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Evaluating information and opinion building

a Minor Field Study of how to perform an efficient evaluation of the information and opinion building that Svalorna does in Nicaragua

Medie and communication science
C-level thesis

Date/Term: Fall 2006
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Examiner: Christian Christensen
Serial Number: X-XX XX XX
Abstract

This is a case study on how to perform an efficient evaluation of the information and opinion building that the aid organization Svalorna Latin America does in Nicaragua. The main purpose of the study is to find a methodology on how to work with evaluations of information and opinion building in the future. Svalorna LA works to empower the people, through information and opinion building, and achieve sustainable development. The method I used is semi-structured interviews in combination with literature review about the topic to create a base for my questions.

I used the Johari window to analyze Svalorna with the information that had come up during the interviews. For example, Svalorna in Sweden has one understanding of how the perception of the organization is. Svalorna in Nicaragua has another and the cooperating organizations a third perception. There were also a lot of different opinions about the purpose of an evaluation.

The main purpose of evaluation, to constantly develop the program and thereby strengthen the cooperating organizations, should furthermore guide the choice of methodology for evaluation. This should be a consistent methodology with an amount of specific methods of which one is to be chosen depending on if it is an activity, effort or goal that need to be evaluated. These specific methods should be the same every time.

I do believe that Svalorna’s work in Nicaragua contributes to a sustainable development but as I will show in my thesis I found several recommendations for them to work more efficiently.
**Sammanfattning**


Jag tror verkligen att Svalornas arbete i Nicaragua bidrar till en hållbar utveckling men som jag kommer att visa i min uppsats har jag funnit flera rekommendationer på hur de skulle kunna jobba mer effektivt.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJL</td>
<td>Asociación para la Juventud de León</td>
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<td>APEADECO</td>
<td>Asociación de Promotoras de la Educación Alternativa para el Desarrollo Comunitario</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICAP</td>
<td>Centro de Investigación, Capacitación y Acción Pedagógica</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Cooperating Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSLN</td>
<td>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>LFA</td>
<td>Logical Framework Approach</td>
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<td>MASA</td>
<td>Movimiento de Activación Social Alternativa</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millenium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Partido Conservador</td>
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<td>PLC</td>
<td>Partido Liberal Constitucionalista</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRGF</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Growth Facility</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategies</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers</td>
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<td>REJE</td>
<td>Red de Jóvenes</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBV</td>
<td>Utbildning för BistandsVerksamhet</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAN</td>
<td>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of content

**ABSTRACT** .................................................................................................................................................. 2

**TABLE OF CONTENT** .................................................................................................................................. 5

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................................................................................... 7

1. **INTRODUCTION** ....................................................................................................................................... 8

1.1 PROBLEM AREA .......................................................................................................................................... 8

2. **PURPOSE OF THE THESIS** ................................................................................................................... 11

2.1. SVALORNA .................................................................................................................................................. 12

2.1.1. Svalorna in Nicaragua .......................................................................................................................... 12

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .............................................................................................................................. 14

2.3. RESEARCH SCOPE ..................................................................................................................................... 14

3. **BACKGROUND** .......................................................................................................................................... 15

3.1. FACTS ABOUT NICARAGUA ...................................................................................................................... 15

3.1.1. History and politics ............................................................................................................................... 15

3.2. GLOBALIZATION ....................................................................................................................................... 17

3.2.1. Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) ...................................................................................................... 19

4. **THEORY** ................................................................................................................................................... 23

4.1. THE JOHARI WINDOW .............................................................................................................................. 23

4.2. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ............................................................................................................ 25

4.2.1. Top-down versus Bottom-up Communication .................................................................................... 26

4.3. INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION ..................................................... 27

4.3.1. Information and opinion building ...................................................................................................... 28

4.4. PURPOSE OF A EVALUATION .................................................................................................................. 29

4.4.1. Evaluation ............................................................................................................................................. 31

4.4.2. Evaluation of information and opinion efforts ..................................................................................... 32

4.4.3. Base line study ....................................................................................................................................... 34

4.5. SUMMARY .................................................................................................................................................. 35

5. **METHOD** .................................................................................................................................................. 37

5.1. CASE STUDY ............................................................................................................................................. 37

5.2. QUALITATIVE METHOD ............................................................................................................................ 38

5.3. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS ....................................................................................................................... 38

5.3.1. Semi-structured interviews .................................................................................................................. 39

5.4. INTERVIEWS ............................................................................................................................................ 40

5.4.1. Interviews in Stockholm ....................................................................................................................... 40

5.4.2. Interviews in Nicaragua ........................................................................................................................ 41

5.5. COURSE OF ACTIONS ................................................................................................................................. 44

5.6. DATA TREATMENT ..................................................................................................................................... 46

5.7. CREDIBILITY DISCUSSION ....................................................................................................................... 46

5.7.1. An evaluation free of values or affected of values .............................................................................. 47

5.7.2. Validity .................................................................................................................................................. 47

5.7.2. Reliability ............................................................................................................................................. 48

6. **PRESENT METHODS FOR EVALUATION** ............................................................................................. 49
### List of illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Map of Nicaragua</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Johari window</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Feedback circle</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Interview table</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Data treatment table</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

In this chapter I will clarify the purpose of my thesis by presenting the problem area, research questions and research scope. This will give an understanding of my thesis.

1.1 Problem area

I have lived in Latin America and speak fluent Spanish, therefore I wanted to take the chance to write my thesis there. When I looked for a subject I decided to send an email with a request for subject matter to several different companies and organizations. Svalorna Latin America, called me with this project and asked me if I would be interested. Information and opinion building in the third world is something that interests me deeply and I decided to go to Nicaragua and examine how to evaluate this. I was not paid anything from Svalorna. Svalorna is a Swedish aid organization founded in 1959. It is a grass roots organization that works closely with their target group. The starting point for Svalorna in Nicaragua is to support their cooperating organizations (COs) to work with opinion building in different levels of the society so that children and youths should have an influence in the development of the society.¹ Svalorna Latin America (LA) support Non-governmental organisations (NGO) in developing countries such as Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua. I am studying their work in Nicaragua. The republic of Nicaragua with a population of 4.3 million people in 1996, is the largest country in Central America and covers an area of 130 000 km². It has coastlines both to the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Ocean. The country borders Honduras in the north and Costa Rica in the south.

¹ http://www.svalorna.se
Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America. It depends on foreign capital and investments to grow a higher production and more possibilities of jobs. The poverty in Nicaragua is primarily a result of unequal division of economic resources as well as political power. Over 45% of the population is living in extreme poverty, which means less than 1 USD per day. Poverty is concentrated to the Atlantic coast and northern parts of Nicaragua, where 73.9% of the people living there in extreme poverty.

Sida has decided that starting in 2007 all Swedish organizations have to work with programs that run for 5 years to qualify for Sida support. Before Sida gave support for 1-year projects but noticed that these are very hard to analyze and evaluate. In the thesis I will always discuss the new program (5-year) versus the old project (1-year). The goal of Svalorna LA in Nicaragua is to achieve sustainable development through information and opinion building. They have adopted the following four strategies for their programs for development of the information society:

• Clarify everybody’s part in the global context to show the importance of taking responsibility in the work of progress
• A greater possibility to earn ones living
• Education
• Democracy and human rights

Svalorna Nicaragua works with ten COs; through a perspective of democracy they support the work with development and the rights of children and youth. The activities that the COs perform can be anything from radio programs and theatre to manifestations and festivals. Svalorna Nicaragua support several organizations that work with radio programs by and for youths with focus on their situation with a purpose to educate and influence the population.

In this paper I will talk primarily about information and opinion building. Nicaragua has a very fragile democracy and low confidence in their politics, as I will show in my paper. The starting point of Svalorna in Nicaragua is that children and youths should have an influence in the development and work with opinion building on different levels of the society. The COs

4 http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3043
5 Svalorna Latinamerika (2005) Övergripande policy – utkast
6 Svalorna Latinamerika, Utkast till Program Barn och Ungdomars Rättigheter och Utveckling, Esteli, 2006,
works with everything from information and opinion towards politicians, to information to teachers, to students and parents about children’s rights and about how to work with children and youth with drug problems. They also work to inform the politicians about the current education situation in Nicaragua.

Parent's level of education and the necessity of relying on help from their children to support the family are directly connected to the low attendance at school. Children from poor families are often prevented by their economic situation to attend school. Even if it is an obligation to go to school you still have to pay registration fee, school uniform and material, which is far more expensive than most people can afford. The lack of education makes people feel that it is hard to make themselves heard and demand their rights. The result of this is discrimination and increasing rifts between the Nicaraguans and the government.  

The school and the church together reinforce the traditional class differences, gender roles and discriminates differences in thinking. This is just a short brief of the facts of Nicaragua, I will explain some more in the Background chapter. I do believe that the political history has had a huge impact and forms much of the economic situation today.
2. Purpose of the thesis

The purpose of my thesis is to find a method for how to evaluate information and opinion building. The thesis is examining the aid organization Svalorna LA and how they can perform, in the most efficient way, evaluation of information and opinion building. When I talk about the information and opinion building that Svalorna LA works with in Nicaragua I will always refer to radio programs, campaigns and other efforts that the COs perform. For example Club Infantil, one of the COs, ran a campaign against selling glue to minors. They had information meeting, posters and flyers to supermarkets about the damages that occur after sniffing glue. On the basis of theories of communication strategies, interview respondents and evaluation of an information and opinion project I will try to find out which factors make the evaluation efficient, all this to be able to find a suitable method. My preliminary understanding is that the aid organizations today underestimate the value of an evaluation. I believe that an evaluation is of great importance to learn from to not repeat any eventual errors. During the last decade there have been a lot of changes of the way that the aid organizations work. There is a consensus about the absolute necessity of information and opinion building to support a sustainable development in Nicaragua, according to Svalorna LA who works with implementation, follow-ups and evaluations. More and more organizations choose to work with political aid (instead of economic or technical aid). In this way the aid organizations, like Svalorna LA, work with “information as power” for a deeper democracy.

By composing methods for evaluation of the information and opinion building you can secure to fulfil one’s obligations and enhance the efficiency of the organization. Svalorna LA wants to be a progressive actor of welfare aid that uses the most efficient methods without losing their close contact with the target group or the COs. By efficiency I mean to secure that the evaluation show whether the intervention have had an impact or not. And if it had any impact an efficient evaluation method should be able to measure this without any estimation.

Svalorna, I think, represents a well-established Swedish aid organization. It is a smaller organization, which makes it possible for me, due to my limited time, to study all their work in Nicaragua. Furthermore, I will have the possibility to dig deeper on each CO but still be able to study how the organization works with all of their CO’s.
2.1. Svalorna

In the beginning, Svalorna was divided into three sections that worked together but nowadays these sections split up into three different organizations; Föreningen Svalorna Göteborg, Svalorna Indien Bangladesh and Svalorna Latin America.  

Today Svalorna LA is sending aid to three countries; Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua. The employees in each country work close to the target group and support local organizations and development projects. However, one has to keep in mind that Svalorna is the organization that provides the money and the cooperation will always be affected of that. In my study I will use Svalorna LA to describe the whole organization; Sweden, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru. Svalorna Sweden will be used for the head office and Svalorna Nicaragua for all the employees in Nicaragua.

2.1.1. Svalorna in Nicaragua

Svalorna Nicaragua is concentrated on the north of Nicaragua where there is a lot of poverty. The aid is focused on the most vulnerable, children and youths between 8-25 years old, that also is the target group. For example Red de Jovenes (ReJE) produces radio programs by and for youth with a focus on their situation with a purpose of educating the population. They chose pressing issues; new laws and other subject they feel are relevant to inform the target group. Some other subjects they have been producing programs about are gender and macho behaviour.

The purpose with having youth informing youth is the conviction that the target group know best where the needs are. I do believe that it is of great importance to listen to the target group to acknowledge their needs. However, the target group does not always have neither the tools, nor the knowledge, to recognize the most efficient way to achieve it. For example in Nicaragua today there are a lot of Internet café’s, more than enough, but people keep on putting their savings on a few computers to be able to start an Internet café.

The COs have an active part when designing the program for Svalorna Nicaragua. More precisely, the COs develop their goals, methods, indicators, anticipated results and the

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9 http://www.svalorna.se
10 Interview with Svalorna
11 Ibid
carrying out of the program.\textsuperscript{12} If an intervention reflects the partner country’s priorities it stands a much better chance of being sustained than if the donor drive them.\textsuperscript{13} All the COs prioritize the same three areas: education, active participation of the youths and the psychosocial health of the children.\textsuperscript{14} To make use of the strengths of the COs, Svalorna helps arranging exchange and cooperation between the organizations.\textsuperscript{15} Svalorna’s part is to coordinate and according to the needs of every CO, to offer support during the process of the interventions.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Content of the program in Nicaragua:}

\textbf{The broader goal}

Children and youths should have an influence in the development and work with opinion building in different levels of the society

\textbf{Specific goals}

\textit{Education}

- To give the education system better possibilities to qualitative education with focus on personal development. Svalorna work with this in Estelí, Jinotega and Telica in Nicaragua.

\textit{Participation}

- Support children and youths to demand that the politicians take their responsibility in children rights. Help the children and youths to get organized and be active in the processes of local political decisions.

\textit{Psychosocial health}

- Children and youths should have the right to develop and grow up without violence, abuse, insulting treatment of their rights or economic exploitation.
- To change the attitudes of the population to achieve an active defence of the children rights with focus on the psychosocial health of the target group.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} http://www.svalorna.se
\textsuperscript{13} Sida evaluation manual (2004) Looking back, moving forward, p. 36
\textsuperscript{14} http://www.svalorna.se
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid
\textsuperscript{17} Svalorna: Utkast till program: Barn och ungdomars rättigheter och Utveckling, p. 9
2.2. Research questions

• How efficient are the methods that are used today to evaluate the information and opinion building that Svalorna LA carries out in Nicaragua?

• How can I improve the existing methods so that they get more efficient, without Svalorna LA losing their close contact with the target group or the COs?

• How does Svalorna LA’s communication work feel that contribute to a sustainable development in Nicaragua? (due to evaluation)

2.3. Research Scope

I will perform this study in cooperation with Svalorna LA. Thereby I limit my study to Svalorna Nicaragua.

I will use a qualitative method, in the form of individual interviews, starting with the representative persons from Svalorna LA and also the COs they have in Nicaragua. To cover as much differences as possible I have also decided to interview some other well-established organizations; two Swedish ones and two Nicaraguan methodology experts.

