa working on child rights. EveryChild funded action research on kinship care.
Van Muhil	January 2015	A rights-based advocacy group in Tamil Nadu. EveryChild supported advocacy work on child labour in textile mills.
READ	March 2015	A local NGO working for the rights of the Arunthathiya community in Tamil Nadu.
Prerana	March 2015	A regional NGO in Raichur district of Karnataka that supports local NGOs working on women and children's rights.
MASS	March 2015	A community organisation that works with Devadasi women and children in Belguam district, Karnataka.
FENCE	March 2015	A local NGO working for Dalit rights and wellbeing in Siriguppa Taluk of Bellary district in Karnataka.
SGGKK	March 2015	A local NGO working on Dalit rights and wellbeing in Mudhole district in Karnataka.

The decision to exit

Discussions around exit began in 2012. EveryChild India began work to prepare partners and communities for exit in late 2012. The Country Director communicated the decision to exit to partners and the Country Office supported partners to communicate it to communities. Although the decision to exit was made at a senior level within EveryChild, the Programme Team, the Country Office and partner organisations were involved in deciding how the exit should take place. The Country Office was consulted at key points during the decision making process. They shifted the discussion from one about exit to one about sustainability, helping partners to identify the support they needed to become more sustainable.

How did 'responsible exit' take place?

The exit from India is taking place at two levels, at the office and partner level. The Country Office will close on 31 March 2015. Funding to partners is ending and programmes supported by EveryChild India is being phased out over 2014 - 2015. For most partners, funding is being reduced in stages over two to three years. EveryChild India made the decision to withdraw from partners gradually because many of the organisations it supports are grassroots groups working at the local level. They are typically smaller and younger than other partner organisations, with less capacity and a higher degree of dependency on EveryChild India.

Much of the responsible exit process is focused on capacity building for sustainability. EveryChild India chose not to pass partners over to another donor, but to support them to become more sustainable organisations through providing sustained and tailored capacity building support, particularly around fundraising. They have encouraged and supported partners to seek funding from within communities and from government authorities, as well as other NGOs. However, the Country Office will support some partners who are struggling, to access short term, transitional funding from other donors.

EveryChild India supported all partners to develop specific exit plans tailored to their needs. Partners that required additional capacity building support were invited to participate in a Leadership Training Programme, which focused on areas such as strategic planning, programme management and M&E. The programme ran over 12 months, with one module per month. Alongside this, EveryChild India helped partners (READ, Prerana, FENCE, MASS, SGGKK) to develop organisational development plans, strategic plans, and fundraising plans. They also supported partners to improve their documentation, and created opportunities for partners to meet with new donors and other local and international agencies.

Challenges

Interviewees identified two main challenges faced through the 'responsible exit' process: communicating the decision to exit to staff, partners and communities, and overcoming partner dependency.

1. *Communicating exit:* Staff found exit difficult to accept as they were less involved in conversations around exit that had occurred at a managerial level, and they found the redundancies hard. Although partners initially found it difficult to take on board what was happening, the development of exit plans helped them to come to terms with and plan for exit. Children and communities also found exit difficult to understand. EveryChild India

addressed this through developing a specific exit plan for each community and visiting them throughout the process. In the end, a number of communities have become very active in supporting the continuation of activities through the establishment of Child Rights Protection Committees and the provision of financial support.

2. *Overcoming dependency*: Prior to the 'responsible exit' process, a number of EveryChild India's partners received significant proportion of their funding from EveryChild. Many of these partners did not have a focus on children until they became an EveryChild India partner, and were focused on Dalit rights and welfare more generally. EveryChild India played a significant role in the development of child-focused programmes within these organisations, and in the end, was "*doing a lot of things for them, not with them*". This resulted in a high degree of dependency on EveryChild India, which was difficult to overcome. Initiatives such as the leadership training programme and other capacity building support initiatives have helped to reduce dependency. Many partners have gone on to attract support from local communities and other providers such as the state government or other NGOs, although some are still struggling.

Analysis of process

The 'responsible exit' process appears to have gone relatively well in India, although the immediate and long term sustainability of some partners and their programmes is in doubt. Some partners appear to have become more sustainable as a result of the capacity building support provided by the EveryChild India office and ownership of activities has increased, although this is difficult to judge at this stage of the exit process.

What went well

The EveryChild Programme Team and the Country Office team appear to have thought about the issue of exit deeply and sensitively. According to one interviewee, "*Exit was initially a big shock for many, but the Country Director worked closely with them to alleviate fear and see the opportunities within exit*". Under the leadership of the Country Director, EveryChild India engaged in detailed planning for exit with partners. Staff supported partners to develop a range of tailored plans that enabled partners to identify and articulate the capacity building support required, and begin to think carefully and strategically about what they would like to do following the culmination of their partnership with EveryChild India, and how they plan to fund this work. Interviewees particularly appreciated the amount of time allowed for planning.

The Leadership Training Programme seems to have been especially appreciated. The programme was appropriately and sensitively designed, tailored to the needs of particular partner organisations. As well as providing much needed capacity building support, "*it gave partners the opportunity to explore alternatives and take ownership over their organisations and their work. They felt prouder and stronger*". Interviewees also cited the importance of the documentation support, which has helped partners to record their past work and communicate it to new funders.

Another success was EveryChild India's emphasis on seeking support within communities. Today, many programmes and activities are at least part funded by local communities. This is particularly the case for Child Activity Centres (CACs). By

February 2014, INR 1.5 lakh has been raised through Panchayats, community meetings, and individual fundraising to support CACs. According to one interviewee, *“community fundraising was particularly successful and partners came to feel very proud of this”*. Importantly, it appears to have resulted in increased ownership of CACs among communities and partners. A number of interviewees expressed a wish that they had sought community support earlier: *“It would have been good to involve the community and ask for contributions from the beginning of the project. If this had been done, activities would be sustainable by now”*.

Issues and challenges

However many partners have faced significant challenges that may affect the sustainability of their programmes and organisations. There have been leadership issues in two organisations, resulting in a lack of strategic direction that has impacted their ability to fundraise and make decisions. In one organisation this is due to the ill health of the director, a situation that has been compounded by the disengagement of the board. Former EveryChild Programme staff and EveryChild India staff both expressed concern about the sustainability of organisation and its child-focused programmes.

Another challenge is the presence of Hindu nationalist groups in some areas. These groups have sought to undermine EveryChild-supported programmes by spreading rumours among communities that they are seeking to convert children to Christianity. Former programme staff and EveryChild India staff are concerned that activities will be unable to continue in these areas without EveryChild India funding due to the presence of these groups.

Impact

Overall, it appears that exit will have an impact on the sustainability of partner organisations and programmes; children and communities; and on momentum for change in India, but this impact has been mitigated to some degree by the efforts of the EveryChild programme team and the EveryChild India country office, as well as partners and communities themselves.

Sustainability of partner organisations and programmes

The impact of exit on the sustainability of partner organisations and programmes is mixed, although it is expected that most will continue to operate in some form following the exit and closure of EveryChild India.

Exit has meant different things for the sustainability of partners who are part-funded (NIMHANS, SATHI, Vaan Muhil, CRT, YCDA, MASS, Prerana, READ) and those who are wholly funded (FENCE, SGGKK) by EveryChild. Although all organisations will continue to exist immediately following the closure of EveryChild India⁴, the sustainability of those 100% funded by EveryChild India is, in the words of one interviewee, *“at stake”*. This is largely due to their high degree of dependency on EveryChild. However leadership crises and legal issues such as lack of government

⁴ This is with the exception of Prerana, which will be re-established as the Kushi Trust, and hand over some its work to its existing partners Roovari and NJMO.

registration (known as FCRA) will also affect the future sustainability of these organisations.

