

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 2020

1 Background and aims of the mid-term evaluation

This mid-term evaluation focuses on the joint Decent Work Development programme, co-financed by DGD for the period 2017-2021 and implemented by WSM, the NGO of the Christian Labour Movement in Belgium in association with ANMC-LCM, IIWE constituted by ACV-CSC and the non-profit organisation MIS, constituted by ACLVB-CGSLB. The joint programme's overall aim is to promote **decent work for sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development**: creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, expanding social protection and promoting social dialogue for all.

The aim of the mid-term evaluation is twofold: i) to learn together about the potential of the (sub)strategies employed for influencing policy and ii) to contribute to joint decision-making on strategic and operational adjustments for the actual programme. The evaluation focuses on the policy-influencing strategies of the Belgian programme partners at national, regional, continental or international level and aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the **intrinsic value (or potential)** of each (sub)strategy (or type of activity) for successful policy-influencing at national, subcontinental (or regional), continental and international level?
2. How do all of these (sub)strategies (or types of activity) complement or reinforce one another, and what needs **to be adjusted at a more practical level** with a view to successful policy-influencing at national, (sub)continental (or regional), continental and international level?
3. What are the **strategic recommendations** for WSM, IIWE and MIS concerning the (sub)strategies employed by the joint programme with a view to successful policy-influencing at national, subcontinental (or regional), continental and international level?

While the joint programme covers various countries and regions in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the evaluation included **case studies on policy-influencing strategies in three countries**: Senegal, Indonesia and the Dominican Republic. The focus of the policy-influencing strategies in each of these three countries is quite different.

- In Senegal, WSM focuses on capacity-building of the multi-actor network 'Reseau multi-acteurs sur la Protection Sociale' (REMAPS), which is involved in lobbying and advocacy in relation to social protection and, more specifically, the Universal Health Coverage Act. MIS works with the Senegalese Trade Union CNTS on the application of the ILO Recommendation 204 regarding the informal sector.
- For Indonesia, the evaluation looked at the work of WSM with KSBSI, an important National Trade Union Confederation, on social protection and, with SBMI, on migrant workers'

rights. The long-term objective of the IIWE programme component in Asia is to create Decent Work in Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and their supply chains through social dialogue and defence of workers' rights.

- In the Dominican Republic, WSM focuses on capacity-building of the multi-actor network regarding the right to social protection. IIWE focuses on a binational programme to enhance the articulation of union work between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in relation to labour realities and social protection, among other things in free zones.

2 Evaluation methodology and implementation process

Knowing that policy-influencing is a complex venture that is influenced by many factors, the evaluation team developed a conceptual framework defining different building blocks for lobbying and advocacy activities. The following building blocks were analysed:

- Policy and practice changes
 - Policy changes concern laws, amendments and regulations at central and local level
 - Practice changes concern the implementation of the law, amendments and regulations at local or plant level
- The context and the actors involved
- The development of claims, arguments and alternatives
- Agenda-setting, including securing a place at the table and being heard
- Building alliances with other organisations
- Overall capacity and capacity-building initiatives of organizations and networks to better master the above pillars

In addition, specific attention was given to the multi-actor networks defined by WSM as an important strategy for strengthening policy-influencing.

The evaluation methodology and the conceptual framework were presented and discussed during a workshop with staff from the three Belgian programme organisations. Interviews and discussions with the programme officers allowed the evaluation team to obtain a good understanding of the different programmes as well as the different contexts in the selected country case studies. Based on the results of these exchanges and a document review, the evaluation team worked up an inception note for each country case study; clarifying the aspects to be considered for each of the pillars and the criteria to be used to evaluate and analyse the sub-strategies implemented by the programme. Based on the inception note, which was formally approved by the steering committee, the field missions were prepared. The field visits were performed by an international and a national expert. All the national experts were selected for their knowledge of the context and experiences with the work of trade unions in the specific countries. During the field missions a wide range of data collection methods was used, including semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders such as decision-makers in the partner organisations, decision-makers in the political arena and beneficiaries. In each country the findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed during a restitution workshop. Based on the project teams' feedback on the draft country reports, a synthesis report was compiled. This report defines the lessons learned and includes recommendations on the different (sub)strategies implemented, as well as a number of overall strategic recommendations. During a final workshop, the synthesis report was presented and discussed.