The qualitative method is characterized by closeness, empathy and flexibility, and not as firmly structured as the quantitative method\(^\text{18}\). The focus is on if there are any eventually contradictions, and also on the unusual and the unique. The qualitative interview uses open questions to analyze on the depth\(^\text{19}\). The purpose of this study is to find out how efficient the evaluation methods are that Svalorna LA uses to evaluate their influence in Nicaragua. I chose to do interviews and collect as much information about the problem area as possible, because of the lack of previous knowledge in this area.

\textsuperscript{18} Ryen, Anne (2004) Kvalitativ intervju – från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier. p. 66

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. p. 77
3. Background

This chapter will discuss globalization, poverty reduction strategies and historical and political facts about Nicaragua. All of which have had a great importance on the situation in Nicaragua today.

3.1. Facts about Nicaragua

I believe that it is necessary to know some about Nicaragua. I have already explained the situation today. But what is the history that leads to the situation and poverty of Nicaragua today? In this section I will first provide a brief overview of Nicaragua, history and politics and reflect on how globalization further affects the situation in Nicaragua further.

3.1.1. History and politics

USA occupied Nicaragua between 1912 and 1933 and the governments of Nicaragua were like American marionettes under Washington. A revolutionary group started in 1927 against the American occupation of Nicaragua. Augusto Sandino led this revolution movement, when the USA retreated their troops and instead they increased the National Guard of Nicaragua. The first leader of the National Guard in Nicaragua was Anastasio Somoza. He had Sandino killed and took over the political power as a president 1936. The Somoza family held the power between 1936 and 1979 with the help of the USA. While the brutality of power got worse the corruption and the concentration of the economic resources also increased during this time. In 1979 the Somoza family had to flee the country due to the dissatisfaction and the social injustices that had led to an increasing revolution.\(^\text{20}\)

Nicaragua was ruled by FSLN, the Sandinist party, from 1979 and during the following 11 years. They started social reforms and made the foundation for a democratic development. They also nationalized several private companies and properties.\(^\text{21}\) When the Sandinistas took the power they took actions that benefited the poorest (like subventions of the provisions, education, health care etc.). The tax revenues could not cover the costs of this, which led to a Nicaraguan economy deeply in debt. The war against the contras got very expensive. And since the government could not finance the social welfare programs they therefore got forced to extensive devalues in 85-86, decrease the subventions and cut backs in the social programs.

\(^\text{20}\) \(\text{http://www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general____25337.asp}\)
\(^\text{21}\) Ibid
Nicaragua’s economy went into a crisis and 1988-1991 was a period of hyperinflation.\footnote{http://www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general\_24435.asp}

Arnoldo Aleman won the election in 1996. The corruption increased heavily during Aleman’s time as president. 2001, Enrique Bolaños took power and started to fight the extended corruption. A result of this is that Aleman got convicted to 20 years in prison charged with embezzling public funds.\footnote{Ibid}

According to Svalorna LA, the personal identity in Nicaragua traditionally has been formed by which party one belonged to but today this has changed because of political pacts, betrayal between parties and their representatives and so on, which have led to an increasing contempt towards the politicians. The traditional support for a party has now been replaced by an increasing support of individuals. As much as 40% of the electorates today consider themselves not belonging to any party affiliation.\footnote{Föreningen Svalorna Latinamerika – Versamhetsplan 2007, p. 17}

Presidential elections took place during my first week in Nicaragua. Daniel Ortega won back the power and will take office in January 2007. I talked a lot with people in the streets, taxis and friends that we met. All of them were sure that this was going to be the last chance for Ortega and their opinions varied as to whether he was going to succeed or not. But one thing seemed to be sure: the hope is still there. It was clear that the one’s I talked to had not lost their hope even if they do not trust the politicians.\footnote{Informant interviews in the streets of Esteli, November 2006} According to the newspaper, the Nicaraguans do not have much faith in any of the public authorities, and this complicates any cooperation between the civil sector and the government.\footnote{http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/132} The economic task for the government is primarily to support the market as increased export and foreign investments is considered the key for an increased economic growth. Unfortunately, as I explained earlier, Nicaragua has to prioritize payments of debts instead of investing money in education and medical care. The result of this is the cutting down of the public sector, higher fees on public service and more privately owned instead of publicly owned companies. The consequences of this are increasing costs of living.\footnote{Ibid}
### 3.2. Globalization

Globalization is an economic, cultural and political process that among other things erases boarders\(^{28}\). Globalization could have been something good for the third world and their economy. But they still depend too much on the buyers. If Nicaragua does not sell coffee at the price that the big companies in the first world want to pay, another country will. The situation in Nicaragua is very much affected by the globalization.

The new world with its new demands is forcing people to treat the environment as a market place instead of the place where they are living. For example in Nicaragua, like many other places in the world, they build shrimp ponds. When doing this, the mangrove is cut down to make place for the shrimp pond. Mangrove forest is a unique ecosystem. It is particularly benefiting the coastal populations and the subtropical and tropical countries but also a globally important ecosystem. In areas of the world where mangrove have been removed for development purposes it often results in problems of trace metal contamination of seawater and the plant and animal life of a region. This because of the disturbance of the underlying sediments, that usually acts as a sink for a variety of heavy trace metals. Over half of the mangrove of the world has been lost, this despite of the replanting programs.\(^{29}\)

In Nicaragua there is also gene manipulation of crops like corn. Gene manipulation occurred when modern biotechnology invented a way to modify living organisms. The purpose of gene manipulation is to develop commercial products for a global market and due to this the stockholder will earn more. The most common manipulation is to make the crops resistant. This should result in less spraying. However, the biotechnology companies have also produced seeds that are sterile for second-hand use. In this sense, the farmers cannot save seeds from the previous year’s vintage to the next year. The result of this is that the farmers have to buy new seeds every year and are therefore dependent on the seed companies. Moreover there is a risk that this sterility transfers to other crops in the surrounding area. This could result in global seed sterility.\(^{30}\)

Sustainable development needs to be a local phenomenon that replaces selfishness, antagonism, injustice and dominance with solidarity, cooperation, equity and respect. It

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\(^{28}\) Robinson, William I et. al.(1996) Globalizacion, neoliberalismo y resistencia, p. 68

\(^{29}\) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove)

\(^{30}\) Globala röster nr 1 (2004), p. 7-8
should promote the forms of government where the elected listen to the voices of the many, that celebrates the diversity of cultural values and promotes the participation of the people whose lives are being affected. The values of sustainability are the values of life and this most certainly means that sustainable development does not really need to be the same everywhere. Uriel Hedengren uses Africa as an example when he explains that the only way for the third world to receive benefits from the globalization is a development of the political culture. A political culture that is distinguished by openness, efficiency and a higher participation of the civil society. This type of political culture is called good governance.

Today the non-governmental (NGO) movements, like Svalorna LA, are less about creating conditions for economic growth. Since the beginning of the 1990s, it is more common to work with so-called democratic aid, whose purpose is to influence the political development in countries in southern countries that receive aid. In other words to support a good development of the society and increasing democracy, good governance.

There are organizations, like the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO) who claims that the globalization favours the development in the third world. According to them globalization has played an important role, when reducing poverty in developing countries by catalyzing economic growth. Furthermore, they mean that developing countries are offered significant opportunities in various aspects of globalization. The globalization process gives an opportunity to fight for human rights and other universal values, but the developing countries also stand to gain from wider market access and availability of technology and capital from the rest of the world. Everything is changing and nothing remains untouched, every social aspect, every alley is turning into merchandise.

In this sense, there is a growing sentiment that western trends, so called Americanization, will push away local and traditional culture and traditions. As shown, globalization can be positive but for the development of the world and the human development in many ways also

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35 Robinson, William I et. al. (1996) Globalizacion, neoliberalismo y resistencia, p. 69
negative.\textsuperscript{37} Even if the big companies still dominate the market the small companies can participate in a global market.\textsuperscript{38} But there are certain problems with this as well. An open market increases the competition. The results of this is that big companies can put pressure on the companies in the third world to keep down the prices, taxes etc. This pressure is possible because of the fear in the third world to lose any job opportunity.\textsuperscript{39} Furthermore, the whole world is tied together by the aim of buying cheap and selling expensive, and this applies even more so in a market with only one buyer or for producers of the monopoly\textsuperscript{40}. What this means is that the phenomenon of globalization takes advantage of the global market, like for example when searching for the cheapest producer of a product\textsuperscript{41}. It is only a small amount of countries that receive the benefits and opportunities of globalization and even within these countries the spread access is uneven.\textsuperscript{42} The countries that need the benefits more than anyone are being shut out, like Africa and Latin America, and the international exchange are focused on just a few countries. The real challenge is to effect this development so that it favours everyone and not just a few.\textsuperscript{43}

There is an increasing of the rift between social classes and between the first world and the third world. Nicaragua has tremendous debts and IMF claims to help them through something called Poverty Reduction Strategies that I will explain below. The WB and IMF have received criticism due to their hard demands on the countries that need the help with reducing their debts.

\textbf{3.2.1. Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS)}

The description of a country’s macroeconomic, structural and social policies and their programs to promote growth and reduce poverty are called the Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSP). The fact that the poor people lack power, choice and access to material resources deprives them of the freedom to decide over their own lives. However, its causes and expressions vary from place to place and time to time.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{37} http://www.forumsyd.org
\textsuperscript{38} http://www.un.dk/Swedish/Briefing_papers/Globalisering/frame.htm
\textsuperscript{40} Hernandez Ch, Alcides (2000) Globalización sin pobreza, p. 39
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, p. 51
\textsuperscript{42} http://www.un.org/millennium/sg/report/ch1.pdf, p.10
\textsuperscript{44} Sida at work (2005) A guide to principles, procedures and working methods, p.14-15
One of the first steps in a poverty analysis is poverty mapping, which means information about who are poor, where they are and which key characteristics of poverty are there? It is important to be aware that the poor people are part of the society they live in. Attention should be paid to age, gender, ethnicity and disabilities when mapping and identifying the poor. Trigger positive development processes and how to break the circle of poverty has to be the main focus when identifying the remedies.\textsuperscript{45}

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands that developing countries, like Nicaragua, present a plan to fight the poverty in their country\textsuperscript{46}. Nicaragua was one of the first countries to formulate for a National Development Plan (NDP) called Strengthen Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy\textsuperscript{47}. The main goal in the NDP is economic growth and poverty reduction. In the long term NDP project that the economic growth will be 5\% and therefore reduce the percentage of Nicaraguans living in extreme poverty from 15.1\% in 2004 to 11.1\% in 2010.\textsuperscript{48} However, there is a lot of criticism towards IMF’s demands on the developing countries. The demands have changed some during the last decade and IMF points out the importance of the developing country to be in charge of their own poverty reduction plan.\textsuperscript{49}

Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSP) is as mentioned the description of a country’s macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty. But it is also associated with external financing needs.\textsuperscript{50} The World Bank (WB) and IMF also demand that the countries in the third world change their policies, for example privatize the health care and education and open the country borders for the multinational companies that want to make investments. However, this would benefit the multinational companies and the first world even more.\textsuperscript{51}

Nicaragua is one of the countries in Central America that commit the least of budget on education. The second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is to achieve universal primary education\textsuperscript{52}. One of Svalorna LA’s specific goals is to give the education system better

\textsuperscript{45} Sida at Work (2005) A guide to principles, procedures and working methods, p.45
\textsuperscript{46} Andersson, Annelie, Elander, Sven (2006) Vem bestämmer? En rapport om internationella valutafonden, Nicaragua och Sveriges roll, p. 1
\textsuperscript{47} http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPRS1/Resources/Nicaragua_PRSP-November2005.pdf p. 6
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p.19
\textsuperscript{49} Andersson, Annelie, Elander, Sven (2006) Vem bestämmer? En rapport om internationella valutafonden, Nicaragua och Sveriges roll, p. 1
\textsuperscript{52} http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
possibilities to qualitative education with focus on personal development. Even though, the IMF demands that Nicaragua cuts down on education in the annual national budget of the Gross National Product (GNP).

“We know the reality in the society. In a lot of aspects the disinformation is directly connected to the education in Nicaragua.”

Nicaragua promised IMF, in a contract 1991, to reduce government costs, to privatize state owned companies and strengthen the administrative capacity. Other specific demands that IMF has had are to change or pull back some laws, that had been developed on national democratic decisions. However this undermines an already fragile Nicaraguan democracy and the position of the parliament. Thereby, IMF contradicts themselves by first saying that the country itself should be in charge of their own poverty reduction strategy. Then IMF demand changes in the strategy for the country to receive a reduction of the country debt. And IMF is serious in their demands. They froze the coming payments for Nicaragua in February 2005 when they thought that Nicaragua were off-track from the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) contract. IMF did not think that the budget that Nicaragua had assumed, with a large majority in the parliament election, were threatening the stability of the government finance. Economists from Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) in Nicaragua believes the opposite, that the results of the budget would have been a small surplus from the tax revenues.

As I explained before a lot is about information and opinion building. Nicaragua has a very fragile democracy and low confidence in their politics. There were presidential and parliamentary elections in November 2006 in Nicaragua. However, there is a contract with IMF that all candidates have to accept, no matter which party, and this makes it impossible to present their own political economic plan. Moreover, a lot is already decided in closed negotiations between IMF and representatives of the government. And the popularly elected parliament is expected to admit the law proposals. In this sense, the democratic process is further undermined. IMF’s demands undermine this even more and forces Nicaragua to choose. Nicaragua can either adapt to the demands that IMF has, which makes it impossible to

53 Interview with cooperating organization
54 Andersson, Annelie, Elander, Sven (2006) Vem bestämmer? En rapport om internationella valutafonden, Nicaragua och Sveriges roll, p. 3
55 Ibid, p. 1
56 Ibid, p. 4
57 Ibid, p. 5
commit to education and health care. Or they do not bother about IMF and their demands but will then lose one third of their governmental budget.\footnote{Andersson, Annelie, Elander, Sven (2006) Vem bestämmer? En rapport om internationella valutafonden, Nicaragua och Sveriges roll, p. 6} Is this even a choice?
4. Theory

I will in this chapter discuss different communications strategies like the Johari window and why it is so important to use information and opinion building as a strategy for a sustainable development. I also want to clarify the evaluation as a theory, base line study and the purpose of an evaluation.