Although these organisations will still be struggling come March 2015, one interviewee described it as “*a good struggle*”. This is because they will no longer be dependent on one donor, many will be partly community funded, they will have become better at fundraising, and they will be in a position to take advantage of government schemes. If these partners are able to survive in the short to medium term, they may even become more sustainable organisations following the exit of EveryChild India.

Most programmes and services are continuing although not all of them, and not necessarily in the same way. Some projects and programmes were only due to run for a limited period and came to a natural end at the time of exit. Others have been scaled back or are being implemented in different ways either due to a lack of funding or a lack of community support (such as where there is a strong and influential presence of Hindu nationalist groups). However in some cases it is because partners have made a strategic decision to review services provided and implement them differently.

The continuation of programmes will be supported in two main ways. The first is through community support facilitated through the establishment of Child Rights Protection Committees (CPRCs) in villages. These are community led, comprised of Panchayat members, young people, graduates and other interested individuals. The second is through securing funding from other support providers such as the Indian or State governments, other NGOs. EveryChild provided training in 2013-14 to raise awareness of opportunities available for support within communities.

Child Activity Centres (CACs)

EveryChild India has funded five organisations - FENCE, MASS, Prerana, SGGKK and READ to run Child Activity Centres. Most of these organisations hope to continue to run CACs to some extent following the exit of EveryChild India. MASS and Prerana’s successor, the Kushi Trust, hope to continue to run the vast majority of CACs. READ plan to continue to reach a similar number of children but reduce the number of CAC’s through clustering villages together. FENCE and SGGKK hope to run a small number of CACs, although this will be done by individual staff on an informal basis. Many of those CACs that will continue to run will be funded by local communities themselves, through the establishment of CRCPs at the village level. Others will be supported by grants from other NGOs or local government. Although many of these organisations will continue to run a similar number of CACs, many will either have to or chose to change the way CACs run; they may meet less often, and some may reduce the scale and range of support CACs provide.

Effect on Children and Communities

Although children and communities were initially very upset about exit, and struggled to understand it, all interviewees hope that the actual effect on children and communities will be minimal. This is because the vast majority of child-focused services, particularly the CACs will continue in some shape or form. In some cases children and communities have even stepped in to run CACs, increasing their participation and ownership of these activities. However the motivation and ability of children to participate in the ongoing management of CACs very much depends

broader community support, or in the words of one interviewee, whether the community creates a “platform” for the programme to continue. However, there is a concern that children currently supported by FENCE and SGGKK will not receive the same support following the withdrawal of EveryChild India due to their internal problems and reduced sustainability.

Efforts by EveryChild India to link partners, CRPCs, and individuals within communities to sources of local government support alongside work to raise awareness of entitlements has also helped to ensure negative effects of exit on children and communities are reduced.

Momentum for change and expertise

A decision was made within EveryChild to focus more on advocacy in the period from 2012-15, particularly around strengthening legal frameworks. It was hoped that this work would both be able to continue following the exit of EveryChild India, and leave a lasting legacy in the form of a stronger framework for child rights. It appears to have improved partner relations with government and other civil society groups, through expanding their networks.

EveryChild also supported an Action Research project (due to be continued after exit with a legacy grant) on children in kinship care run by YCDA. It appears to have already produced positive and sustainable results. According to one interviewee, “*It supported children and adults to find real solutions to real problems and be less dependent on outsiders*”. YCDA has also learned a lot from the experience, and plan to use the methodology to explore other research questions and areas pertinent to their work.

Implications for others

Interviewees from India provided a wide range of advice for others seeking to ensure a responsible exit. All agreed that taking steps to ensure exit is responsible is important. They also emphasised the importance of:

- Being open and communicating change clearly and firmly
- Giving partners sufficient notice and time to plan for exit
- Thinking about sustainability from the beginning to prevent dependency
- Building good relations with government and local communities
- Providing strong, tailored technical support on strategy, purpose, leadership
- Involving communities and children throughout the process
- Not underestimating the capacity of organisations you work with
- Having a strong framework and principles to structure exit

EveryChild exit from Pendekezo Letu (Kenya)

January 2015

Initial Situation

Pendekezo Letu was established in May 1997 and focuses its work around the main slums of Nairobi and neighbouring counties. Its mission is to 'support vulnerable children and other disadvantaged community members in Kenya to fully access their fundamental human rights.' Pendekezo Letu promotes a rights based approach which combines addressing the immediate needs of its beneficiaries and building the capacity of disadvantaged communities so that they may effectively respond to social inequalities. Pendekezo Letu has 21 staff members in total.

The organisation works on four main issues; legal aid and advocacy, economic empowerment, HIV/AIDs awareness and residential rehabilitation. Pendekezo Letu works extensively in child rights and protection programmes. This involves training teachers on positive discipline; promoting child rights awareness with family members; and assisting children access legal aid.

Pendekezo Letu also helps children through advocacy and networking. PKL is a part of a coalition called the Girl Child Network which has helped to bring about changes in Kenya. For example, in 2010 they lobbied the government for free sanitary towels in poorer areas. The government piloted and now implements a large-scale programme.

The partnership with EveryChild and exit

EveryChild started working with PKL in February 2010 with a small research project to test out the partnership. Together they secured funding from Comic Relief for a three year programme, which started in January 2011 and is scheduled to end in December 2013. When the EveryChild exit decision was taken in July 2012, there were still 18 months left of the project.

The decision to exit was part of a broader transition within EveryChild from a structure involving partner organisations to Family for EveryChild. Pendekezo Letu was aware of the rationale behind the exit as they knew that 'EveryChild was becoming an alliance'. But the decision was more ideological rather than practical. They found it difficult to understand the logic between exiting partnerships and establishing Family for EveryChild. Pendekezo Letu was not invited to be part of the Family. The decision to exit, however, '*was not out of the blue*' as those involved knew that the grant was only three years. Pendekezo Letu therefore accepted the closure with '*understanding and grace*'.

From EvC's perspective, a major risk for PKL was their reliance on funding and the uncertainty surrounding their future without it. EveryChild were aware that without new funding PKL would not be able to continue in its present form with the consequent loss of staff. This also posed a risk for the girls being supporting, as retention in school would fall if they were unable to keep training teachers.

How did the exit process take place?

Timeline

Year	Event/activity
2010	Partnership started
February 2010	Receives funding for pilot project
January 2011	Receives funding for Comic Relief project
December 2012	Global meeting of partners to explain exit and enable shared learning
March 2013	Visit from EveryChild. This visit was used to start a process of risk identification.
September 2013	Link with ChildHope
December 2013	Comic Relief funding ends. 1 year holding grant proposal submitted to Comic Relief by ChildHope.
December 2013	Final visit
2014	Revise a resource mobilisation strategy
Jan-March 2014	Finalise project evaluations and reporting
March 2014	End of partnership letter and completion call
January 2015	Final report for resource mobilisation strategy

Exit planning and mitigating risks

PKL found the risk mitigation workshop to be a key moment in the exit process. It was extremely useful in highlighting what they needed to work on. Even the process of identifying risks and planning for how to address them helped Pendekezo Letu become less fearful of exit. One of the critical concerns was to continue the training of teachers to maintain girl retention in schools. With EveryChild's assistance PKL have managed to train community partners who are taking responsibility for enrolling girls back into schools.

Diversifying funding

The 'most acute' challenge for Pendekezo Letu was that they would collapse without further funding and services would be stopped. Consequently in 2013 EveryChild approached ChildHope (who had formerly funded PKL) to let them know about EvC's impending exit and to see whether they would be interested in taking over grant management responsibility.

PKL was positive about working again with ChildHope. So EveryChild: "*jointly drafted an application to Comic Relief which ChildHope submitted (as PKL could not apply directly) for one year follow-on funding.*" This extension funding enabled EvC to handover responsibility for the Comic Relief grant to ChildHope. Importantly too it

enabled PKL to continue to run the transition centre, mitigating negative impacts on the girls. ChildHope went on to submit further proposals for new work with PKL.