3 The main findings of the evaluation

3.1 The programme contributed significantly to important policy and practice changes

The partners and the multi-actor networks with whom the programme works influenced and have influence on many processes for policy development in a positive way, and **succeeded in achieving many changes in policies**. The evaluation confirmed that these policy-influencing processes take time and are influenced by many unpredictable factors, such as changes in the political arena, financial constraints, changes in priorities of decision-makers, etc. Securing policy changes involves a good deal of time, as well as creativity in accompanying these policy-influencing processes and flexibility to react to different changes in the context that occur during the process and to identify and make use of opportunities in order to make progress. It should be noted that social movements (trade unions and others) also often use changes in local practices, obtained through action or social dialogue, to change policies. They use the local practice changes as leverage to install national or regional legislations. (For example, experiences with local health insurance systems which change policy at national level, the outcomes of social dialogue between trade unions and companies which change national legislation).

Policies have to be implemented and lead to **practice changes** and improved access to social protection for the beneficiaries, strengthened social dialogue and improved worker rights. The process of translating policies into practice changes is one that demands not only a proper translation of the policies but also an awareness-raising, informing and facilitating the actors involved in the practice changes to make sure that answers can be found to the many issues that influence changes in practices. The evaluation confirmed that the programme succeeded in obtaining many practice changes and improved the situation of many beneficiaries. These practice changes may be situated at plant level, e.g. making sure that company owners apply the regulations correct, or at the level of national and local authorities or stakeholders. They have to be informed and facilitated to apply the policies.

The evaluation provided many examples of how the experiences and knowledge gained by working on practice changes through pilot projects, try-outs, local initiatives, etc., contribute to the formulation of more effective, concrete and realistic policies

Recommendation 1: Although the programme has already contributed to policy and practice changes, it needs to focus more on covering all aspects and issues needed to obtain tangible practice changes. Thorough analysis of what is needed to obtain practice changes will enable the required human and financial resources to be incorporated in the programme. Because practice changes are very demanding and have to cover many issues, we recommend that the programme, in close collaboration with the partners, define priorities in the practice changes to be achieved and that its efforts be concentrated on covering all aspects needed to bring about the identified concrete practice changes. It is important to capitalise the experiences, to make the interaction between the practice and the policy changes more explicit and to become 'expert' on that specific priority.

3.2 A complex operating context

The fact that policy and practice changes take place in different contexts and arenas, and that many factors influence the process of securing these changes, underlines the need for a good system for collecting and monitoring information on the context and the behaviour of key stakeholders.

The programme contributes to enabling the partners in the collection and monitoring of that information by organising workshops at continental and regional level to discuss the global context, and at national level to enhance their knowledge at national and local level. In a well-functioning multi-actor network, the different participants representing different sectors bring to bear their specific knowledge and the contacts they have with different stakeholders.

However, the evaluation shows that the contextual analysis and the analysis of the behaviour of stakeholders undertaken by the partners is often too superficial and that changes that occur are not always well monitored. Owing to the absence of an adequate system for monitoring and sharing experiences on contextual factors, reactions on these changes are absent or taken too late, and as a consequence some opportunities to contribute to changes are missed.

Recommendation 2: It is important to invest more in the capacities of the partners and especially of the networks to analyse and monitor the context that influences lobbying and advocacy processes. By integrating some tools and instruments - such as the development of a Theory of Change adapted to lobbying and advocacy, or a power analysis to better situate the different stakeholders - the participation and exchange between different partners and/or members of the multi-actor networks can improve the shared analysis. The evaluation recommends developing a system to allow regular monitoring of the changes in the context and sharing that information so that the L&A activities can be adjusted accordingly.