4.1. The Johari window

The Johari window (figure. 2) is a model that I believe to be useful in my analysis of Svalorna LA’s role in the evaluation of information and opinion building. This model divide the information sources into two; known to others and known to self. The four panel windows below divide personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, hidden, blind and unknown. I will apply this model to Svalorna LA instead of on a person.

![Figure 2: Johari Window](image)

The open quadrant represents things that both the organization knows about itself and that others know about it. It can be filled with obvious things, factual information but also motives, behaviours, wants and needs.

The blind quadrant represents things that others know (or feel) about the organization, but that Svalorna LA is unaware of. For example there were a lot of different opinions about Svalorna

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60 Ibid, p. 304
61 Ibid, p. 304
LA’s closeness to the target groups. In the interviews with Svalorna Nicaragua and Sweden they really point out that they work close to the target group.

“Svalorna is quite an open organization – I believe that the cooperating organizations feel that it is easy to come by the office. This because of that Svalorna is a smaller organization that is not afraid to be self-critical. There is not a lot of hierarchy in Svalorna”  

But a lot of the cooperating organizations did not feel this way. There is some criticism on Svalorna Nicaragua’s attitude. Svalorna Sweden has one understanding of how the perception of the organization is. Svalorna Nicaragua has another and the COs a third perception. If Svalorna LA, as organization, starts to be aware of this might lead to a more open discussion with their COs.

The hidden quadrant represents things that Svalorna LA knows about itself but others do not. However when Svalorna LA reveals new information they effectively pull the window shade down, moving the information in their hidden quadrant and enlarging the open quadrants area. This could be by new information about the situation or the election in Nicaragua on the homepage to the members. Or for example when one of the employees from Svalorna Sweden came to visit in Nicaragua. During the meeting he had with all the CO’s they talked about volunteer work and that Svalorna LA do not have many employees. A lot of people work voluntarily to collect money in different ways for the people in Latin America. This information was new for the COs and caused a great impact.

This is also applicable on the COs. As described earlier, the COs receive their financial support from Svalorna and it is probably of great importance for them to look good. In this sense, this could result in a larger hidden quadrant for the COs. For example one of the COs, we call it A, had problems with their volunteer workers. Svalorna Nicaragua started to claim that A was not as organized as before and this led to discussion about A’s participation in Svalorna LA’s program for next year. For the others in the A organization, and other COs, could get the impression that they can not talk about their problems or failures. Moreover, that would be a problem in an evaluation. The evaluation would not be complete without the failures or problems that occurred during the process. At the same time, Svalorna can not keep

62 Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
63 Interviews with Svalorna Sweden, Nicaragua and cooperating organizations
on supporting a CO that is not organized or carry out their planned effort. Svalorna also needs to report where the money went.

The unknown quadrant represents things that neither Svalorna LA nor others know about Svalorna LA. A very important aspect is that these four quadrants or windows can have different size from person to person, organization to organization and from situation to situation.\(^64\)

When an organization stands for change it is of great importance that the individuals get all the information about which changes that will appear\(^65\). Otherwise there is only opposition to expect. People are usually afraid to throw themselves into something unknown. We know what we have but not what we might gain. This explains why many people feel that it is more comfortable to keep everything as it is.\(^66\)

### 4.2. Communication strategies

“A strategy is the pattern or plan that integrates an organization’s major goals, policies, and action sequences into a cohesive whole. A well-formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization’s resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents.”\(^67\)

I will talk about strategy as a tool, and how to achieve a goal. When an organization designs their goal it is closely tied together with designing the strategy. However there are different levels of strategies, and therefore also different goals as well. Usually the goals of an organization are decided and designed by the board but that is not always the case.\(^68\) In a non-profit organization, like Svalorna LA, there can be different opinions about whether the organization has its own goals or if it is the goals of the individual member. At the same time, when a new member enter Svalorna LA he/she agrees to the goal of the organization. In Svalorna LA, there seems to be differences between Sweden and Nicaragua. The stated goals and strategies are the same, but not the purpose to evaluate these. There also exists a pride over the closeness to the target group that are mediated to the new members. If the COs or target group feel the same about this closeness, does it really exist then?

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\(^64\) Bruzelius, Lars H. Skärvad, Per-Hugo (2000) Integrerad organisationslära, p. 304
\(^65\) Ibid, p. 379
\(^66\) Ibid, p. 370
\(^67\) Quinn 1996:5 i Larsson, Larsåke (20019 Tilämpad kommunikationsvetenskap, p.138
\(^68\) Bruzelius Lars H. Skärvad, Per-Hugo (2000) Integrerad organisationslära, p. 86
Bruzelius/Skärvad talks about an organization as a tool to implement goals, it is always important to keep in mind what the organization does and accomplishes. Svalorna Sweden needs to collect a certain amount of money to the organization to receive support from Forum Syd. Thus they have a different strategy than Svalorna Nicaragua. In Nicaragua they have strategies to achieve a sustainable development. And even if Svalorna LA works with information and opinion building as well in Sweden as in Nicaragua the purpose is different. In Sweden, they want to inform the Swedish people about the situation in Nicaragua and to influence them to take action. In Nicaragua they work with informing the population about their rights. They all work towards the same goal but with different specific goals and strategies.

4.2.1. Top-down versus Bottom-up Communication
Organizations are often drawn as a pyramid, a hierarchy with superiors and subordinate units. This simulation is an explanation of the structure of the organization; decision order and levels, in which way the responsibility and work is divided and how the function of the organization is intended. Lately, however, a lot of organizations flip the pyramid upside down and use a client-perspective or member-perspective. Svalorna LA want their COs to own the new program, they should be in charge of the planning, performance and evaluation. Thus, they want to use a bottom-up approach, which should come with a participative perspective. Nevertheless, the matrix that Svalorna LA uses for evaluation show the total opposite. One of the respondents clarifies that a model that is created by the contributors (from the outside of the problem/solution), and not by the receiving organizations (from the inside where the problem exist) is not a good option. The formulas do come from Sweden, not from the COs, which is typical for a top down perspective. The COs have expressed that they want to participate more in the development in the process of planning.

Another way of describing this is with centralization and decentralization. Centralization is when the decisions are taken highly up in the pyramid of the organization. The opposite, decentralization is when the decisions are taken lower down in the organization. It has been shown that decentralization motivates the employees and it gives the organization a better

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69 Bruzelius Lars H. Skärvad, Per-Hugo (2000) Integrerad organisationslära, p. 86  
70 Ibid, p. 91  
71 Ibid, p. 125  
72 Ibid, p.144  
73 Interview with CICAP  
74 Bruzelius Lars H. Skärvad, Per-Hugo (2000) Integrerad organisationslära, p.146
ability to adapt and to meet new challenges. Furthermore, decentralization creates greater initiative, and empowers decisions and actions for the COs.\textsuperscript{75}

The year of 2006 has been a year of change for Svalorna LA. They are going from having 1-year projects to 5-year programs and with that come several new restrictions. The organization is in a process of development. In a time of change it can be strategic to look over the organization; the goals and strategies to achieve them but also how the organization wants to be perceptive and aware of others’ perception of Svalorna. I believe this is very relevant to this thesis and am using Johari’s window to explain it further.

\textbf{4.3. Information society and development communication}  
There have been many trends in the aid to developing countries concerning how they should work to reduce world poverty. The information society and the networks will grow stronger and bigger. The gap that we call the digital divide will get bigger.

The global finance markets, the trans-national production systems in the multinational groups works together in a kind of network. The big media companies today are usually large conglomerates that work together to influence the economical and political debates in society. The world gets tied into a network, in which the main domain comes from the richest countries that rule the debate. This network is part of the larger society. The global economy, politics and media-society is impossible to avoid, even local media more often than not originates from or is influenced by a source higher up in the hierarchy. The common man needs to be aware of this, because they can rarely influence or effect what happens higher up, at the decision-making levels\textsuperscript{76}.

The people in Nicaragua are part of a network but not one that can change their living situation. Svalorna can then function as a network that uses Internet as a tool to spread the information about the situation in Nicaragua to the world, first of all Sweden. Svalorna and other organisations give Nicaragua the developing aid by support the COs in their information campaigns.

\textsuperscript{75} Bruzelius Lars H. Skärvad, Per-Hugo (2000) Integrerad organisationslära, p.143  
\textsuperscript{76} McQuail, Golding and de Bens - Communication, Theori and Research
The information society and development communication are very important but not in the form of Internet for the third world in this very moment. Nicaragua cannot save their situation through technology. A poor village in Nicaragua primarily needs medical care, clean water but of course they need information as well. The information about how they can make their voice heard, about their rights and how to make a living. The population need education to get a greater possibility to earn one’s living and to know about the importance of cleanliness to not put their health in any danger. The information society and networks exist in Nicaragua as well, but on another level. Their network is their village, with maybe some contacts in the cities. They spread information from person to person. Svalorna LA works with COs that share their goals and visions of Svalorna. Svalorna is just helping them with financing and project support\textsuperscript{77}.

4.3.1. Information and opinion building
There are several models on how communication influences people. All of these methods are formed on the basis of the connection between knowledge→attitudes→action.\textsuperscript{78}

“There is a shortage of information about human rights in Nicaragua. They might now know how to make use of their rights”\textsuperscript{79}

Svalorna LA works for a sustainable development in Nicaragua. Instead of teaching people to hold out their hand for help they give them information to use as a tool. They strengthen their cooperating organizations in their struggle to inform and influence the population of Nicaragua. Information is power in a lot of senses, to know how to vote and which difference you can make, and to be aware of your rights and how to use them. For example one of the specific goals; psychosocial health is for children and youth to have a right to develop and grow up without violence, abuse, insulting treatment of their rights or economic exploitation. APEADECO has offered courses in sewing and bakery to the pupil’s mothers at a one school. During these courses they worked with information and opinion work. They informed the mothers of a new subject in each class. The mothers got knowledge about children rights and what abuse is. Furthermore, they changed their attitudes and some of them took action and talked to their husbands and neighbours.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77} Intervju with Frida Berg, Svalorna
\textsuperscript{78} Larsson, Larsåke (2001) Tillämpad kommunikationsvetenskap, p.145
\textsuperscript{79} Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
\textsuperscript{80} Interview with APEADECO
4.4. Purpose of a evaluation

The purpose of this study is to give recommendations to Svalorna LA about how they should evaluate their information and opinion building in Nicaragua. An evaluation is a systematic reflection with a purpose to learn\textsuperscript{81}. To demonstrate how the results of a project have been achieved to compare with the planned goals, you do an evaluation\textsuperscript{82}. It is first a reality test that provides feedback on the results in action, in relation to prior objectives, plans, expectations or standards of performance\textsuperscript{83}. This is one way to secure the quality of a project and to develop the competence of an organization\textsuperscript{84}. The purpose of an evaluation is to collect information; the evaluation is not justified if this information is not being used\textsuperscript{85}. It is also important to communicate the results of an evaluation to the members, the board and the financers in an organization. When one works with evaluation one should work with a cycle and circulation where one always returns to the beginning to follow-up and improve the effort (see figure.3\textsuperscript{86}). However, it is not enough to follow-up the goals, it is important to also learn from the evaluation and incorporate this new knowledge into the circulation.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[auto, node distance=2cm, >=stealth, thick]
    \node (activity) {Activity};
    \node (planning) [below left of=activity] {Planning};
    \node (reflection) [below right of=activity] {Reflection};
    \node (learning) [below left of=planning] {Learning};

    \draw [arrow] (activity) -- (planning);
    \draw [arrow] (planning) -- (reflection);
    \draw [arrow] (reflection) -- (learning);
    \draw [arrow] (learning) -- (activity);

    \end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Figure 3

There is some confusion on the differences between evaluation and follow-up, which I will try to explain further. It is necessary to collect data about the outcome regularly during the cycle.

\textsuperscript{81} Svenska missionsrådet (2003) Utvärdering, p. 9
\textsuperscript{82} LO-TCO – Handbok i utvärdering av informationsprojekt, p.5
\textsuperscript{83} Sida evaluation manual (2005) Looking Back, Moving Forward, p.9
\textsuperscript{84} LO-TCO – Handbok i utvärdering av informationsprojekt, p.5
\textsuperscript{85} Jerkedal, Åke (1999) Utvärdering- steg för steg, p.35
\textsuperscript{86} Nilsson, Per-Ulf, Carsson Josephine et al. (2002) Afrikagruppernas informationsverksamhet – en fallstudie i projektet utvärdering som lärande process, p.11
of the project to realize a good evaluation. This is called a follow-up, which analyzes the outcome of each activity. A quantitative method is usually used when carrying out a follow-up for an activity. The focus is generally on how many participants or how many in the target group that received the information and if there were any reactions to the activity. The follow-up responds on which actions that are developed by the development intervention.\textsuperscript{87}

When an activity, project or program is finishing, the effects of the intervention are summarized and analyzed. This is called evaluation.\textsuperscript{88} The researcher can use several different methods that together are defined as effect studies. The collection and analysis of data should be well founded and respond to why and how things have happened\textsuperscript{89}. This means that an evaluation should be more than just a judgement\textsuperscript{90}.

There are two main points of departure in evaluation; effect and process evaluation. The effect/result evaluation aims to measure the fulfilment of the goals or effects of the project. They summarize the results of a project. The effect which is measured can be specific, either a specific intervention or a more long-term effect on the target group or on the society. All the effect evaluations show which methods that are most efficient for a project or a program to reach the aimed goal. The other is process/formative evaluation, which means that it focuses on what is happening during the realization of the project and aims to analyze the process towards the goal.\textsuperscript{91} Evaluation of this type is used to create future communication interventions.

A process evaluation demands data about the project and information from the target group about what has occurred during the performance. To evaluate information and opinion interventions the matter can be how many persons in the target group were reached and which quality the intervention had – practical measurements. By analyzing the decision order, communication and attitudes among the participants the evaluation gives answer to why the project came out as it did, what causes the default effects and how to relate these to the performance of the effort. The method also analyzes which requirements that are needed to reach the aimed goals. This makes us aware of what should be done different in the future and through this type of evaluation we can avoid insignificant explanations such as that the default

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\textsuperscript{87} Svenska missionsrådet (2003) Utvärdering, p. 11
\textsuperscript{88} Klas Palm (2000) Diskussionsunderlag om utvärdering av informationsinsatser, p.2
\textsuperscript{89} Svenska missionsrådet, p. 11
\textsuperscript{90} Nilsen, Per (2005) Vad är utvärdering – en översikt
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid
of the effect depended on insufficient performance. The method is efficient to improve and assure knowledge.