This highlights one of the most exciting aspects of the exit - the opportunity it gave PKL to focus on diversifying their income streams. This had long been needed and had been talked about by EveryChild. However, the exit forced PKL to take it more seriously. They realised the risks of 'putting all their eggs into one basket' with lots of projects based around one donor. Through the exit process, PKL was able to develop a resource mobilisation strategy and try and secure other funders. Initially the focus was only on UK funders, but the exit process opened PKL's eyes to the range of donors they could explore. As well as a current proposal they have with ChildHope to Comic Relief, they have secured new funding from the Benjamin Foundation in the Netherlands, Caritas Australia and Jersey Overseas Aid Commission (through ChildHope). The funding diversification was so successful that at a point EveryChild were concerned that PKL would have "*too much money to absorb*". The final version of their mobilisation strategy is currently under review and will set out a plan for the next three years. It has proposal details, deadlines and contact details.

Sustainable programming

The exit process also helped PKL think through a more sustainable approach to their work. For example they now encourage teachers they have to take the initiative and pass on their knowledge to new teachers. This type of knowledge transfer means that services in this area could have continued without new funding.

Training for PKL staff

EveryChild's exit process also enabled PKL to receive capacity building inputs. They particularly valued the training in advocacy and media which they feel has left them well prepared for exit.

Analysis of the exit process

This exit was remarkable straightforward for EveryChild because they were able to link Pendekezo Letu to ChildHope. ChildHope then submitted a new proposal to Comic Relief for a holding grant which EvC helped to draft. Pendekezo Letu was happy with this as they had previously had a good previous experience with ChildHope.

One of the success factors was the timing. Pendekezo Letu felt that the process was started early enough and they had sufficient notice; '*we were not taken by surprise*'. This gave Pendekezo Letu time to prepare and helped to enable them to mitigate the risks. They prepared Pendekezo Letu in advance for the exit and helped them to identify the risks linked to exit which in turn allowed them to develop an action plan. The exit indicators were appreciated by Pendekezo Letu and proved useful in keeping them to target.

Pendekezo Letu would have liked to have created a documentary about the exit strategy to celebrate the journey made. This would have been something for them to reflect back on and would allow them to see how they had grown. Furthermore, Pendekezo Letu would have liked EveryChild to present more opportunities for learning. For example, they found the exchange programme which they took part in

with SOLWODI and Mkombozi in Tanzania to be helpful. Pendekezo Letu would have liked further opportunities to learn more about community development.

For similar reasons, Pendekezo Letu would have liked EveryChild to organise more global meetings during the exit. These meetings would have produced opportunities to learn from organisations in similar contexts, facing similar challenges. Overall, however, Pendekezo Letu feels that EveryChild did the best they could. They did things that other donors had not previously done such as going the extra mile to linking them with ChildHope.

To what extent were the principles of responsible exit fulfilled?

In this responsible exit both services and momentum for change have continued. With other donors the end of the grant usually means the end of activities. *“A responsible exit offers a continuation of services and sustainability through cooperative and timely planning”*.

1. As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable

Due to the continuation of funding, services such as the transition centres have continued and grown. Social workers continue to follow up with families and ensure provision of their basic needs through economic empowerment. 300 families were empowered with life skills, business loans and skills training. The 300 girls who have been rehabilitated and reintroduced back into schools are still attending.

After the exit, a new group of 100 girls, along with 200 of their siblings, have been enrolled in primary schools. 21 students will be enrolled in secondary schools in February 2015. In January 2015, six others will be enrolled in colleges.

2. Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work

The changes have not affected the children themselves as those which have already been helped are still in school and social workers are still following them. Retention in schools is good because of child protection policies. The increasing numbers of children that PKL is helping is evidence that children have not been detrimentally affected. Another positive development for child protection is that PKL have received funding from Jersey Overseas Aid Commission for a dormitory expansion so that children no longer need to share beds.

The communities which Pendekezo Letu has been working with have not been negatively affected. Since the inception of the community structures, 180 children have been supported. These structures are *‘still going strong’*. They meet once a week and are independently capable, although Pendekezo Letu still supports them. They are currently looking for new funds so that this structure can be introduced into other slums and this has been included in a proposal to Comic Relief, as they have realised that they need child protection structures in all regions where they work.

Pendekezo Letu provides continuous training to the community-based child protection committees and offers support on issues such as legal representation and capacity building. They are unpaid and usually train in a local church, while Pendekezo Letu gives them allowances for transportation. In January 2015, community members took up responsibility for enrolling children in the schools. Child

protection structures have also entered non-formal schools, where government is not very involved. This has reduced the use of punishments, such as the cane. Additionally, parents and guardians adhere to what they are being told as they are aware that there is a body monitoring them, this has resulted in higher retention in schools. Furthermore, cases of child labour are reported and reducing. The community structures are also helping to trace parents who changed locality.

PKL's own capacity has not been affected by exit. Pendekezo Letu has retained all key members of staff and staff levels and expertise have expanded. There is now an accountant and following the final evaluation, Pendekezo Letu recruited a dedicated M&E Officer. Furthermore, the evaluation inspired a new department for Research and Learning by merging the advocacy, social work and fundraising teams. The funding extension has helped to allow momentum to continue.

3. As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost

As EveryChild's exit has not adversely affected PKL's funding (indeed through diversification it may have helped), expertise and momentum for change has not been lost in the country. PKL continues to play an active role in the Girl Child Network – an advocacy coalition of 312 Kenyan organisations. PKL's work with the network has been successful and has brought about changes in Kenya, such as the aforementioned lobbying on sanitary towels for girls.

Implications for others

Some of the previous exits which EveryChild have made were conducted in a less responsible manner. One example was an exit from Peru, which they undertook in a rapid fashion. They planned to complete the exit from their country office with a full programme in the space of 2-3 months. The exit was made because of funding constraints; however it was rushed and underfinanced and created more problems than it alleviated. The exit dragged on and through legal fees, tax complications and extra staff time the exit ended up being expensive for the organisation. Through experiences like this, EveryChild have learnt the importance of investing time and resources into exits and planning them thoroughly. They have also learnt to be open and transparent during the exit process. Earlier approaches were more secretive and decisions were made from European offices without much prior notice. Later approaches have been much more collaborative. EveryChild now exit responsibly and give partners the opportunity to collaborate in planning exits.

Pendekezo Letu appreciated the emphasis on relationship. During the partnership with EveryChild there were regular opportunities for each organisation to evaluate each other and identify agreements and any disagreements. A responsible exit is a good, but rare, opportunity for the partners to evaluate their donors. This offers more room for mutual understanding, as the donor listens and takes more learning on board from their partner. PKL said that *“EveryChild have listened more than other donors and have taken on board recommendations made via skype calls”*.

Recommendations from PKL

According to PKL respondents, other agencies contemplating exit would do well to:

1. **Plan** - It's important to plan in advance how you will successfully exit. Organisations don't necessarily need to know when the exit will happen from the beginning of the relationship, but they should have an idea of the triggers. It should be built in to programme designs. Unfortunately however, it is rarely thought about at first.
2. **Invest** - In order to ensure a legacy, International NGOs need to make large investments in the process. This means investing resources. You need someone who knows the relationship and can dedicate time to it and plan for it. They also need to understand the possible challenges and pitfalls.
3. **Understand** - Understand what you are trying to get from exit right from the beginning. Exit principles are useful for this.
4. **Consider** the community context - The donor must focus on whether the community are empowered enough to continue the work after the project ends.
5. **Clarify and prepare** - Be clear from the start and prepare the partner. Make sure that they are aware that the donor will only be there for a certain time and that they need to plan for their exit. Those involved should start planning for exit from the half way point and be preparing risk mitigation from then.
6. **Follow up** - Follow up with the organisation 9-12 months down the line as there may be ways you can still support them, such as linking them with another donor.
7. **Document the exit process** – It may be useful to document the exit process, provided the target audience and dissemination plan is clarified. PKL would have liked a video documentary to show the journey made and highlight the lessons learnt.

