|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting: | ChildFund Alliance EU Steering Group |
| Date and Place: | January 22, 2018. Brussels, Belgium |
| Participants: | **Barnfonden** Anna Svärd; **ChildFund Australia** Sarah Hunt; **ChildFund Deutschland** Joern Ziegler; **CCF Canada** Philip Tanner; **ChildFund International** Paul Bode; **EDUCO** Jose Faura; **ChildFund Alliance** Meg Gardinier; **CFA EU Office** Catherine Lalonde & Omar García. |

1. **Briefing update on the EU Office:**

The summary of the year in numbers (ref. to ppt slide) was helpful. The steering group (SG) notably acknowledged that keeping track of the visits to the EU Delegations (EUD) throughout the year is a good practice.

The EUO will keep ChildFund Alliance members (the members) informed on a number of topics, such as the discussions on Brexit and its potential threats and opportunities for the Alliance. Same applies to new funding opportunities, like the EU-UN Spotlight initiative.

At policy level, the Agenda 2030 features high on the agenda of the EU but without a concrete strategy to implement and deliver on its commitments. The new EU Consensus on Development should lead in 2018 to the development of an EU implementation framework for Agenda 2030.

The members sometimes find challenging to develop programmatic positions and innovative leadership on the main EU priority themes, such as gender and migration. Other organisations and networks (like Plan or Terre des Hommes) are already strongly positioned there. ChildFund thought leadership on gender is to come from the programmes implemented on the ground showing how problems affect girls and boys differently.

|  |
| --- |
| * **AP:** Proposition to collaborate with the APC on the development of ChildFund position on Gender. * **AP**: All members are invited to send their positions / researches on migration to the EUO. |

1. **Structure of the EUO**

This year was marked by the integration of the EUO into the Alliance structure. The transition is now complete.

Over 50% of the EUO efforts are today devoted to supporting grant application processes. A shift should gradually take place in the coming months and years for the EUO team to devote more time to reinforce the members preparation to apply for EU grants (by supporting the development of engagement strategies, developing capacities in developing quality project proposals, etc.).

The EUO engagement in the field of advocacy aims at forging the members brand and credibility and contribute to the development of a solid EU financial partnership strategy. It also contributes to the Alliance strategy to go and be known beyond the UN and NYC-based stakeholders.

The EU SG agrees that the overall role of the EUO in grant acquisition is to:

* Provide leadership on internal processes and member cooperation;
* Focus on quality strengthening;
* Contribute to the members long term external partnership / consortium strategy.

Discussions on current challenges focused on solutions to the increase the collaboration between the EUO and the members newly supporting the office (i.e. members who are not part of the EU SG) and to increase the EUO financial sustainability.

The EUO budget and financial structure is to be reviewed to limit the risks related to currency exchange rate fluctuations.

As of today, the EUO budget strictly covers the costs related to the running of the office (HR and admin). It was agreed and reminded that EUO activities that have budget implications (such as the organization of in person workshop or training, visibility event, etc.) should be done in collaboration with the members involved and that members should be ready to cover some / part of the costs associated to the realisation of the activities (such as travels, accommodation, etc.). This is very much in line with the practices established with the Alliance.

|  |
| --- |
| * **AP:** Proposition to increase the steering group’s membership but looking at keeping this group’s ability to react quickly. * **AP:** Disseminate the minutes of this meeting to all the members * **AP:** To communicate budget update and planning at CEO and Board levels. * **AP:** To include clause that provides for the sharing of the indirect cost recovery (ICR) in the EU protocol. * **Decision:** The SG recommends members to consider budgeting for least 0.5 to 1 trip per year at a cost-share for EUO activities impacting members. |

1. **EU Protocol**

The EU Protocol was reviewed based on the comments and recommendations made by the GSC.

The SG recommends changing the wording on the applicability of the EU Protocol. It will apply to all EU grant application processes in which one or many ChildFund members are involved, but some sections (mainly on the mode of operation) will only be applicable in situations where a ChildFund member is the lead applicant.

It is too soon to decide whether the Protocol is relevant for ECHO funding application.

|  |
| --- |
| * **Decision:** The engagement in ECHO funding will be discussed in due course (once EDUCO has full clarity) and all reference to ECHO funding will be removed from the Protocol. |

The SG recommends that the time limits proposed in the Protocol (ex. deadline for taking a go decision, for adopting a member cooperation framework, etc.) should be maintained, considering the efforts that must be made in this regard.

The rule on the sharing of the ICR was debated and evolved from the 1% rule (1% of the project budget should be transferred to the EUO when a Childfund member is lead applicant) to the 12% rule (12% of the ICR received by a ChildFund member should be transferred to the EUO, in all situations).