Qualitative information, that demands interpretation, is necessary for a process evaluation. A combination with effect evaluation is to be preferred, for instance analyzing which methods that are most convenient to reach a certain goal. The results of this combination will tell the researcher if the project was efficient (the goals were achieved), and why the effort was efficient (strengths and weaknesses in the performance). Evaluations should also be efficient in costs. This can be one of the reasons that smaller organizations hesitate to perform larger evaluations. Larger and more theoretical evaluations are not always the most praiseworthy.\(^\text{92}\)

A lot of researchers have tried to work with standardized instruments for evaluation to measure and also with before- and after measurements on control groups or experiment groups\(^\text{93}\). Due to their theoretical character, most of the scientific terms are seldom of the character that works in reality\(^\text{94}\).

During the interviews with Svalorna Nicaragua and the CO’s I realized that there was a confusion of the purpose of the evaluations. I decided to add a question: What is the purpose of the evaluations? Or whom do they make evaluations for?

### 4.4.1. Evaluation

What an evaluation is? It is not always easy to differentiate an evaluation from other studies. But these following points can be used as a starting point to perform an evaluation:

- **✓** If you do not know how it was before you can not measure how it has changed. With the purpose to measure results and effects, analyze a cause; examine the efficiency of processes or working forms towards the aiming point. You always have to have a retrospective. To do this it requires a point zero, a pre-study to compare with and a base line study (see explanation in the base line study chapter). By efficiency, I mean to secure that the evaluation shows whether the effort have had an impact or not.

- **✓** It is important that the study is objective, which means that if someone else does the study they will get the same results. Therefore the collecting of data should be systematic.

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\(^{92}\) Nilsson et al, p.9, Klas Palm, p.4

\(^{93}\) Jerkedal, Åke (1999) Utvärdering- steg för steg, p. 42

\(^{94}\) Eneroth, Bo (1998) Erfarenhetsinventering- att utvärdera arbete med människor
Find new empirical data. This is hard to know if you will find before analyzing. The evaluation should try to give new knowledge and increase the institutional learning.95

Sonny Östberg is writing about what you can evaluate and not. Usually it is possible to evaluate more projects and information that one thinks. When it comes to aid for developing countries he thinks that no project should be initiated if it is not possible to evaluate. But the aiming points need to be more specific to make it possible to evaluate. To “eliminate the poverty in the world” is not a goal but a vision. The Swedish aid organizations need to be specific in a way they can measure their results.96

4.4.2. Evaluation of information and opinion efforts

There is a consensus about the absolute necessity of information and opinion building to support a sustainable development in Nicaragua, according to Svalorna LA. This is one of the guiding principals from SIDA to support private organizations.

“SIDAs goal is to facilitate development of a strong and democratic society and to strengthen the local cooperating organization, this by support private organizations cooperation of development.”97

Since the beginning of the 1990, it is more common to work with so called democratic aid, which purpose is to influence the political development in southern countries that receive aid. In other words to support a good development of the society and increasing democracy, good governance. The reasons for this are that a democratic form of governance (with an active civil society) also favour the economic development98, and therefore will lead to less need for aid. Svalorna LA does neither work directly with political aid nor with institutions and other organizations that above all work closely or directly associated with the government. Svalorna LA follows the same line of argument in their policy.

One of the strategies of Svalorna LA is to work with democracy and human rights to achieve sustainable development99. Social capital is one effect of the democratic relations in the society, and this contributes to a positive development100. Regions with a good social capital have a greater economic growth than regions with less101, which is shown by Robert Putnam’s

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95 Östberg, Sonny (2000) Nio steg för en utvärdering
96 Ibid
97 http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=263
98 Fredriksson, Daniel (2006), Utvärdering av Politiskt Bistånd p.4
99 Svalorna Latinamerika (2005) Övergripande policy – utkast
100 Putnam, 1993
101 Ibid
(1993) research. An active civil society creates a greater trust between people and contributes to the confidence to make a change. A change from grass roots level requires an active civil society\textsuperscript{102}, because that creates good conditions for democratic relations and therefore economic development. However, it is not enough with an active civil society to achieve a sustainable development\textsuperscript{103}. To take part in the process of changing the population of the civil society need capacity to make constructive choices for their lives and to convert their beliefs into action (so called empowerment). This capacity is often low in countries with a low Gross National Product (GNP) and with a low education level, like in Nicaragua. Like the interventions of the policy of Svalorna Latin America an effort whose purpose is to strengthen this capacity, with the contribution of a deeper democracy promotes a sustainable development.

A sustainable development does not only consist of a strong economy and free political elections, it also demands equal opportunity for the citizens to participate in the political life. In Nicaragua, this is not the case. First because of a combination of the imbalanced income division, structured discrimination, a high segregation between educated and uneducated people. Second, the unwillingness of the state to take responsibility for services like medical care and education. Moreover this complicates for uneducated people with a low income to have an influence on their life situation. According to the persons we interviewed for this study\textsuperscript{104}, there is a shortage of information about questions that affect individuals and group life choices. Nevertheless, there is also disinformation and propaganda and not enough tools to interpret the reality in a critical and enlightened way. 71% of the population of Nicaragua is younger than 30 years old\textsuperscript{105} and it is the children and teenagers who suffer most of the poverty. At the same time they are the ones that will lead Nicaragua’s development in the future.

“Life quality varies from person to person. We can define and discuss what life quality is. We can even write a book about it. But life quality is not the same in Nicaragua. Or in Congo. Or in Sweden or France it is not the same. I can talk about life quality in this block were I live. The lady who owns the super

\textsuperscript{102} Krishna, Anirudh (2003), Social Capital, Community Driven Development, and Empowerment: A Short Note on Concepts and Operations, Putnam, 1993
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid, p.3
\textsuperscript{104} See appendix
\textsuperscript{105} Svalorna Latin America, Utkast till Program Barn och Ungdomars Rättigheter och Utveckling, Esteli, 2006, p.6
market feels one way about life quality. My neighbour something else and I have my definition. We get along perfectly fine but life quality is something personal for each one of us.”

To make people heighten their awareness and empower as well as individuals or in groups, those who are the future of Nicaragua, it is necessary to work with democracy by spreading information. But it is not sufficient with information to achieve sustainable development either. It is necessary to strengthen the target group in their efforts with opinion building towards the authorities in the society to achieve long-term change. Authorities in the society are not only the politicians, those who have influence on the political agenda, but also all authorities that have influence over the possibilities to develop into informed citizens within the target group. Therefore efforts are also aimed towards parents, teachers and local politicians:

“If we want to reach the roots of the problem then it is necessary with information and opinion building and not just as a consolation. This is the only way for the aid organizations to be unnecessary in the future. […] Information is power.”

To summarize, one can conclude that large groups in Nicaragua do not have access to information about their rights or options. A lot of disinformation and irrelevant propaganda is spread in Nicaragua and for the target group for Svalorna Nicaragua this is not possible to sort out. The target group does not know how to make a change with the help of their knowledge. Similarly, there do not exist means to make authorities aware about the organized wishes to make a change in the civil society. All of the above are difficulties that stand in the way of Nicaragua’s possibility of a positive development. Svalorna Nicaragua has therefore chosen to support their cooperating organizations in their information and opinion building. Furthermore this is Svalorna LA’s principal method to support the target group in their empowerment. 80% of Svalorna Nicaragua’s new program is information and opinion building.

4.4.3. Base line study

To understand the theories of evaluation it is important to have knowledge about baseline studies. I will here explain further what a baseline study is and why it is so important.

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106 Interview with CICAP (translation by author)
107 Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua, translates by the author
108 Ibid
If you do not know how it was before you cannot measure how it has changed\textsuperscript{109}. The description of conditions in a locality or site prior to a development intervention is called a baseline study. The changes and progress can later be measured and evaluated against the baseline that provides the benchmarks.\textsuperscript{110} A baseline study focuses on the purpose of the intervention, and it is necessary for the evaluation. If this information is missing it is possible to reconstruct a baseline with the help of written documents and interviews. A reconstructed baseline is much less reliable than one assembled before the intervention started. Unfortunately it is a common problem to lack a baseline study.

> “Nowadays everyone talks about baseline. It is the same thing as the initial point of the project. We need to know from where we start, that is why the first thing to do is put together a diagnose. It is important to use words that the people recognize.”\textsuperscript{111}

Svalorna in LA are together with all their COs working out a baseline study for the program they will start within 2007.

> “We are working on a baseline study to see where we are right now. We need to be able to form indicators. […] At the moment, there are no clear connection between the plan of the year and the end of the year. It is like the organizations forget what they wanted to achieve with the project – it should be a strong connection. This could be done with the baseline study.”\textsuperscript{112}

There was no baseline study available when I preformed my minor field study but I do think it is relevant to explain what it is. I find it relevant because they are in the middle of the process of developing one and that would affect the method for evaluation. Furthermore it is something that helps the COs to understand why it is important to evaluate and that it is not only something they have to do to keep on receiving support from Svalorna. It will help them to clearly see the changes they help forming in the society.

**4.5. Summary**

In my analysis I will use the *Johari window* and the *purpose of an evaluation* as my main theories. The Johari window is one communication strategy but I find it relevant to discuss communication strategies as a tool. The whole study would be useless without a context and therefore I discuss Top-down versus Bottom-up Communication. I will use this in my analysis to examine how Svalorna work and if there is another way that is more efficient. Moreover, the information society and development communication is another context for the study.

\textsuperscript{109} Östberg, Sonny (2000) Nio steg för en utvärdering


\textsuperscript{111} Interview with CICAP

\textsuperscript{112} Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
The purpose of my thesis is to find a method for Svalorna LA to evaluate their information and opinion building in Nicaragua. To do this, I need to have a discussion about information and opinion building and more important, different types of evaluation and the purpose of these.
5. Method

In this chapter I will describe motive, theory, performance and the problems with the method I choose to work with. I will also describe the respondents and how I have managed the gathered data. I will also discuss the methods that Svalorna uses today in their evaluations.

Throughout the thesis I have been using books, publications and information from the Internet. The Internet sources that I have used are acquired from well-established organizations; SIDA, World Bank, United Nations, Svalorna LA etc.

As my purpose is to do a research on Svalorna LA’s evaluation of information and opinion building, in a limited time period a qualitative method seemed to be suitable. To not generalize, but to make a deep analysis were also important factors in my choice of method. I started to search for literature that I could use as a foundation for my study. I wanted to learn about the different types of evaluation, understand these methods and with them, build a base for my study. Besides the literature I also interviewed people that I think have relevant information for my study. With interviews I can get more precise answers, as it is a direct response. I also have the possibility to catch reactions or movements of the respondent that would not appear in a written text. All the above means that I, as a researcher, will get both the possibility to interact and an increased understanding when combining the theories in the literature with interviews. Furthermore, it is of great importance that I am aware that the respondents will answer the questions from their perception. I do not want to answer my research questions based on the perception of Svalorna and their COs and therefore I carefully chose respondents from aid organizations from Sweden as well as from Nicaragua.

5.1. Case study

The use of case studies is in favour when the study intends to answer the questions how or why. Case study as a method allows the researcher to keep the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles and organizational processes. For example if I want to know why and how people got affected of the information and opinion building that Svalorna LA do in Nicaragua and how efficient has

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114 Ibid, p. 2
their work been I would have to draw on a wider array of documentary information, in addition to conducting interviews. For this it is preferred to use a multiple-case study.\textsuperscript{115} In my study I am not interested in performing the evaluation myself but to find out which type of evaluation that are suitable for this type of work. However, to do this I need to conduct interviews with the target group to understand how they work and why they believe that this way of working is the best to work with information and opinion building.

The strengths of case studies are the ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, articles, facts, interviews and observation. Furthermore, one of the most important preparations for a case study is to define the research questions. One way of doing this is to review the literature on the topic. However, it is important not to look for answers in the literature but to develop sharper and more insightful questions about the topic. For me that included reading about Svalorna LA as an organization, the COs in Nicaragua and about the different theories of evaluation of aid organization and projects of information and opinion building. With interviews I collected data to understand which capacities existed to perform an evaluation.

5.2. Qualitative method

In this study I have chosen to use a qualitative method, which is characterized by closeness, empathy and flexibility, and not as firmly structured as the quantitative method\textsuperscript{116}. The qualitative method focuses on if there are any eventually divergent, on the peculiar and unique. The purpose of this study is to find out how efficient the evaluation methods that Svalorna LA uses to evaluate their influence in Nicaragua. Because of the lack of previous knowledge in this area I chose to do interviews and collect as much information about the problem area as possible.

5.3. Qualitative interviews

"The interview has been called a dialogue with a purpose"\textsuperscript{117}

The qualitative method is characterized by the fact that collecting data and analyzing the same is inseparable. Meaning that the researcher always will interpret the data spontaneously, simultaneously to collecting it.\textsuperscript{118} I chose qualitative interviews because I want to collect as much information as possible about the information and opinion building that Svalorna LA do

\textsuperscript{115} Yin, Robert K. (2003) Case Study Research – design and methods, p. 5-6
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid. p. 46
\textsuperscript{118} Rosengren Karl Erik, Arvidsson, Peter (2002) Socologisk metodik
in Nicaragua. The qualitative interview uses open questions to analyze in-depth\textsuperscript{119}. This method does not try to generalize a larger group instead I can focus on a few interviews to get a deeper understanding. It is important to decide who is going to be a part of the study and in where it is possible to perform this study\textsuperscript{120}. I thought it was very important for me to be in Nicaragua to be able to understand the different factors that the country and persons that work here could have on the study. It is specific for a qualitative study that it tries to get access to the interviewed persons way of experience the world\textsuperscript{121}.

### 5.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interview is an open dialogue that is controlled by the interviewer. The interviewer has prepared a semi-structured interview by, without deciding the order of the questions or any details, having fixed themes and main points prepared for the interview\textsuperscript{122}. The interview should take place where the interviewed person feels comfortable and safe. To collect authentic knowledge and when the interviewer want to reveal the true identity that only can be found beneath the surface, the semi-structured interview is considered to be the adequate method\textsuperscript{123}.