CWISH Nepal

Initial situation

CWISH (Children – Women in Social Service and Human Rights) was formed in 1993 to promote human rights and social justice and equal opportunities for women, youth and children in the vulnerable areas of Nepal. Its work later expanded to cover issues of child labour and violence against children and women. They currently employ 93 staff and have funding from Save the Children, AC International (Denmark) and Interpedia (Finland).

EveryChild's relationship with CWISH began with a scoping visit in October 2010. Together they developed a proposal for Comic Relief in January 2011, which was approved in July and eventually started in October 2011. The four-year project (ending in September 2015) focuses on reintegrating Nepalese Child Domestic Workers with their families (or into independent living). Reintegrated children continue to receive support so they can remain/return to education whilst their families receive business training and support to increase household income.

The project also involves building the capacity of local child protection mechanisms, such as 30 Child Protection committees and 45 school management committees/PTAs.

At an advocacy level, CWISH works closely with the Department of Labour to develop litigation procedures to prosecute employers of children. Its campaign on child labour, called the Green Flag movement, involves creating child labour free zones. CWISH is also supporting local government to implement child-friendly local governance.

Nine months after this project started, EveryChild in the UK took the momentous decision to close down globally. This meant that there would be no further funding for CWISH after the end of the project. The visit report from October 2012 stated clearly that EveryChild will not be able to support CWISH with direct project funding after the end of the project. They hoped that this would give time to CWISH and EvC to build more sustainability into the project and for CWISH to plan for what happens after that. But it took a long time for this to sink in for CWISH. During a visit in April 2013, EveryChild discussed sustainability plans with staff and they began to communicate with communities. But there was not much headway or clarity on what to phase out. According to current staff: *"We only started thinking about exit seriously from early 2014"*. As another said: *"In the initial phase of the project we did not think too much about exit"*.

This may have been because CWISH simply did not want to hear the bad news. *"When we heard EvC was phasing out, we were very concerned. We were doing very significant work with lots of achievements in this project. The project had given CWISH the identity of reintegrating CDW and establishing child-labour-free zones"*.

How did EvC go about responsible exit with CWISH?

Planning for exit

From 2013, “*EveryChild kept asking us for our post-project plan*”, but it was not until April 2014 they CWISH finally developed its sustainability plan and exit strategy and shared it with EveryChild for feedback. The good thing was that they came up with the document themselves. For each activity they discussed and agreed whether to stop, whether to handover to communities or whether to fundraise for. EveryChild emphasised the focus needed to be on stopping or handing over activities to communities as much as possible as they could not commit to financial or technical support after the project end date.

Key questions discussed in planning

- Which activities need to continue after 2015 and which are time bound?
- How will we ensure they continue? Who will coordinate, host meetings? What training might be required? Is additional funding required? How much and how long for?
- If they are not going continue, who do need to communicate this to and when?
- What do we need to do this year, next year to achieve this?

The result of all these discussions was that CWISH created a colour coded operational plan for exit and sustainability which they discuss with EveryChild and update every six months.

Objectives	Activities	Strategy	Milestones 6 monthly	Extra funding	Justification	Risk	Mitigation

CWISH also made a plan for protecting children during the exit process. During a visit In October 2014, EveryChild facilitated a risk assessment workshop. The aim of this workshop was to identify the risks that might be increased for children once a project ends and the actions we can take to mitigate these. CWISH also wanted to ensure systems and procedures for keeping children safe are maintained after exit. The resulting activities have been included in planned project activities for the final year of the project. They have created a specific matrix outlining:

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigating action	Who responsible	By when

Stopping activities

CWISH took the difficult decision to plan to stop key activities that were not going to be sustainable after the end of the project. These included:

- Awareness-raising in communities which had been done since the beginning of the project.
- Outreach centres which were intended to be bridge back into formal education and back into families

- Teachers training and sensitisation in schools
- Adult Domestic workers initiative with private companies
- Training for police
- Case management activities
- Non-formal education

Handover

CWISH is also in the process of handing over sustainable interventions to community mechanisms. Staff believe that sustainable exit: *“is all about coordinating with existing structures”* as one put it or as another said: *“We are making community structures take more responsibility so that results are more sustainable.”*

Ensuring sustainable reintegration is a key focus of CWISH. They have been working with government-mandated (but previously inactive) Child Protection Committees (CPC) in project areas to take over the case management after the project ends, (Outside of the six project areas, the District Child Welfare Board will be responsible for monitoring and supporting reintegrated children). CWISH is currently providing training to CPCs on case management and will slowly start to hand over cases from April 2015, providing accompaniment and support to them during the final six months of the project.

CWISH is also hoping that the:

- teachers they have trained will be able to provide on-going psychosocial support.
- livelihoods training to families of reintegrated children will be taken over by cooperatives in different communities (they have MOUs in place)
- District Education Office will provide on-going education support to reintegrated children (still in process)

As well as the work with reintegrating children, CWISH has worked closely with government. They conducted an initial survey with the Department of Labour on domestic work and signed an MOU with the Department of Labour to develop and implement litigation procedures to prosecute employers of children. Its Green Flag campaign on child labour involves creating child labour free zones, such as the one owned by Lalitpur Sub Metropolitan City Office and the local community. As there are clear monitoring mechanisms and targets in place, this will help ensure the campaign continues beyond the life of this project. CWISH has also been lobbying political leaders to integrate child planning. It hopes that the government will continue to implement these initiatives after the project ends.

Capacity building of local government and communities

Capacity building of local government and communities is a priority in the exit strategy. In October 2014 it was identified as one of the two most urgent initiatives. Capacity building is taking place with a variety of bodies including:

- Training labour officials in litigation,
- Support to Home Workers’ Union (HUN) so that they take over running awareness raising activities with employers in April 2015.
- Training to savings and credit cooperatives in management and accounting so that they are able to play a more active role in supporting vulnerable families in the community.

Source replacement funding

For non-sustainable activities that need to continue after the end of the project, CWISH needs to source additional funding, if services to children are not to suffer. CWISH believes passionately in the need to continue to reintegrate child domestic workers. According to staff: *“this is what CWISH has become known for. It’s our identity. Everyone comes to us for legal and psychosocial support so we cannot stop.”*

In October 2014 EveryChild facilitated a two-day workshop with 12 staff of CWISH focused on fundraising for the priority activities that they had already defined needed to continue. These included

- Legal & psychosocial support for a further two years for children reintegrated in the last years of the EveryChild project.
- Education support (for children who started to receive education support in the last project year)
- Awareness raising with employers
- Media campaigns
- Livelihoods support (follow up and technical support for two more years)

As part of this workshop, EveryChild supported CWISH to develop a fundraising plan. Having so many CWISH staff involved was good for ownership and learning – though the real test will be whether they are able to access actual funding. As of January 2015, CWISH had not yet managed to secure this. EveryChild has tried to help further by linking CWISH with UK Trusts supporting Nepal and helping organise a potential donor visit.

Capacity building of CWISH staff

As well as providing some capacity building support to CWISH staff in fundraising, EveryChild also supported CWISH to develop a Child Protection policy which included workshops with staff.

Monitoring, evaluation and Learning

CWISH is monitoring its sustainability plan regularly, looking at the activities and milestones. Internally it is undertaking a review every three months and externally with EveryChild every six months. The reviews analyse progress and use a red, amber, green colour coding to highlight progress or trouble spots.

After the last EveryChild visit in October 2014, CWISH Director and management team visited all the districts in November and December. They had meetings with communities about what will happen after the EveryChild project’s exit. They assisted every district and community to make specific exit plans, identifying existing local structures (like schools) mechanisms to take greater responsibility.

Analysis of exit process

What went well? What were key success factors?

