

## Save the Children UK – Talent Management

SC UK employs approximately 4,700 national staff in 26 country programmes, 600 UK based staff in their London office, shops, and UK Programmes and over 200 international staff. The international staff are predominantly on fixed term contracts and make up a large part of the senior leadership team within country programmes but also provide technical expertise in areas such as health, education and advocacy.

In 2007 Save the Children UK developed a strategic ambition called '**Change for Children**' which focused on how they could inspire dramatic change for children. It set out what they aim to achieve for children in the next ten years, a plan for what they need to do over three years, and a detailed annual plan.

### How the global talent/people management strategy supports the achievement of the charity's ten-year plan:

SC UK's Talent and Leadership strategies centre on ensuring they have the top talent in critical locations at exactly the right time. This is achieved through:

- Attracting top talent through networks and being an agency of choice in the sector.
- Deploying people with the right skills at sometimes short notice to hazardous locations.
- Supporting employee recruitment through online systems managed at country programme level ("*Our people on the ground are best placed to select their talent*"<sup>1</sup>), which is supported by a consistent recruitment model.
- Identifying the top 100 staff globally (national and international) by looking at their performance and potential, their leadership development, and supporting them with career conversations.
- Online talent pools and alumni allow them to deploy people with the right skills at short notice and stay connected with talent.
- To deliver their goals, they are fully committed to promoting diversity: "*We value and maximise our differences to achieve dramatic change for children. Globally we provide the overarching principles and frameworks of diversity that provide structure to local policy development that fulfils the specific needs of the programmes, local legislation and ensure our staff reflect the most vulnerable communities in which we work*"<sup>2</sup>.
- The Emergency Response Team work across borders and cultures, and Save the Children build their own humanitarian talent through proactively supporting senior national staff in roles that provide experience and exposure to international roles and various trainee schemes.
- Retention and development programmes - the Leadership Academy provides experiential development with direct feedback, and ongoing mentoring or coaching for Management, Senior Management and Leaders throughout the

---

<sup>1</sup> Parsons, Susannah, Re:locate Magazine, *Global Leadership – Save The Children*, 23 September 2011, <http://www.relocatemagazine.com/blogs-top/476-hr-employment-blog/2816-global-leadership-save-the-children>

<sup>2</sup> Parsons, Susannah, Re:locate Magazine, *Global Leadership – Save The Children*, 23 September 2011, <http://www.relocatemagazine.com/blogs-top/476-hr-employment-blog/2816-global-leadership-save-the-children>

organisation - 1,500 people have attended the 80 programmes globally since 2004.

- Supported development through online learning initiatives.
- Annually reviewing the compensation packages at local, and international levels to ensure they remain competitive.

## **How important is leadership to delivering services and implementing the strategies? What does this mean in practice?**

*“Our leaders are accountable for delivering against our strategy. Operating in a devolved structure, we believe behaviours are the backbone that drive our culture and change. We invest in our talent through our Leadership Academy and provide a world class programme with.”<sup>3</sup>*

- Priority leadership behaviours;
- Senior external speakers, experiential group working on current strategic issues;
- Focus on self awareness, personal effectiveness and confidence;
- Provide an opportunity to develop with individual feedback, 360 psychometrics, observational feedback;
- A 12 month development plan with external pro bono coaching.

## **Further plans/goals for the future in terms of international assignments and talent management:**

Save the Children UK will continue to support all members of the Save the Children family as a Centre of Excellence through the Leadership Academy harnessing their programmes in Leadership and Humanitarian work. Their talent model will support the delivery of one Save the Children through frameworks and online tools.

## **What would you say are the most important changes Save the Children made to its global talent management strategy that have led to the achievement of its strategic goals? What advice would you offer to both private and NGOs looking to emulate your success?**

*“We talk about our talent – we ensure we all understand what it is to be talent in our organisation, global leaders share their talent, line managers take “ownership” for identifying, managing, developing and deploying their talent. Line managers’ talk to their talent using the leadership behaviours and performance management process, and our talent know we are committed to them.”<sup>4</sup>*

---

<sup>3</sup> Parsons, Susannah, Re:locate Magazine, *Global Leadership – Save The Children*, 23 September 2011, <http://www.relocatemagazine.com/blogs-top/476-hr-employment-blog/2816-global-leadership-save-the-children>

<sup>4</sup> Parsons, Susannah, Re:locate Magazine, *Global Leadership – Save The Children*, 23 September 2011, <http://www.relocatemagazine.com/blogs-top/476-hr-employment-blog/2816-global-leadership-save-the-children>

## What does it mean for Save the Children that other companies, including charities, can learn from your successes?

*“Our sector has always been open to the influence of the private sector and have shared and learned from good practices within the sector. We are thrilled that our programmes are being recognised and have been identified as not only role modelling within the NGO sector but across other sectors. We believe in developing partnerships to share good practice and learning’s, however most importantly we believe in partnerships to deliver breakthroughs for children. We will continue to learn from others as we grow as an organisation and we are happy to share our learning and experiences with others and to engage others in our work.”<sup>5</sup>*

---

<sup>5</sup> Parsons, Susannah, Re:locate Magazine, *Global Leadership – Save The Children*, 23 September 2011, <http://www.relocatemagazine.com/blogs-top/476-hr-employment-blog/2816-global-leadership-save-the-children>