An interview is an analytic way of collecting qualitative data, not only a technique\textsuperscript{124}. To get beneath the surface and collect what could be very important data the researcher needs to have the courage to keep on asking the questions even when the respondent starts to get uncomfortable. The respondent should say when him or her does not want to answer a certain question. Sometimes it can be efficient to let go of the theme that seams to be sensitive just to find the way back later on in the interview\textsuperscript{125}. Confidence is very important for an interview and is often near connected with the effect of the interview\textsuperscript{126}.

I started to interview four of the staff on Svalorna Nicaragua’s office to get an understanding about how the different projects were working and which of these projects that were going to be a part of Svalorna LA’s work here next year. The interviews took place on a café nearby their office where they felt comfortable and we were not in the way for the others at the

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\textsuperscript{119} Rosengren Karl Erik, Arvidsson, Peter (2002) Socologisk metodik, p. 77  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, p. 71  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, p. 77  
\textsuperscript{122} Ryen, Anne (2004) Kvalitativ intervju – från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier, p. 46  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, p. 12  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, p. 13  
\textsuperscript{125} Krag Jacobsen, Jan (1993) Intervju – konsten att lyssna och fråga  
\textsuperscript{126} Ryen, Anne (2004) Kvalitativ intervju – från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier p. 64
office. Each interview during the whole study was held in the birth language of the respondent to avoid misunderstandings and to easily create a relationship. The different languages used in the study are Swedish and Spanish, which are later translated by the author into English.

To get a wider understanding of the research problem I decided to interview two other Swedish organizations, and to cover any eventual differences to also interview two Nicaraguan organizations. In my interviews I will collect answers that represents the perceptions of the respondents. These I will use together with the theories to answer my research questions.

5.4. Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish organizations</th>
<th>Cooperating organizations</th>
<th>Nicaraguan organizations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Svalorna Sweden (3)</td>
<td>APEADECO (1)</td>
<td>CANTERA (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svalorna Nicaragua (4)</td>
<td>AJL (1)</td>
<td>CICAP (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBV (1)</td>
<td>Club Infantil (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum Syd (1)</td>
<td>MASA (1)</td>
<td>ReJE (1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Parenthesis denotes number of interviewees.

In this chapter I will explain my selection of respondents for my interviews. I chose to make interviews first with Svalorna in Stockholm to understand and learn more about the organization. Furthermore, I wanted to start with Svalorna Nicaragua’s office in Estelí, Nicaragua, to see if they had the same thoughts about evaluation and the use of such. But also to test my interview questions and see if I got answers that I could use for my study, that is to test the validity. However, I wanted to strengthen my reliability as well and therefore I also interviewed other Swedish organizations, Nicaraguan organizations and finally also the COs of Svalorna. Below I explain more about my respondents.

5.4.1. Interviews in Stockholm

I made three background interviews in Stockholm. I had decided to make these to get a better understanding of the problem. My intentions with this were to collect more information about
Svalorna LA as organization and how they work both in Sweden and Latin America. The evaluations were important not only for the application to Forum Syd, who approves the projects of Svalorna LA and gives them a budget, but also for the collection campaign and the homepage. The three respondents that I found relevant and important were: the head of the Sweden office, the public relation manager and the collection campaign manager. They all needed information about the projects in Nicaragua for their activities. The evaluations of the projects are important to show the stakeholders and members the work that Svalorna LA performs in Latin America. With stakeholders I mean the financiers, like Forum Syd and Sida.

5.4.2. Interviews in Nicaragua

I decided to do 13 interviews in Nicaragua, more about each respondent below. I choose to do four of them with the volunteers for Svalorna Nicaragua and two of them with other Swedish aid organizations to get a wider picture of how the different aid organizations work with information and opinion building and evaluation of the same. I also interviewed five COs to Svalorna LA because I find it necessary to get their voice about evaluation and Svalorna LA’s support in evaluating their information and opinion building. I chose the organizations that are a part of Svalorna LA’s program 2007-2011: APEADECO, AJL, ReJE, Club Infantil and MASA.

To cover any eventual differences between information and opinion building in Sweden and Nicaragua I also interviewed a Nicaraguan organization, CANTERA. At last I decided to interview a methodology expert for CICAP that also is a lector at the university of Estelí (UNAN).

To protect the anonymity of each respondent, I will refer to Svalorna Sweden, Svalorna Nicaragua, and cooperating organizations, UBV, Forum Syd, CANTERA and CICAP. Further, I have had numerous of informal conversations with persons with all kinds of backgrounds, also outside the given study area. These conversations have been important to my knowledge of the overall situation in Nicaragua.

Svalorna Latin America

As mentioned earlier, Svalorna Nicaragua’s target group is children and youth between 8-25 years old and the program focuses on three main efforts: education, an active youth participation and the psychosocial health of the children. The participating Nicaraguan
organizations are the ones that operate the program in Latin America together with support from the volunteers. Svalorna Nicaragua has six employees of which I choose to interview four. Linda Björk, coordinates the work between the cooperating organizations, the volunteers and contact with Svalorna Sweden. Sara Svensson, works with the development of the organisation and with ReJE. She is the one that has the most knowledge on methodology. Lisa Hansson is the information manager and writes articles and reports to Sweden. Jonas Knutell, is responsible for the base line study and network volunteer, who has participated as observant on several activities. He also gave feedback to the cooperating organizations after the activities. Cruz Delia Cerrato Ordóñez is not relevant for the study as she only works with administration. Kerstin Öqvist works with education of family relations with Club Infantil but nothing with evaluations or methods and she is therefore not relevant for this study either.

Forum Syd
Forum Syd works together with their member organizations with competence and development of methods to strengthen the civil society through development cooperation, information and opinion work. Forum Syd also supports and help other organizations that are active in the same areas.

UBV
UBV is an aid organization that works with indigenous people, youth, farmers and their organizations in Latin America. People that live in oppression and who are trying to change their situation of life are the ones that UBV focuses on. UBV in Latin America supports projects, organizes exchanges and practice programs. “Knowledge is power”, that is UBV’s starting point. Everyone has a right to get knowledge. The citizens need to participate if a democracy will work.

APEADECO – Asociación de Promotoras de la Educación Alternativa para el Desarrollo Comunitario
The organization APEADECO started in 1996 in Telica. This organization aims for the children in Telica and Quezalguaque to have possibilities to grow and develops as persons.
and with processes for sexual equality makes people aware of the existing differences between men and women. Svalorna LA support APEADECO in different forums for teachers, students, parents and authorities where they have the possibilities to find solutions together. Their direct target group is about 700 students, 165 parents and 45 kindergarten teachers. APEADECO also arranges courses for women in sewing, cooking and handcraft.\textsuperscript{131}

**AJL - Asociación para la Juventud de León**

AJL works with youths and to encourage them to take an active interest in, participation and find solutions for their problems. ALJ help the youths and one of the main goals is to make the youths of León to see possibilities and about the importance to be active and organized to make a change. Furthermore, they create a network for youth organizations in the area around León with the purpose to cooperate and learn from each other. Their primary target group are the youths but they also work indirectly with institutions that in one way or another are in contact directly with the youths or the same questions as the youths of AJL.\textsuperscript{132}

**MASA - Movimiento de Activación Social Alternativa**

MASA started in 2000 as a social movement and work with political opinion building at the local level. They do this with a radio program and seminars to also make the citizens of Estelí aware of the global economy significance for the local development and encourage to action. Their themes can be about everything from free trade agreements, the privatization of the public sector, free trade zones and the questions of debts. Svalorna helps MASA financing the radio program “Open veins”.

MASAs members are in Estelí but they do co-ordinates activities with other associations in Nicaragua and all Central America.\textsuperscript{133}

**ReJE - Red de Jovenes**

ReJE is an organization for teenagers in Estelí. It started 1996 and their vision is to give young people influence in the local political development and make politicians consider the needs and wishes of the youths in Estelí. The radio program “Awake the youths” gets

\textsuperscript{131} Svalorna Latinamerikas Utkast till program Barn och ungdomars rättigheter och utveckling I Nicaragua, Estelí 2006, p.5
\textsuperscript{132} Document with information about AJL, from Linda Björk, coordinator Svalorna Nicaragua
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, p.6
financial support from Svalorna LA. ReJE arranges courses and theme days in leadership, sexual equality, sex and co-existence, citizen participant and processes of democracy.\textsuperscript{134}

**CANTERA**

CANTERA is a Nicaraguan non-governmental organization (NGO) that was funded in 1988. They work toward strengthening and supporting local people, groups and organizations in their efforts to improve their economic, political and social conditions. CANTERA also aims to enable people to discover solutions to their own problems and set in motion concrete actions for transformation of that reality.\textsuperscript{135}

**CICAP - Centro de Investigación, Capacitación y Acción Pedagógica**

CICAP is a centre for education, investigation and socio-educational. Their methodology keeps in mind the persons socio-educational exercises and by this they try to create an open-minded and encourage dialoguing. In processes of change CICAP searches for new development perspectives and innovation. They use this as a starting point in their work to empower the poor, create knowledge and a board that work for participating and democratic processes.\textsuperscript{136}

**5.5. Course of actions**

Before I went to Nicaragua I had have some initial contact with the employees that are working for Svalorna LA there. I had explained my purpose with the study and had asked if they could participate in my interviews. I also asked them for suggestions for persons they thought I should talk to. They had given me some names and along the interviews I realized that I should make some changes and interview others than those I first had planned.

I arrived to Estelí Nicaragua on Tuesday the 31\textsuperscript{st} of October and went to Svalorna Nicaragua’s office to present myself and confirm my first interviews. I had decided to do all the interviews with the volunteers for Svalorna Nicaragua first to collect information about the different COs and which one’s of those are going to be in the program next year. I also felt it to be important to understand which methods they use for evaluation of their information and opinion

\textsuperscript{134} Svalorna Latinamerikas Utkast till program Barn och ungdomars rättigheter och utveckling I Nicaragua, Esteli 2006, p.6
\textsuperscript{135} http://www.canteranicaragua.org/eng
\textsuperscript{136} http://www.centropoveda.org/
building today. I confirmed two interviews with the volunteers the first week and the last two on Monday the 6th of November.

Then I decided to start as soon as possible with interviewing the COs. During my first week I had confirmed interviews with APEADECO and AJL on Wednesday the 8th of November. These two organizations are localized in Telica and León so I went there for the day. A lot of the COs were very busy and did not have time to meet me as I first had planned. I really wanted to execute all my interviews as soon as possible. I confirmed three interviews in Managua with two other aid organizations, Forum Syd and UBV, and one with a Nicaraguan organization that should be an expert on evaluation of communication and opinion building, CANTERA.

I used an interview guide with questions that I wanted to get an answer to. I used semi-structured interviews, which means an open dialogue that is controlled by the interviewer, for the interviewed to expound on one’s views.

I tried to transcribe the interviews as soon as possible after the interviews were recorded to be able to give reflection to the material, while I still had the interview fresh in memory. I chose not to transcribe word for word for two reasons, first because I did not think it was necessary but also because of lack of time. I listened through the interviews and took out what was relevant and had an importance for the study. For example some of the cooperating organizations did not have any methods for evaluation.

It did occur several problems during my study. Some of the cooperating organizations were very occupied and hard to contact. Telephone is the secure way of confirming an interview, but even there were occasions when the respondent did not show. E-mail is not established enough to use as a communication tool for confirming of interviews. Health problems and the living situation also affected my schedule.
5.6. Data treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Svalorna LA</th>
<th>Characteristics of the COs</th>
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<tr>
<td>The small size of the organization</td>
<td>The size of the organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited staff resources</td>
<td>The limited resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>The desire to work close to the target group</td>
<td>Different levels of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference of thinking in terms of program instead of project</td>
<td>Existing methods (weaknesses and strengths, difficulties in a qualitative evaluation and the purpose of evaluation according to Svalorna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The local perspective on participating evaluation methodology</td>
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When I had collected my material I started to form categories for my analysis. First I divided up in what is characteristic for Svalorna LA versus the COs and methods. Furthermore I divided the information about the characteristics of Svalorna LA into five subtitles; the small size of organization, limited staff resources, the desire to work close to the target group, the evaluation meeting and the difference of thinking in terms of program instead of project. I also divided up the characteristics of the COs into three subtitles; the size of the organizations and limited resources, different levels of knowledge and existing methods. The methods title I separated up into weaknesses and strengths. Then I made two other subtitles that I tied to methods; difficulties in a qualitative evaluation and the purpose of evaluation according to Svalorna (Sweden versus Nicaragua). Finally I also compiled the local perspective on participating evaluation methodology. With the theories as basis I made my analysis on each one of my category and found my conclusions.

5.7. Credibility discussion

There will always be a credibility discussion and I believe that this is important for my study. Qualitative methods use a few units and therefore the conclusion of the study is not guaranteed to be representative for a larger group. Thus, it is important to carefully choose the persons that will represent a whole group. However, one way of discovering that people do not always do as they say they do is to combine interviews with an observation study. It is important to understand that this is not always about truth or lies but how the respondent...

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137 Emphasis put by author.
138 Silverman, David (2002) Interpreting Qualitative data, p. 34
pictures them\textsuperscript{140}. Moreover, in a qualitative method the researcher uses open questions which the results in much more data than when using a quantitative method. This much data can cause a problem in the analysis. The researcher will also affect the result just by being present and sometimes even participating. Objectivity is very important, the results can change depending on who is interpreting respondents and doing the analysis which, of course, gives less reliability.

5.7.1. An evaluation free of values or affected of values

Can an evaluation be completely free of values? Yes, according to Jerkedal. For example, if the questions that are asked are totally uncontroversial and if the results of the evaluation do not have an importance for any custom group. At the same time this type of evaluation could be totally useless and uninteresting. An evaluation that is influenced by values can ask questions and get different reactions from different groups, and could lead to consequences but it is very important to be aware of the values. The researcher must be conscious that values and other the influences, invisibles and visible, affect the evaluation and the results\textsuperscript{141}.

To minimize the effects of influence from the researchers there is a method that can be used that is called defence-prosecute method. To be able to use this method it need to be two persons doing one evaluation each. One of the researchers studies the program critically and tries to find the weak points meanwhile the other researcher searches for benefits in the program\textsuperscript{142}.