It was apparent after just nine months of a four year project, that exit would be happening at the end of the project. Having more than three years to prepare made it easier than for other partners (like VOC in Nepal where exit took place very quickly at the end of the pilot project). This long lead time meant that although CWISH took until 2014 to really accept that reality, this still means they had 18 months to be more intentional and focused on responsible exit.

CWISH themselves deserve much credit. EveryChild describes them as *“a very engaging and open partner”*. CWISH took a positive approach to the relationship, even when they realised it would end. They were the ones demanding more communication with the funder through regular Skype calls.

EveryChild has provided intensive support to the process. Initially there was a lot of communication about developing a sustainability and exit strategy. They have visited CWISH every six months. Most importantly to CWISH, they let them drive the process of prioritising; only facilitating CWISH to make their own decisions. CWISH staff said: *“They were not interfering. They always respect the group realities. We appreciate this most. There were flexible in response to challenges and learning.”* They say *“Our achievements are because they supported us to change”*. When asked with the benefit of hindsight, what EveryChild could have done better in exit, the CWISH Director replied: *“They have done an amazing job. Together we have achieved very significant results.”*

To a large degree this approach reflects EveryChild's overall approach to partnership. Since 2011, EveryChild has also intentionally conducted an annual two-way monitoring of the quality of the relationship. They developed a considered and comprehensive process, adapted from the Keystone Accountability survey.

What did not go as well as hoped? Why not?

The main issue is that it has taken a while for CWISH to take the exit process seriously. As one staff said: *“We should have focused more on sustainability at the start. We only began to take it seriously in Year 3 of the 4 year project. It could have been earlier”*. Consequently in 2104, EveryChild is still concerned that CWISH has not made enough progress on sustainability and the exit strategy. With one year left of the project, it is still in delivery mode. Communications to communities has only just started and it has not actually stopped many activities yet, just planned to.

CWISH has not yet managed to access replacement funding. As one CWISH staff said *“EveryChild should help us find another donor”*. But ultimately it is CWISH's responsibility. It is not yet clear what is CWISH's plan 'b' if they are not successful.

One staff member also pointed out that *“We could have done more capacity building of local stakeholders in exit. We did not emphasise this enough.”*

Mixed messages in 2012 about Family for Every Child caused problems initially. As one UK staff person said: *“It was very difficult as we were not sure what was going to happen. At what stage do you communicate? Our mixed messages in 2012 caused hiccoughs and awkward moments, but no lasting damage; though we had to spend a lot of time reiterating and rebuilding”*.

Impact - As of today, to what extent have principles of responsible exit been achieved?

As the project does not end until September 2015, it is obviously too early to answer this question. It will be more appropriate to ask this question in Phase 2, in mid-2016, when a local consultant will visit CWISH and a sample of accessible communities to get their perspective.

- i. As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable – a continuation of services or lasting changes in children’s lives*

During the project more than 700 children were reintegrated back in their families by CWISH. It will be important to find out whether this reintegration was sustained. Have they stayed? Did the District Education Office will provide on-going education support to reintegrated children? It will also be worth investigating whether the District Child Welfare Board has taken on responsibility for monitoring and supporting reintegrated children.

In Phase 2 it will also be important to see whether CWISH managed to handover implementation successfully to communities. CWISH themselves predict that EveryChild’s exit will cause “*a slight imbalance in the communities. But it is manageable. We are in contact with community mechanisms and are confident that they will take these issues forward.*” Did the CPC manage to successfully take on the case management responsibility? Did teachers continue to provide on-going psychosocial support? Did cooperatives manage to take over the livelihoods training and support to families of reintegrated children? Did the Home Workers’ Union (HUN) take over running awareness raising activities with employers from April 2015?

It will also be useful to find out whether or not CWISH managed to source replacement funding for the range of support services to children post-integration.

- ii. Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work.*

A door-to-door campaign to raise awareness of the illegality of employing children has now reached 12000 households in the Kathmandu valley. In addition 30 Child Protection Committees and 45 school management committees/PTAs have received training to develop action plans to protect children in their community. It will be important to analyse the extent to which these CPCs and school committees have genuinely taken on responsibility post-project and EveryChild exit

- iii. As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost*

CWISH has worked closely with Village and Municipal Development Committees so that no one employs Child Domestic Workers. It will be important to find out whether the Green Flag momentum for creating child labour-free zones continues post-project. Has this spread beyond Lalitpur as hoped? To what extent has the Department of Labour been able to continue the work with CWISH on prosecuting employers of children?

CWISH has also encouraged local government to implement child-friendly local governance. To what extent are some VDC’s now budgeting for children?

The project has done well in changing national perceptions about the feasibility of reintegrating children. Previously this was not part of the discourse, but now CDW reintegration is seen as possible. Will this be sustained post-project?

Implications for others

Respondents in this case study identified the following key learning points for other international NGOs interested in 'responsible exit':

- Responsible exit simply forces you to do top-quality development. It should be in place from the start because it is an intrinsic to the INGOs understanding of and approach to development. It forces you not to be lazy and just pay lip-service to sustainability. As CWISH said: "*Exit promotes sustainability*".
- There is real value in having principles and guidelines for exit and clear plans. But these plans need to be responsive to local issues, needs and demands, as well as flexible. Communities are very diverse. When we go to the field we have to listen to people and respond. Plans need to be flexible.
- Focus exit on empowering people so that they can take responsibly themselves. Focus on sustainability at the start. What if we are not here? Different community structures will be there for ever and so we have to be responsive and reactive to them, focusing on how to strengthen them
- Capacity building is not just about grant management compliance. Capacity building should be focused on the future of the organisations and respond to local partner's demands.
- Successful exit depends on the health of the partnership itself. EveryChild's approach and annual partnership reviews from 2011 which assessed the quality of relationship provided the foundation for successful exit as communication between partners was already honest and open.

P4EC Russia Case Study

January 2015

Initial situation

Partnership for EveryChild (P4EC) Russia was formerly a country office of EveryChild, established in 1994. Following discussions around localisation within EveryChild, and the introduction of a new legal framework in Russia in 2007, a decision was made to establish a new independent organisation that would become a partner of EveryChild and close the EveryChild country office in Russia. A new organisation, P4EC was established in 2009 and the country office was closed in 2011. P4EC became a founding member of Family for EveryChild in 2011. The partnership between EveryChild and P4EC ended in 2014.

During their partnership, P4EC implemented two programmes with the support of EveryChild.

Title	Date	Funding	Description
IBPP10 Taking Action for Children	1 October 2010 – 31 October 2013	EU funded project with a total grant of €675,000 EUR plus \$152,550 USD from Vitol. EveryChild funded €559,347 EUR of the grant. Grant was for 26 months, later extended to 27 months.	Developed Loss of Parental Care Index, and successfully engaged with decision makers and child care organisations at development and implementation stages. Also created an online platform for specialists, Association for Early Intervention, a national network of foster care associations.
Prevention, protection and reintegration programme	1 April 2011 – 31 March 2014	£44,000 GBP over 2013/14	Concerned with preventing children from entering state institutions by working with parents, foster parents and social workers to protect and reintegrate children at-risk. Key services included the Short Breaks Service for families caring with disabilities and Crisis Intervention Service for families in difficult situations.

According to EveryChild staff, P4EC was different to the other organisations they supported. P4EC was already a strong, independent organisation, with a lot more existing skills and capacities. It was in a much better position as it already had some fundraising capacity and was not reliant on EveryChild as its single donor.

How did exit take place?

Although the exit process only covers a period of 2 years and 8 months (from when EveryChild took the decision to close and end its partnership with P4EC in 2012 to when it finally exited from P4EC in 2014), P4EC see this period as the final stage of a much longer transition from Country Office to member of family for EveryChild.