Members are committed to reinforce transparency and open communication in the countries where more than one Childfund member is present. Recent cases (in countries such as Ethiopia or India) show that both the Head Offices (HOs) and COs should strengthen their practices in this regard. It of course concerns situations where members could be competing for the same grant, but it also affects the members common engagement strategy with the EUD.

The models of cooperation developed in the section on Eligibility will undergo revision. The last model will be further detailed and remain a recommended practice, for specific situations only (mainly when national legislations allow for it). The model will be further researched by field teams and progressively developed and reviewed based on our experience (ex. CSO project in Indonesia).

An alternative model was proposed by ChildFund International, which consisted for the EU-based (eligible) member to award a contract to a non-EU-based (ineligible) members for the implementation of specific activities. This solution is however not in line with the spirit of the EU rules and regulations.

The EU Protocol was not formally approved by the SG.

|  |
| --- |
| * **AP:** To insist in the EU protocol on the importance of open communication and transparency. * **AP:** The EU Protocol will be reviewed based on the SG feedback, ChildFund International will review it for a final approval. * **Decision:** 12% of all ICR received through an EU grant is to be transferred to EUO, as of 01 October 2017. * **Decision:** To increase transparency and communication on EU grant acquisition, Members will develop a unified EU engagement strategy in countries where more than one ChildFund member is present. * **Decision:** In case of substantial changes in the circumstances, the EUO will call for the modification of the EU protocol. There is no fixed review process. |

**2017 Annual workplan**

The reporting on the 2017 workplan was approved by the SG after a review of the achievements and KPIs.

Recommendations for a more focused capacity building strategy and support to priority countries will be implemented in the EUO 2018 workplan.

|  |
| --- |
| * **Decision:** Approval of the reporting on the 2017 workplan. |

**2018 Annual workplan**

The format of the workplan (reviewed by the EUO, divided into 4 objectives) and the proposed KPIs were discussed by the SG.

|  |
| --- |
| * **Decision:** In order to facilitate the EUO reporting and to align it with the Alliance Secretariat reporting process, this years’ workplan will be covering 3 semesters (from Jan. 2018 to June 2019). In July 2019, the EUO reporting process will be fully aligned with the US fiscal year and budgeting processes. |

Further to the signature between Educo and ECHO of a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), it was agreed that the role of the EUO in the implementation of the Alliance strategy towards this new donor would be discussed in the coming weeks and months. The 2018 EUO workplan will be reviewed accordingly.

The decision to review the list of priority countries by mid-2018 is reaffirmed.

During the first semester of 2018, the EUO will work with a limited number of priority countries (those we know will remain on our list) to develop an engagement strategy. Lessons learned from this process will impact the review of the list.

Ethiopia was included by the SG on the list of priority countries based on the following factors: 1) alignment with the EU priorities in preventing migration, in countries of origin and transit; 2) scarcity of African countries in the initial list; 3) the presence of 2 ChildFund members and their current engagement/ will to engage with the EUD.

Considering the importance of building a strong relationship with the EU at all levels, the immediate next step will consist in supporting priority countries in the development of their engagement strategy with the EUD.

|  |
| --- |
| * **Decision:** Priority countries for immediate engagement: Burkina Faso, Myanmar, the Philippines, Guatemala, India and (newly added to the list) Ethiopia. |

Capacity building will focus on enabling the members to integrate, on the long term, the expertise required to develop successful EU grant proposals. It was recommended to develop more training material (accessible on the EUO folder of the Alliance members only section) and to improve sustainability of EU grant capacity amongst members through the introduction of at least 2 master trainers per member, and a training toolkit (containing training material and other orientation material). More efforts will also be devoted to sharing lessons learned at senior management level (ex. of the next CEO Forum).

In 2018 the contribution of the EUO to the Alliance advocacy strategy will remain limited a few very specific aspects. The EUO will focus on the budget component of the strategy, raising the importance on investing in children in the new EU multi annual budget (MFF) as well as on child participation in the SDG process (focussing on lessons learned from the Child Friendly Accountability program). The KPIs will be reviewed in the coming months, with the implementation of the Alliance advocacy task-force strategy.

The SG highlighted the potential of the EUO in leveraging the advocacy work done by the Secretariat and in expanding it. The EUO offers an added value to the Alliance and the members at this level and a more active contribution should progressively be envisaged in the future. In addition to contributing to the Alliance advocacy strategy (developed by the ATF, based on CFA), potential niches for the EUO in terms of advocacy include gender and migration from a child protection perspective.

|  |
| --- |
| * **Decision:** the EUO 2018 workplan as modified during the session was approved by the SG. |