5.7.2. Validity

Validity can be defined as weather a method measures what it is intended to measure, in other words, to what extent the results correspond to reality\textsuperscript{143}. Without validity the whole study will be worthless. The data that has been collected can not be used to analyze the problem even if the measurement itself is reliable. I started to interview the volunteers of Svalorna Nicaragua, in Swedish, to see if my questions were valid and if they gave me the information that I needed. I chose theories to cover the research areas of interest of the study and the results and analysis were structured according to the areas of theory. I also went back to my

\textsuperscript{140} Ekström, Mats, Larsson, Larsåke (2000) Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap, p. 22
\textsuperscript{141} Jerkedal, Åke (1999) Utvärdering- steg för steg, p. 46
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, p. 46
\textsuperscript{143} Silverman, David (2002) Interpreting Qualitative data, p. 239
problem questions to reassure me that the method I used responded to the questions I were trying to answer.

5.7.2. Reliability

Reliability is a measure of how reliable the results are. There are a number of concrete ways to obtain a high reliability. The selection of interviewees is important and a crucial part of the research and to obtain high reliability I chose my respondent carefully as described earlier. For example to strengthen the reliability of my study I did not only talk with Svalorna. I also interviewed other Swedish organizations, Nicaraguan organizations and finally also the COs of Svalorna LA.

Another way to strengthen the reliability is to record all the interviews. Then all the implicit material, for example the way a respondent stressed the word or a certain pause, will be recorded. If another researcher should repeat the study he/she would have the recorded tapes to listen to instead of performing new interviews. If performing an interview two times the respondent will never give the exact same answers. People construct different versions of one occurrence.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{144}} \text{Silverman, David (2002) Interpreting Qualitative data, p. 230}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{145}} \text{Ryen, Anne (2004) Kvalitativ intervju – från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier, p. 139}\]
6. Present methods for evaluation

This chapter is to discuss and explain the methods used today by aid organizations. These methods are important for the analysis and to get an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each method. I will thus discuss criticism and why the organizations find them useful.

6.1. Qualitative evaluation

There are two different methods to do a research on a quality: quantitative or qualitative. Here I will go in deeper on the qualitative method. The qualitative method is trying to analyze the variety for a quality. This by analyzing the different expressions that one quality possible can have. The researcher should in advance, try to find which types of one quality that exist, and then try to find examples on varieties of that one quality.

With a qualitative method the researcher can gather knowledge about the effect that intervention had on the development process. It gathers all data; restructured effects, the not quantitative effects and not predicted effects, positive like negatives.

Both of the methods, qualitative and quantitative, have to rely on the ability of the researcher that he/her can define the different and alike expressions for the quality.

For instance, the qualitative method is analyzing qualitative alterations proceeds from a chaotic, unsorted amount of information that an activity will possibly lead to. This by exposing the researcher to as different and as much information as possible so he/she can find all the qualities that are developed, that disappears or change due to an action.

This type of data is often collected by empathy, direct observation, participating observation or dialogue. This means that, the researcher needs to make some selection out of all the information, clarify, sift out and divide the data into different groups. Each group will show a different expression for one quality.

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147 Ibid, p.11
148 Ibid, p.17
149 Ibid, p.13
150 Ibid, p.21
151 Ibid, p. 22
6.2. Quantitative evaluation

Svalorna Nicaragua uses a quantitative matrix in their reports to the head office in Sweden. It is a formula that the cooperating organizations have to turn in twice a year. Svalorna Nicaragua does like that the matrix is foreseeable and believe that it is positive to quantify the results. However, this matrix is hardly criticized by Svalorna Nicaragua. They listed the following problems:

- It is a waste of a lot of information to quantify qualitative information and values, like the matrix of Svalorna LA does. Information like experiences, attitudes and processes, that is very important for a complete evaluation are wasted.
- The results of an effort should be reduced into a number and a few rows for eventual deviants. This means that the matrix demands hard reducing of the results.
- The matrix should have more instructions; no one seems to know exactly how to use it.  

Even if I am not going to recommend or use quantitative evaluation in my analysis I believe that it is relevant to explain why. Especially when it is a method that Svalorna LA uses today. Therefore below I will describe the advantages and disadvantages with quantitative evaluation.

The quantitative quality takes form when you search for expressions that are as alike each other as possible except absolute quantitative; amount, strength or size. The quantitative method is only constructed to clarify the quantitative variable and to illustrate these. Many make the mistake of trying to quantify a qualitative variable for a quality. Eneroth clarifies this by an example, if one tries to survey the quality of “cooperative” is it useless to try to quantify this variable. It is not possible to compare two different qualitative qualities of “cooperative” like for example perception and willingness to compromise. It is like Eneroth expresses it with a question, what is more a fruit: apple or pear? With a quantitative evaluation you will miss out on the all-or-nothing qualities and also on the qualities that develops during the process. Which then is a huge problem for Svalorna when using the matrix. If Svalorna LA misses out on this information in an evaluation, is it efficient then? Does it measure what is intended to measure? As Svalorna LA focuses on information and opinion work, the quantitative evaluation should not be an option when they need to measure

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152 Interviews with Svalorna Nicaragua
153 Ibid, p. 12
a change of attitude. Then there is also all-or-nothing qualities, the one’s that are not quantitative at all, they either are or not. For example one cannot be more or less dead, you either are or not.

The choice of quantitative evaluation in Svalorna LA exists as well in other aid organizations. In one of the interviews with Svalorna Nicaragua I got the explanation that it is always a problem, because the contributors want to see numbers. The Swedish population wants to see how many the organization reach out to, how many do they help etc. Democratic aid is not so easy to “sell” to the contributor as economic aid.

“It is very hard to know who is listening to the radio program and even harder to examine how they were influenced by the information, if they were.”154

“When an organization has done a massive campaign it is more difficult to evaluate the influence the effort had. People recognize that there has been a campaign but however that is no guarantee that they considered the information and got influenced. It is a problem when trying to measure the effect of the effort in the society.”155

Furthermore, most contributors appear to believe that human development is something linear, and that all poor countries will go through all the same levels of development and that development is the same for everyone. Even though this would have made everything easier, and especially evaluations, to conclude whether the project or the aid is on the right track.156

If the researcher wants to quantitatively analyze the quality cooperative, this will only be possible by measuring the colleagues experience if the cooperation has been good, very good or bad.157 Already here we can see that the quantitative method relies on the researchers subjective ability to separate alike and different expressions of a quality but also on the subjective judgement of in which amount, strength or size that this quality is experienced.158 The validity is a problem for the quantitative method because a not controllable subjectivity and arbitrary is brought into analyze when analyzing the intervention.

With a quantitative method, the researcher has to decide the qualities that he/she suspects will be affected by the interventions before it starts. This is due to that the measure instrument has

154 Interview with Nicaragua
155 Interview with CO
156 Interview with CANTERA
158 Ibid, p.13
to be designed before the evaluation starts. The quantitative changes that can be caused by theoretical models and/or theories are drawn up in the hypothesis. Each goal quality has to be defined after what they aim to measure before an instrument for measurement is designed. To create a form as an instrument for evaluation the researcher has to create questions that are as concrete as possible and will measure the goal qualities.\textsuperscript{159}

\section*{6.3. Logical framework approach}

The most used conventional method for planning and evaluation of aid for third world countries is LFA. This evaluation model is constructed from a positivistic approach steered by causality, by deducing consequences through a logical goal chain between activities, goals and expected results. In the beginning of the project, the matrix is designed and then completed with indicators and methods to check. It should therefore be possible during the project to measure if the goals will be achieved, but is it? The user of the method is limited to measure pre-estimated goals but even though it is a rigorous method.\textsuperscript{160}

But LFA is also hardly criticized\textsuperscript{161}, specifically when it is used for evaluating democratic aid, especially the one that put a greater emphasis on dimensions like participating and qualitative kind. The main critique is on the following five kinds:

- **The focus is on project not program,**
- **and that it applies to hard facts.** LFA is designed to measure the clear effects on a time-limited project like for example infrastructure projects where hard quantitative data are more available.
- **Inward oriented.** LFA starts from predetermined project goals while political aid demands an outward orientation that will notice the indications in the complex reality that democratic aid takes part in and in which the project wants to change. This method is progressive and its logic helps the project in a positive direction. There are two problems with this way of working. First, democracy is not a linear process but rather a non-linear pattern with progresses and setbacks. Second, because of its inward orientation is it not possible to measure negative or unexpected effects with LFA, who demands progress.
- **Causality and quantitative indicators are in focus.** LFA gives a fake feeling of science as a result of the complex context that democracy occurs in. It might prove

\textsuperscript{159} Eneroth, Bo (1998) Erfarenhetsinventering- att utvärdera arbete med människor, p.20
\textsuperscript{160} Crawford, Gordon, Kearton, Iain (2002) Evaluating democracy and governance assistance, p.3
\textsuperscript{161} Rebien 1996, Cracknell 2000, and Marsden & Oakley 1990
unsatisfactory to reduce the change that occurred in a process of democracy into approximated numbers. Furthermore sometimes it is only possible effects that can be estimated when it comes to democratic efforts, and then it is unreasonable to use a method that focus on causality.

- **A system based on the results.** System based on the results focus on the efficiency of the aid organization instead of contributes to a more efficient democratic development in the country and to seek for learning of this.
7. Results and analysis

In this chapter I will analyze all my material applicable to my research questions:

- How efficient are the methods that are used today to evaluate the information and opinion building that Svalorna LA has in Nicaragua?
- How can we improve these methods so that we get more efficiency without losing the close contact with the target group or the COs?
- How is Svalorna LA’s communication work contributing to a sustainable development in Nicaragua? (due to evaluation)

In the interviews in Nicaragua there appeared to be dissatisfaction because of the lack of regularity for evaluations. No one seemed to have a method that they followed to evaluate information and opinion building, neither Svalorna LA nor the COs nor other Swedish organizations. The purpose of the evaluation is also something to keep in mind. The evaluations, quantitative as qualitative are being sent home to the head office in for example Sweden. For the contributor’s it is of great importance to get results, and they prefer hard facts, like for example that we have helped this many children to start school. This is a complex problem when working with information and opinion building, as Svalorna LA does.

Development in Nicaragua is according to Svalorna LA’s new program about quality of life:

The broader goal

- Children and youth should have an influence in the development and work with opinion building in different levels of the society

Specific goals

Education

- To give the education system better possibilities to qualitative education with focus on personal development. Svalorna work with this in Esteli, Jinotega and Telica in Nicaragua.
Participation

- Support children and youth to demand that the politicians take their responsibility in children’s rights. Help the children and youth to get organized and be active in the processes of local political decision-making.

Psychosocial health

- Children and youth should have the right to develop and grow up without violence, abuse, insulting treatment of their rights or economic exploitation.
- To change the attitudes of the population to achieve an active defence of the children rights with focus on the psychosocial health of the target group.¹⁶₂

7.1. Svalorna LA’s purpose of performing an evaluation

To achieve these goals Svalorna LA works with education, political opinion building and networking and organization development¹⁶³. The population of Nicaragua are part of a network but not one that can change their living situation. Svalorna LA can function as a network for them that for example use Internet as a tool to spread the information about the situation in Nicaragua. During the interviews I asked Svalorna Sweden and Nicaragua about the purpose of an evaluation. Who is it for and what purpose does it have? I learned that there is no common vision in Svalorna LA for the purpose of an evaluation. Furthermore, the different purpose of evaluation and follow-up or how to prioritize these differed within the volunteers in Nicaragua. They listed the purpose and priority order, which clearly involves the comprehensive goal of Svalorna LA.

- Follow-up to make sure that the project is heading in the right direction. (process evaluation)
- Process of learning of one’s mistakes – why we did not reach our goal.
- Exchange of knowledge – between the volunteers, with Sweden and with Peru/Bolivia.
- Write reports to Forum Syd, the board in Sweden and information to the members.

The office of Svalorna in Sweden listed the importance and purpose of evaluation as follows:

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¹⁶² Svalorna: Utkast till program: Barn och ungdomars rättigheter och Utveckling, p. 9
¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 10
• Point out which impact an intervention has had on the target group. The more the target group participate in all the planning and performance of the effort, the more interest they would have in evaluating it.

• Result reports to the financiers

• Create legitimacy and insight into the organization. The members need to have access to reliable and relevant information to be able to follow the development in Nicaragua and to take a position to the ongoing organization. Everything with a purpose to secure the achievement of the expected goals.¹⁶⁴

It is interesting that Svalorna Nicaragua and Sweden have rather substantial differences between the visions of the purpose of an evaluation. Svalorna Nicaragua actually even asked what use the board has of the reports that Nicaragua send to the head office. When looking at the list that the board sent I notice an understanding of the existing possibilities to make use of the evaluations. It seems that the board has ideas to use the information that an evaluation supplies but does not always know how. It is not always about reports (that sooner or later ends up in an archive) but the information in the reports. Would it be possible to use the same information for different functions? To learn from the information it has to be worked through. There is a great will to learn but maybe not a full understanding of how much there is to learn. This should be noted and considered when responding my research question about how to improve the existing method. Decentralization creates greater initiative, and empowers decisions and actions for the COs.

Svalorna Nicaragua did also express a lack of instructions from the organization, which is also noticed in the evaluation work. The fact that the formulas that Svalorna LA uses in their reports are not clear how they should be used creates insecurity in the employees. Furthermore this could be interpreted as a sign of insecurity in Svalorna LA. The COs are of the opinion that each new coordinator for Svalorna Nicaragua has their own vision of the organization.¹⁶⁵ With this as a basis, several COs recommend Svalorna Nicaragua to make a priority list to describe the purpose of the evaluation.

“If Svalorna wants to strengthen their organization, that is what they should evaluate first. If development of the organization is what is important, then they should evaluate their comprehension. The most important is what Svalorna wants to accomplish in Nicaragua, the rest should be secondary. Of course, it

¹⁶⁴ The office Svalorna Sweden, 061117
¹⁶⁵ Interview with the cooperating organizations
is of great value to report and motivate why Svalorna should receive support to keep on working in Nicaragua. But still the focus should be on strengthening the cooperating organizations in Nicaragua.[…] This is why it is so important to discuss with the cooperating organizations what they want to achieve and what they need. Furthermore to discuss how they want to evaluate. To make sure they understand what Svalorna means by that term.”

7.2. The methodology of Svalorna for evaluation

As I described earlier, Svalorna LA uses a quantitative matrix in their reports to Sweden. This matrix is foreseeable and a quantification of the results of an effort. But when the matrix quantifies qualitative information and values it, there is a waste of a lot of information. Information such as experiences, attitudes and processes, which is very important for a complete evaluation.