P4EC also have some concerns with use of the term 'responsible exit'. First, the term only came into use in 2012 whereas, in the case of Russia, exit is seen as being part of a much longer and more complicated transition process. Second, P4EC do not associate themselves with the term and feel that it reflects EveryChild's agenda rather than their own. They also see the term as one-sided, arguing that "one side's 'responsible exit' is the other side's ongoing struggle for survival, sustainability and impact".

The transition from Country Office to independent organisation 2009-2011

This was a long process that started with localisation of the former EveryChild country office in Russia. This decision was largely brought about by a broader movement within EveryChild to localise all its country offices (with the exception of India, Malawi and Cambodia). However local factors, particularly the establishment of a new legal framework within Russia in 2007 also played a part.

P4EC was established as an independent, local organisation and registered with the Russian authorities in 2009. The Country Office closed in 2011. During this period, programmes previously ran from the country office were handed over to P4EC. This included IBPP10 Taking Action for Children Programme, a large EU funded programme. They became a founding member of Family for EveryChild in 2011.

P4EC received a large degree of technical capacity building support from EveryChild during this period. EveryChild also transferred the ownership of the building that the Country Office was based in to P4EC.

However P4EC encountered a number of challenges during this transition.

Throughout this period P4EC had to undergo a series of separate due diligence processes, first from the EU to take over administration of IBPP10 Taking Action For Children, secondly to become a partner of EveryChild, and finally another one to become a member of Family for EveryChild. These processes each took up a lot of time, money and effort. P4EC found them repetitive and felt like they were being continually reviewed and inspected by EveryChild (though only one of these processes was actually from EveryChild).

They also faced issues around the ownership of their outputs, results and legacy. As P4EC, they were considered a completely new legal entity under Russian law and were unable to take their track record with them. This meant that they had to start to build up their track record again from scratch.

In the years up to 2011 there was a high turnover of programme staff within EveryChild in the UK, which P4EC found difficult to cope with. It resulted in a lack of continuity and made communication between EveryChild and P4EC more difficult.

Together, these challenges meant that the relationship between EveryChild and P4EC became difficult and at times, fraught. It created an atmosphere of distrust, which took time to wane. It was against this backdrop that the final stage of the exit process took place. This meant that during the 2012 – 2014 exit, EveryChild left the process a bit more up to them and gave them a bit more space, but responded to any needs P4EC identified. According to programme staff, sensitivity around communications, particularly on suggestions and feedback from EveryChild, continued to affect the relationship during the 2012 – 2014 exit process.

The 2012 – 2014 exit process

Both EveryChild and P4EC agree that the exit process which took place between 2012 and 2014 was relatively smooth and easy, especially compared with the transition from country office to EveryChild partner.

Funding was tapered out over a 2 year 8 month period, commencing in 2012. The process was structured in a similar way to other exit process and the same exit tools were used (Partnership Completion Report, Letter of Recommendation, Partnership Completion Final Call, and Partnership Completion 6 Month Follow-up Call).

P4EC staff visited the EveryChild offices in London to learn more about fundraising and administration systems in October 2013. The trip focused on systems management to support the development of fundraising streams from individual and corporate donors. This was followed by a visit from EveryChild's Director of Fundraising to P4EC in St Petersburg in November 2013. EveryChild hired an external consultant to undertake due diligence work, who also provided some support for systems management and the development of a business plan.

During this period the main challenges P4EC faced were around fundraising. The fundraising environment in Russia is difficult, with laws restricting foreign funding of civil society. This situation has been exacerbated by the recent economic crisis within the country. Consequently, P4EC developed a fundraising strategy based around raising revenue from individual and corporate donors within Russia.

Analysis of process

All interviewees noted that the 2012 – 2014 exit process was relatively easy compared to the earlier transition. EveryChild felt that P4EC didn't have the same degree of anxiety about exit as other partners as it was part of a larger transition process. Ultimately, "partnership came to an end quietly and smoothly".

What went well

During the transition from Country Office to EveryChild partner, P4EC greatly appreciated the technical support EveryChild provided them with, which allowed them to build the foundations of the new organisation. They particularly appreciated the EveryChild project planning tools "which were clear and well laid out". They appreciated support to develop systems, processes and policies around finance and HR, stating that "our NGO infrastructure owes a lot to EveryChild". P4EC also appreciated being given the opportunity to participate in global meetings during this time.

By the time the formal partnership between P4EC and EveryChild began in 2011 a new programmes team were in place within EveryChild. P4EC appreciated the professional and sensitive attitude of EveryChild staff during the 2012 – 2014 exit period. The programmes team put in place a clear process and did not miss any milestones important to this process, which P4EC appreciated. They also understood that P4EC was an organisation and what they were trying to do: "EveryChild took time to understand them as an organisation, how they worked and listened to them before making suggestions". EveryChild treated P4EC "as an equal partner and respected their expertise".

At the beginning of their formal partnership, EveryChild handed over the administration of the IBPP10 Taking Action For Children Programme to P4EC. Managing the administration of this large EU grant with the support of EveryChild gave P4EC the opportunity to build up its reputation and track record for administering big grants, and increased their profile as an organisation. EveryChild provided P4EC with support when needed but essentially gave them space to get on with it. Although P4EC appreciated this, at times it led P4EC to think that the EU project was not a priority for EveryChild. The end of the project coincided with exit, which encouraged P4EC to think a bit more about the sustainability of the project interventions than they might otherwise have done.

Financially, P4EC appreciated the flexibility of EveryChild during the 2012-2014 exit period. They particularly appreciated being allowed to use exchange rate gains to cover service provision costs during the exit period. P4EC also appreciated that EveryChild tapered out P4EC's funding over 2 years and 8 months rather than stopping it in one go. These 'parachute payments' gave them time and the incentive to seek alternative funding, and softened the blow to organisational finances, giving them security over the exit period.

What went less well

This evaluation focuses on the 2012 – 2014 exit process, but respondents found it difficult to neatly disentangle this period from what went on before. The tensions from the earlier localisation period continued to affect both the partnership between P4EC and EveryChild, and the 2012 – 2014 exit process.

Most significantly, the transition from country office to member for EveryChild was characterised by feelings of distrust. Although there is no single cause, these feelings appear to relate most clearly to the repeated due diligence processes P4EC were required to undergo during the transition. P4EC saw these processes as rigid and bureaucratic, and they made P4EC staff feel like they were constantly being inspected or checked out to see if they were good enough. Poor communication between EveryChild and P4EC, which was exacerbated by high staff turnover during the early part of the transition also contributed to feelings of distrust. From EveryChild's perspective they could understand P4EC's frustration, but the first was an EU requirement, the second was considerably adapted with minimal information required and the third, the due diligence for Family for Every Child was a requirement for all members and an entirely separate process, carried out by Family for Every Child as an independent organisation, not EveryChild. So to a large extent, EveryChild believe that *"these different processes were not all initiated by EvC and not within EveryChild's control"*

Whatever the case, it meant that P4EC lacked ownership of the 2012-2014 exit process. Within P4EC the 2012-2014 exit process is very much seen as belonging to EveryChild rather than P4EC. Throughout interviews P4EC continually refer to the 2012-2014 exit process in the third person, and talk about *'their process'*, *'their milestones'*, *'their agenda'* etc. P4EC staff members choose not to use the term 'responsible exit' and are also unfamiliar with the Responsible Exit Principles.

What could have been improved

Communication throughout the transition could have been more sensitive and inclusive. Although the relationship between P4EC and EveryChild improved during the formal partnership period from 2011 – 2014, P4EC would have liked communication and planning during the 2012- 2014 exit, to have been more participatory. This may have helped to further reduce feelings of distrust and increase P4EC's ownership over the exit process. P4EC would also have liked EveryChild to place more trust in their local partners, as they know what works best in their context.