In addition, Svalorna Nicaragua admits their failure in their feedback to the presumed goals, results and indicators during the process cycle. They use the model LFA when designing the presumed goals, results and indicators but not to evaluate. CANTERA and CICAP claim that is because of that this model is created of the contributor’s (from the outside of the problem/solution), and not of the receiving organizations (from the inside where the problem exist). The model is not a good option. Moreover, democratic development comes in a dynamic context that can not be sensed by the LFA model. This model is constructed to show the efficiency of the contributing organization instead of what’s really interesting; to learn about what is contributing to a sustainable development. According to the respondents, learn and collect new knowledge is the most important result of an evaluation.

It is difficult with qualitative evaluation. All of the respondents have expressed insecurity but a great will of starting with qualitative evaluations.

“I will suggest that we make an intervention to find qualitative indicators. There are a lot of statistics to be examined, but why spend money on head counting. That is not the way to measure what we intend to measure, I believe.”

“It is difficult to measure a change of attitude. Maybe it could be done by using focus groups, some kind of combination of quantitative and qualitative factors.”

166 Interview with Forum Syd
167 Interviews with Svalorna Nicaragua
169 Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua, translated by author
170 Ibid
The easiest way would be to use a combination, as recommended by the respondent. Svalorna LA supports in interventions that has a qualitative character. This should automatically result in a collection of the qualitative values. However, it is important to find a good interview technique. All the interventions and efforts have both qualitative and quantitative values. For example; a person weights xx kilos, are xx m. tall and xx years old. At the same time this person is maybe kind, intelligent and slightly boring. This person would not be seen as the same if any one of these values were removed. As well as if not searched for, a person can have values that do not appear at first sight.

“The quantitative and qualitative are incompatible. They are mutually exclusive.”

In this sense, the evaluation has to analyze a situation and not only one value that represent the situation. CANTERA suggests describing the qualitative factors in a context, like everyday occurrences. He uses machismo as an example:

“El machismo is something you note in a persons behaviour. It is nothing you can measure with numbers. Furthermore, there can be contradictory signals. By a careful diagnostically analysis one can interpret these signals.”

Another defined problem is the lack of confidence, something that can be difficult when the respondent in a qualitative evaluation needs to be honest. The COs know that the results will effect if the cooperation will continue or not. If changes of attitude or a learning process will appear the interviewer has to offer confidentiality to the respondent.

“…a lot of the organizations, maybe mainly the youth organizations, do not trust the business around the aid organizations. When the aid organizations only want their reports, the youth organizations do not want to open up and share more. The aid organizations will then only receive and know the most necessary and nothing more.”

“If we want to see something clearer – we go closer. However, when we contract external consults to perform an evaluation, which is the total opposite.”

“It is a waste of money on evaluations performed by external consulters in the business of the aid organizations. These evaluations might be of interest when spread in Europe but they have no function what so ever here. I ask myself why anyone performs these kinds of evaluations. […] When they do not reflect the reality here.”

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171 Interview with CICAP
172 Interview with CANTERA, quote translated by the author
173 Interview with cooperating organization
174 Interview with CICAP
175 Ibid
All the COs want to participate more in the development of the process of planning; the strategies to achieve the presumed goals in the new program are discussed and decided all together\textsuperscript{176}, something that were really appreciated by the COs. They also expressed more possibilities to do this, which I find important to talk about methods.

There is a need for a discussion about LFA. Should Svalorna Nicaragua use this at all? Both CANTERA and CICAP criticize this method, mainly because of the lack of a participating process. The target group should contribute with data, but on the conditions of the model LFA.

“This model has been forced on the contributor’s, and it focus on the problem instead of the solution. That makes it difficult for people to formulate indicators, it is not a system of theirs.”\textsuperscript{177}

The COs are willing to work with a more bottom-up approach rather than the top-down method Svalorna is imposing on them. Svalorna LA works mostly with \textit{process evaluations} today, which means an estimation of how efficient the campaign or activity been. Twice a year, \textit{effect evaluations} complement these. No one of these estimates the effects in the society, they only focus on the effect on the direct target group (the members of the CO\textsuperscript{178}).

Evaluation of specific campaigns performed by a CO, financed by Svalorna LA, is one example on a process evaluation. When evaluating, there are no common formulas or destined methodology for all the COs. This is to recommend, it would be in benefit of the COs to see the differences and make it easier for Svalorna LA to gather the information. However, neither UBV nor Forum Syd has a fixed methodology. All of the responding aid organizations chose a new method for every evaluation occasion. This complicates the systemization of the collected information and the learning process. SIDA and other well-established international aid organization have the same problem. There is no consensus regarding what is the most suitable methodology to evaluate qualitative interventions and efforts.\textsuperscript{179} Also, there is no system for how much support Svalorna Nicaragua gives the COs in their evaluating process. Nevertheless, the network volunteer participated as an observant a couple of times, and gave feedback on some activities performed by the COs. Moreover, this feedback did not come along with any demands, the organizations chose what to implement.

\textsuperscript{176} All together is Svalorna and all the cooperating organizations, emphasis put by the author
\textsuperscript{177} Interview with CANTERA
\textsuperscript{178} Emphasis put by the author
\textsuperscript{179} Crawford, Gordon, Kearton, Iain (2002) Evaluating democracy and governance assistance
Svalorna Nicaragua claims that some COs have a lack of knowledge concerning for example terms like goals and indicators. Another problem is the feedback to the presumed goals, results and indicators when evaluating. All the COs wishes to learn about and be educated in: what is an indicator, how do you pick an indicator and how do you use them to follow-up your work during the year? Another way of treating this problem is to forget about the terms and explain to the COs what an indicator is. CICAP uses base line as an example:

“Nowadays everyone talks about base line. It is the same thing as the initial point of the project. We need to know from where we start, that is why the first thing to do is put together a diagnose. It is important to use words that the people recognize.”

This assumes that Svalorna Nicaragua knows what an indicator is and is able to educate their COs. Otherwise it is recommended to consider external advice.

In 2006 for the first time, Svalorna Nicaragua arranged a joint meeting to discuss evaluation with all their COs. This initiative is well appreciated but illustrates even more the lack of methods to perform a common effect evaluation. The comment of Svalorna Nicaragua were:

“It appears that the cooperating organizations feel that Svalorna has not participated enough in or followed-up the projects”, “The meeting discussed the purpose of an evaluation” and “The meeting focused on: what is a good project and the cooperation with Svalorna. And less on what effect of our cooperation has. We took a huge step closer common evaluations but the meeting did not reveal or result in any achieved effects.” These are just a few examples.

The COs have also expressed that they are very content with the evaluation meeting. They point out that the meeting did not evaluate the organizations but: “how we would like to cooperate with Svalorna, not about how the cooperation works today. It was not that kind of evaluation.”

7.2.1. Methods for evaluating results and effects at meso- and macro level

Interviews have shown that neither Svalorna Nicaragua, nor the COs even try to estimate effects on a macro level. This is due to not knowing what method to use, which also is a result of their insecurity. The only evaluation is of specific activities, mainly a discussion about how it was organized and how they can improve it the next time. These evaluations do not discuss the participators new knowledge or how they can use this knowledge in the future.

180 Interview with CICAP
181 Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
182 Interview with COs
“It is very hard to know who is listening to the radio program and even harder to examine how they were influenced by the information, if they were.”

“When an organization has done a massive campaign it is more difficult to evaluate the influence the effort had. People recognize that there has been a campaign but however that is no guarantee that they considered the information or were influenced. It is a problem when trying to measure the effect of the effort in the society.”

The intention of creating a chain of effects from micro to macro, does exist within the COs. However, this discussion has not developed into something yet. It is always hard to know or prove that the effect is a result of a certain intervention or effort. A change of attitudes for example usually depend on several efforts and changes in the society.

7.2.2. Characteristics of Svalorna LA as an organization - that may affect the evaluations -

First of all, Svalorna LA is a small organization, with a few employees in each country. These volunteers have 2-year contracts, which means that the employees changes every other year. Inevitable, this affects the contact with their COs. Furthermore, the amount of time and resources are limited. All of the above need to be taken into consideration when choosing a method for evaluation. Another thing to consider is whether Svalorna Nicaragua should have a person designed to work with evaluations and create possibilities to discuss and reflect over the new knowledge. As mentioned earlier, evaluation and learning is a conclusive part of the interventions and efforts that Svalorna LA participate in. This could be one way to assure quality, to have a person assigned to work with evaluations.

Additionally, the question to ask is how Svalorna Sweden can participate in this? Several of the volunteers for Svalorna Nicaragua wish to get more support from Svalorna Sweden. Above all support with a basis for methodology and theories concerning methodological questions is needed. This would be particularly important if the volunteers will be more limited in the new program. There is also a request to an exchange of information between the different countries that Svalorna LA works with. This type of information exchange is something that Svalorna Sweden could facilitate, which also is a wish from Svalorna Nicaragua. An exchange of information would heighten the learning ability of the organization.

183 Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
184 Interview with CO
External help is also something to consider. The network volunteer in Nicaragua is in this very moment developing a base line study. By doing this, the group of volunteers in Nicaragua is suddenly one person less to perform the daily duties. This is a kind of effort that could be done by an intern, Minor Field Study-student or a method volunteer. However, to make use of such resources it needs to be planned well in advance and also it should be notified that the external help should not intrude on the every-day work of Svalorna or the COs.

One of the strengths that Svalorna LA takes great pride in is that they work close to their target group. But a lot of the COs did not feel this way. There is some criticism on Svalorna Nicaragua’s attitude. Svalorna Sweden has one understanding of how the perception of the organization is. Svalorna Nicaragua has another and the COs a third perception.\textsuperscript{185} This is the blind quadrant of the Johari window, which represents things that others know (or feel) about the organization, but that Svalorna LA is unaware of. Several COs also point out the informal structure and flexibility as distinguished for the cooperation. Nonetheless, other COs reveal a total lack of knowledge about the organization that Svalorna LA is. Other shows their dissatisfaction over the sloppiness that Svalorna LA sometimes demonstrates.

"Svalorna should demand more! With this I do not mean survey us all the time, everything is about how they do it. We do not want any favours, which Svalorna seems to believe when they do not demand a full return. We want respect and a communication with trust and confidence, but we also need that they demand things in return. There seam to be some kind of paternalism, which we do not like."\textsuperscript{186}

This is noteworthy, considering the response “some cooperating organizations appreciate informal criticism more than when it arises in a formal evaluation."\textsuperscript{187} This is not necessarily true, and seems to originate in the older, now slightly antiquated notion that cooperating organizations seeks a close and informal relationship with Svalorna Sweden, rather than one based in strict professionalism. ReJE, APEADECO, Club Infantil and AJL have all explicitly stated that they want more support from Svalorna, during evaluations. But they want the support as formal feedback, well-advanced plans, and information concerning format and expectations.

\textsuperscript{185}Interviews with Svalorna Stockholm, Nicaragua and COs
\textsuperscript{186}Interview with CO
\textsuperscript{187}Interview with Svalorna Nicaragua
Svalorna LA approaches a greater professionalism with the new program, and is actually gradually away from their target group. Today, there are rather substantial differences between how Svalorna Sweden wants to be perceived by the target group, how Svalorna Nicaragua believes they are perceived by the COs, and how the COs actually perceive them. This might be because in the past, Svalorna LA has worked unusually close to their target group and this has become a very important part of Svalorna LA’s identity. The contact with the COs and the confidence Svalorna Nicaragua assumes exists, partly due to the small size of the organization, may not be correct. This has a profound effect on the effort of the feedback activity and the evaluation if they are to be carried out together with cooperating COs, meaning with full disclosure, analytical depth, etc. In particular, this seems to be the case with ReJE. This might be explained by the fact that they have had more volunteers assigned to them, and also are deeply involved in program development, with the additional roles it might involve and the expectations on the relationship it inevitably creates. It is also not impossible that Svalorna Nicaragua use a different approach to ReJE since it is a youth organization and there being a certain amount of inadvertent paternalism in Svalorna Nicaragua. This could partly be explained by the fact that Svalorna LA wants to consider themselves one of few organizations with an equal relationship to their COs, something hard to achieve when one of the parties is also the financier. Several of the respondents from Svalorna Nicaragua express concern about whether the COs are honest and self-critical. One way could be to use the Joari window for analysis but the same must apply to Svalorna LA, and in extension, the entire organization. In order for Svalorna LA to be able to work more efficiently with quality assurance through evaluation, the organization must become more self-critical and self-conscious. And by doing this they could enlarge their open quadrant and decrease the hidden and find awareness about their blind spots.

However, there is nothing indicating that an increase in Svalorna LA’s professionalism, with more stringent demands, would be perceived as something negative by the COs. Contrary, they are full of expectation about the new program and the increase in stability and long term planning it will mean. The COs also have some characteristics to consider, which I will explain below.
7.2.3. Characteristics of cooperating organizations (COs)

COs and Svalorna Nicaragua both acknowledge that COs work under great pressure and great demands from a multitude of directions at once. This can be brought to attention in several ways.

• Some of the COs already have established methods for internal evaluation and learning. Might these methods be used to a greater extent when reporting to the program than it currently is, and thus save time?

• Could contributors coordinate their evaluations together with the COs? This would admittedly be positive for the methodological development, if there was a greater exchange between contributors, and not only between COs.

• Legible accounting for how Svalorna LA expects reports to be made, including date and evaluation questions decided prior to the start of the year, to increase advance planning.

• Every CO has expressed an interest in education, preferably together with Svalorna Nicaragua, in particular how realistic indicators can be applied to information and opinion building. Svalorna LA must assume responsibility for providing the COs with the tools they need to work with goal and result orientation, if the CO will ever be able to assume responsibility of the new program.
8. Conclusions

This is the chapter that brings everything to an end. I will discuss the results of my study, answer my research questions and give recommendation to Svalorna LA.

Several of the COs have established that it is not a linear process to use democracy to achieve sustainable development. For this reason, it is even more important that it is the COs that decide the goals, their strategies and evaluate their own goals.\textsuperscript{188} Otherwise it would be difficult to measure the effects of the activities, efforts and interventions. To do it differently, it would be necessary to have a methodology with \textit{actual participation}, in contrast to only input of information. Today Svalorna Nicaragua only receives input of information that they process, judge and use as basis in their evaluations.