P4EC would have liked EveryChild to have done more to support the development of fundraising skills and capacity prior to and during the exit process. Although some support was provided, they would have liked EveryChild to invest in P4EC's fundraising capacity by allowing them to use EveryChild funds to pay for the salary of a member of staff dedicated to fundraising, creating administrative structures for fundraising, or developing fundraising strategies and testing approaches.

EveryChild Responsible Exit Principles

Before entering into a discussion around the Responsible Exit Principles, it is important to note that P4EC were unfamiliar with these principles. According to EveryChild: "*they were explained during skype calls and visits and referred to in other communications such as newsletters*" but they were not understood or internalised by P4EC. Despite this it appears that they have largely been met within this case. On the whole, the services supported by EveryChild during the partnership between EveryChild and P4EC are continuing, although P4EC is struggling to cover the costs of some services as well as its core costs. They are able to support a similar number of children and momentum for change and expertise has not been lost.

i. The work supported by EveryChild is sustainable

The work supported by EveryChild is continuing, although the funding for supporting this work is less stable. According to P4EC:

"EveryChild exit has meant less stable funding for the kind of work that we do with children and families. We have had to reduce the reach of some of our services as a consequence, although we have found some other donors for other types of work".

At the beginning of this year, P4EC only had enough funding to cover two thirds of their budget. They are able to fund most of their services, although often at a slightly reduced level. However they do not have enough funding to cover the core costs of their organisation. They are seeking to meet this shortfall through consultancy work, largely short-term training and education contracts.

They have developed a five-year fundraising strategy. Today, services are funded by a mixture of corporate and individual grants from national and local Russian foundations, as well as one international donor. P4EC have some funding from the Childhood Foundation for Infant Foster Care, and they will incorporate the Crisis Intervention Service into this. They also have a new grant from USAID for developing a professional foster care system.

P4EC are also receiving increased support from local and regional government. A quarter of the funding for the Short Breaks Service is now coming from the St Petersburg City Government. They are also engaged in some consultancy work with regional government to support local government which is bringing in funding. Perhaps more importantly for P4EC's long terms sustainability, they have improved their relationship with local and regional government, and they are acknowledged and valued by them as a strong and knowledgeable partner.

With regards to the specific programmes funded by EveryChild, the Loss of Parental Care Index developed as part of the IBPP10 Taking Action for Children Programme is still going strong. P4EC continue to lead data collection and analysis. Collaboration between the three networks developed under this programme is continuing, although some are more active than others. The online platform for professionals is doing less well as this required a lot more support, whereas the other two are relatively autonomous and therefore more sustainable.

Services developed under the Prevention, Protection and Reintegration Programme will continue but have been scaled back until longer term funding is secured. Crisis Intervention Service will focus on prevention of abandonment of infants and babies in two maternity hospitals in Leningrad and St Petersburg. P4EC are still providing

emergency foster are for babies with 20 cases so far mainly in Leningrad Oblast. They have developed a good partnership with local authorities here.

ii. The exit process has not had a detrimental effect on children and communities

Although P4EC is still supporting roughly the same number of children it was at the time of EveryChild's exit, they are working with fewer children than they would have been able to had EveryChild continued to support P4EC. This is because EveryChild funds were focused on developing service provision models. The grant helped to establish, develop and consolidate these models, and encourage their replication elsewhere. So although P4EC is still supporting the same number of children, this process has stalled. Reduction in funding means they are just about able to keep exiting services going, but have been unable to support the replication of these models elsewhere, which they would have been able to do with the EveryChild grant. They have also had to reduce some service provision due to lack of funding. Although they have secured funding from a range of private and government sources for the Short Breaks Service, it isn't enough to cover full costs. This means that they have had to cut number of hours they can offer and prioritise services for families most in need.

iii. Expertise and momentum for change has not been lost through the exit process

Expertise and momentum for change has not been lost, both within P4EC and within the work supported by EveryChild. P4EC have more control over their strategic direction and they are able to set priorities. They also continue to be linked to a global community of practice through membership of Family for EveryChild, which is very important for P4EC.

At the programme level, among the networks developed as part of the IBPP10 Programme, one doing not so well, one doing ok and another one doing very well. This last network is continuing to develop practice, influencing government.

Implications for others from P4EC

- P4EC would recommend that organisations transitioning from a country office to an independent partner organisation should try to do this through a merger rather than establishing a completely new, independent organisation as this means you can take your track record with you. Organisations should maximise their potential to include previous financial and programmatic history.
- Open and inclusive communication as well as confidence building is required to prevent and resolve issues around trust, which may arise during such a transition process.
- INGOs need to recognise that although we have certain ideas about how support should be provided, partners might want to do things differently and this can work just as well. INGOs need to respect this.

EveryChild Exit Cambodia-LAC

January 2015

Initial Situation

Legal Aid Cambodia (LAC) was established in 1994 to provide quality legal aid, legal and human rights education/outreach and advocate for the poor in Cambodia. Their aim is to ensure access to justice, promote respect of law and human rights and advance legal and judicial reform. LAC has four programmes; the General Legal Aid Programme, the Land Law and Natural Resources Programme, the Child Justice Programme and the Women Justice Programme. They employ 62 staff members, including 17 lawyers.

EveryChild started its relationship with LAC in 2008 when it had a Country Office in Cambodia. The first support from 2008 to 2012 was through a DFID-funded programme called Preventing Violence Against Children. EveryChild and LAC focus on three provinces and other donors support LAC's work elsewhere. They have helped to draft the Juvenile Justice Act with a working group (including government and NGOs) on child justice.

Initially EveryChild operated in Cambodia through its country office, but decided from 2012 onwards to close the country office and work directly through local partners. LAC and Khemara (a new partner with specific community-based expertise) were identified as good partners to work with. Together they developed a joint proposal on Justice for Children and submitted it in May 2012 to Big Lottery for funding.

Exit decisions

In June 2012, EveryChild UK took the decision to close all its programmes, leaving them in a predicament with LAC and the planned work in Cambodia. The project had not started yet, but funding was approved in February 2013 (and the project began in June 2013 for three years). LAC staff were informed about the exit plan. They understood that it was part of their strategy to reconstruct and form Family for EveryChild. But they still wanted the proposed three year project. (In 2014 EveryChild discussed with LAC the possibility of transferring the grant management function to another UK NGO, such as Plan or Save the Children as Big Lottery requires a UK counterpart. But LAC was not keen on this. They felt that both funders had different ways of working and different geographical areas.)

So EveryChild decided to continue to go ahead with the project. As one staff member said: *"We pushed hard to go ahead because LAC and Khemara had invested so much time and effort. We still needed to respect their process."* To ensure quality programming and a clear focus on exit, EveryChild hired a staff person, Choun Soyorn, to be their in-country coordinator using funds from the Big Lottery. She coordinates reporting and checks that projects are running as planned. Furthermore, she oversees internal reviews with stakeholders, helps to fill gaps in the workforce and enables continuity.

But exit was definitely set for the close of the project in June 2016. Exit presented organisational and programming risks to LAC. For example, LAC provides legal

expertise to key actors and legal assistant through programmes such as the diversion programme. The diversion programme seeks to prevent children going through the legal system for minor crimes. Programmes like this may have to be reduced after the exit. LAC's funding comes from abroad and local donors, so a fear for both themselves and EveryChild was that without EveryChild's funding they would not be able to continue their services. LAC worried about finding the support from a new donor to continue to support the children.

How did 'responsible exit' take place?

Jan 2012		LAC identified as partner
March 2012	EveryChild Country Office closes	
May 2012	Phase 1 Big Lottery Fund application submitted	
June 2012	EveryChild exit decision	Decision to honour the planning and design work already done by partners and still submit application
October 2012	Phase 2 Big Lottery Fund application submitted	
March 2013	Confirmation that BIG application successful	
June 2013	LAC project starts	Application for Big Lottery funding successful
February 2014	Meeting with EveryChild UK staff	Discussed the partnership and planned for exit step by step. LAC updates EveryChild on projects and their progress. Capacity building is also discussed, particularly with respect to child protection
September 2014	Meeting with Head of Programmes and review	The organisations discuss M&E and have drawn up a timetable for donor deadlines. During this visit EveryChild staff met with other INGOs who can possibly provide support to LAC.
November 2014 - January 2015	Midterm review report	The report highlighted that everything 'was on track'. The main negative finding of the report was the failure to have achieved the ratification of the Juvenile Justice Act
March 2015	Comprehensive child protection policy approved by the board	EveryChild wanted LAC to update their child protection policy in order to make it more comprehensive. The new policy is awaiting approval by the board.

A key moment in the exit for LAC was the shift in understanding of M&E through their support on reporting. EveryChild also assisted with child protection risks and fundraising training. They believe they have learnt a lot through the exit process. But LAC realises *"this knowledge is useless without a continuation of the resources through funding"*.

Change is a slow process in Cambodia, so if donors work in the country for 5 or 10 years and then move on, as most do, they may not be able to achieve everything

they wanted. Cambodia is not presently a priority for donors. Furthermore, because LAC only employs national staff, they can find it hard to communicate effectively to foreign donors.

EveryChild are also looking for other new partners amongst NGOs in the UK which will continue the work LAC are doing. Save the Children and PLAN international have been approached and talks are on-going. LAC is hoping to find new donors or an alternative partner through EveryChild. Similarly, they are currently looking for donors in their own network. But it still remains a challenge.

The next planned EveryChild visit in May 2015 will focus on helping LAC with scenario planning for sustainability – identifying which activities can be self-sustaining and which need further funding and therefore fundraising.

To a degree, EveryChild believes that the way the project has been designed – joint implementation between LAC and Khemara will mitigate some of the exit risks. A lot depends on whether the Juvenile Justice Act is passed and implemented. This Act will help to ‘fill in any gaps’ in the domestic law and help to achieve the goals which LAC and EveryChild are working toward.

Analysis of process

LAC found EveryChild easy to work with as they were communicative and strategically supportive. LAC appreciated that EveryChild ‘were clear from the start’ with them and that EveryChild UK staff have always kept LAC informed about the restructure and exit plan. This has helped LAC to look for other donors and EveryChild have always been supportive in this aspect. EveryChild has provided continuity in support to LAC. They have been concerned not to break the partnership relationship. They have provided a great local coordinator Soyorn and even after the Head of Programmes leaves in mid-2015, she will continue to provide support to LAC on a consultancy basis.

EveryChild are clearly concerned about funding to support the children after their departure and this has made for a more constructive exit. EveryChild staff have convened meetings and given co-ordination support to LAC. While this was initially a case of EveryChild giving recommendations to LAC, EveryChild now seeks recommendation from LAC. When looking for new donors for LAC, EveryChild have always been very open and respectful of LAC’s recommendations and opinions, which has been appreciated.

However, if LAC can’t find a new donor they will lose staff. It is difficult to find pro-bono lawyers as there are only around 1000 lawyers working in the country and these are mostly urban-based, predominantly in Phnom Penh. There are none to support children in rural areas. Fundraising is still a weakness.

One aspect which could have gone better was the speed of the induction of the Juvenile Justice Act. LAC respondents wonder whether they and EveryChild could have pushed and lobbied the appropriate ministries more vigorously.

LAC feels that Family for EveryChild should choose to focus some of its activity in Cambodia so that these children can still be helped. It’s not clear to LAC yet which organisations they are looking to work with in Cambodia, although they are aware that they are looking for NGOs which work with children.

Impact of exit

As exit will not occur for another 18 months, this is still conjecture at this stage

i. As far as possible ensure that the work we have done is sustainable

LAC feels that services may reduce without EveryChild. It is a possibility that they may not get another donor, as Cambodia is not presently a priority for donors. However, the exit plan they have managed to construct with EveryChild will go some way to mitigate this. The knowledge that EveryChild is looking for new partners for their work gives them more confidence. They have a lot of information and experience working with donors and through meetings and skype calls with EveryChild they have received ideas. Additionally, EveryChild have offered them advice regarding who to work with and who will be involved. They also received advice on what should continue once EveryChild withdraws. The success of the Juvenile Justice Act is very important in this regard, as it will put more responsibility onto the government for the legal representation of juveniles.

ii. Ensure that exit does not have a detrimental effect on the children and communities where we work

The children and communities that LAC works with will be affected but unsure as to what extent yet. More than 100 children as child accused and child victims are currently supported by the Justice for Children project. LAC is used to having small grants from donors but the government cannot take over alone, as it has a lot of issues to deal with and has to prioritise. Unfortunately, the government generally chooses to prioritise other issues which means it has to set up with an NGO to solve the problem cooperatively. There is an exit plan but the problem persists. The structure exists now but if funding is reduced activity will fall.

iii. As far as possible, ensure that expertise and momentum for change in the country is not lost

A big challenge during the exit process has been trying to expedite the ratification of the Juvenile Justice Act. Unfortunately, events largely outside of LAC's control have impeded this development. The rotation of key figures in the relevant ministries has meant that the Act has had to be reviewed multiple times. Furthermore after the national election, the two main parties in Cambodia were in a state of conflict which caused political processes to slow down for many months.

LAC is confident that the Juvenile Justice Act will go through and be adopted by the government in 2015. The law only needs to be sent to the Council Minister and then to the assembly for induction. However LAC is concerned that they will not have the resources to push the government if this slips to 2016.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, however, believes that it will still need support from LAC after the law has been introduced. The ministry cooperates with LAC on a rehabilitation programme that works with children in prison. Through this programme they helped to draft the Juvenile Justice Act. Once the Act is passed the Ministry still believes it will need to cooperate with LAC to train the relevant professionals, such as induction guidelines for social workers.

LAC and other NGOs are also lobbying the government for change by allocating more resources on children's issues through working with the Bar Association of Cambodia. As a result, the government is now investing \$40,000 per annum for *pro bono* lawyers for the poor.

Implications for others

LAC had previously worked with another international partner with funds from the EU. This partner decided to switch its focus from children to women. They suddenly gave LAC a "*hard quick answer*". There was little information regarding the process and the rationale behind it. In contrast, EveryChild kept LAC informed from the beginning and were clear in their step by step process. In this case LAC knew why there was an exit taking place and was able to 'look forward to other partners'. Post exit, LAC will take more initiative in partnerships and will always be 'looking forward'. They now want to plan clear strategies, goals and intended / expected outcomes for exit well in advance.

In a responsible exit, effective communication and strategic thinking is very important; there has to be appropriate planning and project design and sustainability needs to be considered. LAC believes that a responsible exit allows the organisations involved to learn from their own mistakes, as well as each other's. During a responsible exit there is a transfer of knowledge and a focus on project management, sustainability and the infrastructure to achieve this.

Responsible exits needs to be tailored and context specific as there are different styles of donor and relationship. EveryChild have taken this into consideration. For example, they have listened to LAC's input surrounding potential future donors as LAC feel that not all styles of grant management will suit their context.

Recommendations from LAC to other international NGOs

1. Inform well in advance - Partners and key stakeholders should be informed well in advance. The entire process should also be transparent to these parties. Previous partners have just finished with LAC and they were not aware of the partner's strategy before this. In this situation LAC were unprepared for exit and had no time to share what they had done or offer input. They felt as if they had no power in the relationship
2. Plan, monitor and adapt - Work with the partner to produce an exit plan and allow opportunities for this to keep being modified throughout
3. Aim high - International NGOs must include governments in their sustainability strategies and find a way to work with them. For example, in Cambodia the annual budget does not allocate much money for issues such as health, education and social aid. If exit plans are to ensure sustainability then governments and policy makers need to be considered
4. Accept that downsizing may be inevitable - If donors cap their funding then activity will likely get smaller, despite mitigation policies.