Svalorna Nicaragua is aware that the purposes of an evaluation need to be listed in order of priority. Primarily, it should be a result evaluation of the effects of the new program (impact evaluation). This is because the existence of Svalorna LA depends on if they contribute to a change. Only after this should reports be submitted, to Forum Syd and the head office, in a manner as effective as possible. This priority order is formulated and should also be implemented by Svalorna Sweden to learn from the development of the new program. Partly because of the lack of methods for evaluations, the learning process within Svalorna LA is very limited.

The main purpose of evaluation, to constantly develop the program and thereby strengthen the COs, should furthermore guide the choice of methodology for evaluation. The recommendation would be to direct their evaluations to include two more characteristics:

- Legible objective to implement a culture of increased efficiency that encourages learning
- A methodological effort to evaluation that clearly show on an actual and democratic participation with all stakeholders. All this to implement the efforts into the democracy process in Nicaragua.

The evaluation process would this way be a method for the COs to run the program efficiently. This also contributes to the deepening of democracy. During the start of the new

\textsuperscript{188} Interview with CANTERA, CICAP and cooperating organizations
program, this is what Svalorna Nicaragua should aspire to achieve. It is important to keep in mind that the mechanisms for follow-ups and evaluations should be planned well in advance, preferably during the planning of the new program. This way, Svalorna can assure that the methodology is based on actual participation.

It would also be recommended to give responsibility to one person to prepare, implement, follow-up and continuously develop the methodology. It is of great importance that the follow-ups and evaluations are integrated into the program to encourage the learning in the organization. The COs will be in charge of the program; the activities, efforts and evaluations. As the COs expressed their need for support, this person would be coordinating the evaluations together with the COs. Also, to encourage the COs, coordinate their reports, and have responsibility for continued methodology education of the COs and Svalorna Nicaragua. This would contribute to the institutional learning and a better quality of the program.

I also recommend that Svalorna LA rely more on external resources such as interns, Minor Field Studies students and method volunteers. Only the efforts that may heighten the competence within a certain area without intruding on Svalorna Nicaragua’s or the COs everyday work. This is also a cost-efficient way to increase learning and strengthen Svalorna LA as a quality directed organization brand. Svalorna LA should admit their limitations and when they have a shortage of knowledge. It would then be easier to work on these shortcomings.

On basis of my analysis I think it is necessary to design an internal system of methods and if possible this should be a method that the COs already use. Svalorna LA should support and help the COs to develop their methods. It has to be a consistent methodology with an amount of specific methods of which one is to be chosen depending on if it is an activity, effort or goal that need to be evaluated. These specific methods are the same every time. If possible, the system should use as many as possible of the existing methods for evaluation that the COs already uses. By doing this, Svalorna LA assures that the COs know how to use the methods. The levels of knowledge are very spread out between the different COs, which Svalorna LA are aware of. I see a few choices; accept this, conform the support of Svalorna Nicaragua from organization to organization or work actively to strengthen the level of knowledge for the organizations that are most far behind (to then develop together). My conclusion is that Svalorna LA needs to choose one strategy to implement at the start of the new program.
I do believe that Svalorna LA’s work in Nicaragua contributes to a sustainable development. Instead of teaching people to hold out their hand for help they give them information to use as a tool. As shown in this paper, they support several Nicaraguan organizations in their work. They strengthen them in their struggle to inform and influence the population of Nicaragua. Information is power in a lot of senses, to know how to vote and which difference you can make, and to be aware of your rights and how to use them.
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10. Appendix

10.1. Appendix 1.

10.1.1. Interview questions

Interview questions to Svalorna Sweden

1. Vad har du för vision för Svalornas informations- och påverkansarbete i Nicaragua?
2. Vilka strategier/arbetsmetoder har man sett fungera/föredrar du för Nicaragua?
3. Vad anser du att det finns för problemområden vid info-/påverkansarbetet i Nicaragua? Hur tar ni er förbi dem idag?
4. Vilka fördelar resp. nackdelar ser du med sättet ni jobbat på hittills (1-års projekt)?
5. Vilka fördelar resp. nackdelar ser du med att gå över till 5-åriga program?

Del 2. Arbetet med utvärdering idag, enligt personens insyn.

1. Hur förbereds projekt/ delprogram inom info- och påverkan så att utvärdering underlättas?
   a. Beskriv processen.
   Styrkor? Svagheter?
   b. Hur görs och fungerar uppdelningen i olika typer av insatser (info/påverkan/insamling?) Hur fungerar sammankopplingen när effekterna ska mätas?
   c. Vad saknas för att insatserna ska kunna följas upp/utvärderas efteråt? Med vilka kriterier bestäms förhållandet mellan mål – resultat – indikatorer?
   d. Finns system, mallar, teoretiskt stöd?

2. På vilket sätt utvärderas info- och påverkans arbetet idag?
   a. Rapportering?
   b. Har du fått någon utbildning/tekniskt stöd i hur du ska tänka in utvärdering när du planerar verksamheten?
   c. Är du nöjd med den dokumentation som görs av uppföljningar/utvärdering?
   d. Styrkor och svagheter?

Verksamhetsledaren fick specifikt en fråga: Hur ser du på flexibilitet respektive stabilitet i personalfrågan? (Institutionellt minne?)
Informationsansvarig fick specifikt en fråga: På vilket sätt skulle lärandet mellan Nicaragua och Sverige förbättras?

Interview questions to Svalorna Nicaragua

1. På vilket sätt kommer du i kontakt med uppföljning/utvärdering av infoinsatserna? (Sara, Lisa och Linda har olika roller i LG och olika arbetsuppgifter)
   In which way do you come in contact with evaluation of the information and opinion work?
2. Räkna upp/beskriv informationsinsatser gör landgruppen tillsammans med sina SO idag? Även utöver radioprojektet.
   Describe what different information work that the land group does with the COs today?
3. Påverkansinsatser idag?
Describe what different opinion work that the land group does with the COs today?
4. På vilket sätt bidrar de till att uppfylla Svalornas övergripande verksamhetsmål (en hållbar utveckling) tycker du?
In which way do you think that they contribute to the broader goal for Svalorna? A sustainable development?
5. På vilket sätt förändras info- o påverkansarbetet i om övergången till program?
Will the information and opinion work need to change due to the transition from project to programs?
6. Hur utvärderas informationsinsatserna respektive påverkansinsatserna idag?
How do you evaluate the information and opinion work today?
   a. Beskriv hur du går till väga vid uppföljning respektive utvärdering?
      Describe the difference, for you, between evaluation and follow-up?
   b. Skiljer du/LG uppföljning från utvärdering?
      Do you differentiate between evaluation and follow-up?
   c. Görs någon del av uppföljning/utvärdering gemensamt med SO?
      Is there any follow-up/evaluation being done together with SO?
      i. Hur fungerar det? / Varför inte?
         How did it work? / Why not?
   d. Vilka metoder används?
      Which methods do you use?
      i. Styrkor och svagheter med dagens tillvägagångssätt?
         Strengths or weaknesses with the methods that you use today?
      ii. Har du förslag på hur det hade kunnat göras bättre?
         Do you have any suggestions on how it could be done better?
   e. Hur går du till väga för att sätta upp mål, resultat, indikatorer, aktiviteter?
      How do you decide goals, results, indications and activities?
   f. Har du formulär, modeller, personalstöd eller liknande att luta dig emot?
      Do you have any forms, modules or support for the staff or something similar?
      i. Hur fungerar det?
         How does that work?
   g. Finns det delar som du känner att du/LG inte har kompetens att göra på ett tillfredsställande sätt?
      Are there any parts, according to you, that you feel that the land group do not have the competence to succeed with?
7. På vilket sätt planeras uppföljning/utvärdering in i insatsernas levnadscykel från början, redan i planeringsstadiet?
   In which way do the evaluations/follow-ups get planned into the project?
8. Finns det delar av uppföljning/utvärdering som SO inte har kompetens eller resurser att bidra med?
   Are there any parts of the evaluations/follow-ups that you do not feel that the COs have the competence to take part of?
9. Vilka karaktäristika hos Svalorna tycker du att man måste ta hänsyn till när man planerar för uppföljning och utvärdering?
   During the planning of the evaluation and the follow-ups – which are the characteristics, that you need to take into consideration with Svalorna?
10. Vilka externa och institutionella faktorer påverkar vid uppföljnings/utvärderingsarbete i Nicaragua?
    Which external factors or institutional factors, if any, could limit the evaluation work in Nicaragua?
11. Hur kan utvärderingar och uppföljningar användas bättre i Sverige?
   How could the evaluations come to a use in Sweden?

Interview questions to cooperating organizations:

1. Cual es su experiencia de evaluacion de los efectos de proyectos de información e incidencia?
   What is your experience of evaluation of the effects of the information- and influence work?
2. Segun su opinión, pourquoi es importante trabajar con proyectos de información e incidencia para obtener un desarrollo sostenible en Nicaragua?
   Why is it important to work with information- and influence work in Nicaragua to achieve a sustainable development, according to you?
3. Qué sabe Usted de como trabaja Svalorna con evaluar los proyectos que financia? Han hablado de evaluaciones alguna vez?
   Do you know anything about the evaluation work that Svalorna do? (to finance the projects?) Have you discussed evaluation with Svalorna at any time?
4. En su organización, han visto alguna vez evaluaciones hechas por Svalorna de los proyectos que ejecuten ustedes en cooperación con Svalorna?
   Have you ever seen an evaluation for the project that your organization is cooperating with Svalorna in?
5. Cooperan con Svalorna en evaluar los resultados?
   Is it any cooperation with Svalorna when evaluating the results of the project?
   a. Como funciona? / Porqué no?
      How does it work? Why/why not?
6. Como quisiera ustedes poder cooperar con Svalorna en evaluar su trabajo?
   In which way would you like to cooperate with Svalorna to evaluate information and opinion work?
7. Proyectos de información e incidencia son difíciles de evaluar porque se trata de medir cambios de mentalidad, en personas o en grupos de gente. Como, segun su experiencia, se puede mejorar ver y medir los resultados de proyectos de este tipo?
   Information and influence work are hard to measure. Additionally, difficult to evaluate because you should measure the changes in opinion of a person or a group. How should this be measured, according to you, to get the correct results? How does your organization evaluate the information and opinion work?
8. Como hacen ustedes en su organización, para planificar sus proyectos de una manera que se puede ver los resultados de una manera objetiva y exacta despues?
   In which way does your organization plan your projects so that you can be assured that you get the results in an objective and exact way?
   a. Como deciden las metas, los resultados esperados, las indicadores etcetera cuando planifican proyectos?
      How do you decide the goals, expected results and indicators etc. during the planning of a project?
9. Qué limitaciones ve usted en su capacidad de cooperar más con Svalorna con evaluaciones? (recursos, tiempo, distancia geográfica etcetera)
   What limits your capacity to cooperate more with Svalorna in evaluations?
10. ¿Qué factores externos e institucionales hay en su entorno que puedan limitar el trabajo de evaluación?
   Which external factors or institutional factors, if any, could limit the evaluations?

Till CANTERA och CICAP ställdes samma frågor, men i generella ordalag kring utländska biståndsgivande organisationer istället för gällande Svalornas arbete.
10.2. Appendix 2.

10.2.1. Interview persons

**Interview date 060922:**
Cecilia Angberg, Informationsansvarig, Svalorna LA, Stockholm.
Ove Hansson, verksamhetsledare, Svalorna LA, Stockholm.
Wences, Rivas, insamlingsansvarig, Svalorna LA, Stockholm.

**Interview date 061101:**
Lisa Hanson, information manager, volunteer, Svalorna LA, Estelí.

**Interview date 061102:**
Sara Svensson, organization developer, volunteer, Svalorna LA, Estelí.

**Interview date 061106:**
Jonas Knutell, network volunteer, Svalorna LA, Estelí.
Linda Björk, coordinator volunteer, Svalorna LA, Estelí.

**Interview date 061108:**
Nimian Junieth López Martínez, coordinator, APEADECO, Téllica.
Walter Sáenz Rojas, coordinator, AJL – Asociación de Jóvenes de León, León.

**Interview date 061113:**
Carmela Guida, method developer, UBV, Managua.
Dario Sánchez, organization developer, method developer, Forum Syd, Managua.
Ramón González, chairman and part in a group for methodology support (Equipo de apoyo metodológico) de CANTERA, Managua.

**Interview date 061117:**
Jonys Díaz, coordinador de proyectos, Red de Jóvenes Estelí, Estelí.

**Interview date 061118:**
Herman van de Welde, methodology advisor, CICAP – Centro de Investigación, Capitación y Acción Pedagógica, Estelí.

**Interview date 061123:**
Leonel Martínez, member and contraparte in the program, MASA – Movimiento de Activación Social Alternativa, Estelí.

**Interview date 061127:**
Lydia Palacios Chiong, coordinator, Club Infantil, Jinotega.
10.3. Appendix 3.

10.3.1. Questions via email about the purpose of an evaluation

Underlag till kansliet, styrelsen, landgruppen

Esteli, 7 November 2006
Fråga till kansliet angående uppföljningar och utvärderingar

Efter flera intervjuer på plats i Nicaragua, och studier av befintlig teori på området utvärdering, har en fråga återkommande dykt upp. Den skulle vi (Frida Berg, metodvolontär, och Malina Röstlund, MFS-stipendiat) vilja få svar på, och vi vänder oss till kansliet, styrelsen och landgruppen i Nicaragua.

Bakgrunden är att för att kunna utforma modeller eller system för uppföljning och utvärdering på ett sätt så att de faktiskt också kommer till användning, så måste syftet med utvärderingarna vara klart. Utvärderingar och regelbunden uppföljning av biståndsinsatser kan genomföras av många olika skäl. Som exempel kan nämnas resultatrapportering till styrelsen, kansliet eller finansiärer, avstämmning för att försäkra sig om att arbetet går mot de uppsatta målen, undersökning av om de valda strategierna/metoderna är effektiva, om insatserna får effekt i verksamhetslandet eller hos målgruppen, bedöma kostnadseffektiviteten, se hur många mottagare som får del av insatserna, för att landgruppen, kansliet, medlemmarna eller styrelsen ska lära sig om verksamheten. Med mera; tänk kreativt!

Vi ber således er att enas om en numrerad lista på i vilka syften programmen i verksamhetsländerna ska göra regelbundna uppföljningar och större utvärderingar. Vad ska utvärderingarna och uppföljningarna främst användas till, och därefter i fallande ordning?

Maila oss listan senast den 17 november.

/Frida Berg