3.3 Know-how regarding lobbying and advocacy and an approach based on experiences

A key factor explaining why certain policy and practice changes are achieved is the experience-based know-how of the programme partners regarding how to manage the processes of formulating claims and alternatives, of developing arguments to convince the decision-makers and of defending, in different ways, their place at the table. In so far as the programme aims at achieving policy and practice changes in the international, national and local arenas, very concrete, context-specific and realistic alternatives have to be developed and defended in each of these arenas.

The trade unions with which the programme is working play their role in tripartite meetings at national level and in bipartite meetings at factory level, and are listened to through the social dialogue approach, which they manage well. The evaluation made clear that the different programme partners with which they work (trade unions, NGOs, multi-actor networks) are legitimised by a constituency, bring to bear a lot of knowledge about the context and in many cases have the capacity to develop alternatives and to manage different approaches to being heard. Some of the organisations, especially the strong trade unions, have the ability to define which approach is most appropriate at which moment in order to be heard, and can effectively influence the formulation process of policy and practice changes. Through a multi-actor approach, the programme brings together different kinds of actors that have secured their place in other decision-making forums in which decisions are taken that influence practice changes and improve social protection, social dialogue and workers' rights.

Recommendation 3: Because Social protection and workers' rights incorporate many issues and are negotiated in different arenas, a system to capitalise the knowledge and expertise needs to be developed. Given the broad scope of social protection and workers' rights, it is important to select the right priorities and bring together people and organisations that reinforce and complement each other on the same issue.

Recommendation 4: In addition to the continuous attention of the programme on maintaining and expanding the representativeness of the organisations, the programme has to continue to emphasise the creation of synergies between different actors and partners so that their legitimacy and profile increases and to that they are listened to. Also, more emphasis could be placed on the division of tasks between the different partners.

3.4 The different (sub)strategies defined by the programme are relevant

The programme developed and financed a range of strategies and activities, such as research and studies, the organisation of workshops, seminars and training, peer-to-peer exchange and the development of multi-actor networks. In this evaluation the evaluation team focused specifically on the effects of these strategies on lobbying and advocacy.

Studies and research

Studies and research are important strategies. The evaluation showed that, to develop the alternatives and arguments, the organisations involved need to have good data and a good understanding of all the factors that influence decision-making processes. Studies and research are needed to obtain specific data and to identify and understand problems and factors that influence policy and practice changes. This kind of information and knowledge is needed to develop more tangible arguments to convince decision-makers and other stakeholders. The evaluation revealed that to achieve practice changes concrete, context-specific studies of different issues are needed. Studies have to be developed in a pro-active way so that arguments are ready when needed. This requires that partners have the financial and human capacity and flexibility to identify the need for and carry out studies in a pro-active way. Some of the programme partners have these capacities but lack the financial means to invest in these studies.

Recommendation 5. The evaluation team recommends that where needed, the research capacities are further strengthened within the programme partner organisations to make sure the right information needed to develop alternatives, claims and arguments is available at the right moment. It is also recommended that more emphasis be placed on networking with like-minded organisations and research institutes that can provide research results in an efficient way. The programme has to take into account that the more it focuses on local practice changes, the more context-specific claims and arguments have to be developed and hence more concrete information and context specific studies are needed. The evaluators also recommend paying more attention to peer-to-peer exchange, in order to capitalise on the knowledge that already exists on the different themes and to become known as experts.

Workshops and seminars

Workshops and seminars at international and continental level are organised to inform and raise awareness among partners regarding global issues, such as the different conventions and recommendations developed by the ILO, and to bring together resource providers, decision-makers from different trade unions and partners. These workshops contribute to the effectiveness of the programme partners in lobbying and advocacy. The issues addressed during these international and continental workshops provide important information that is needed and used to develop policy

claims and arguments and to enhance the debate on global policy changes. The 'simple' act of physically bringing these different actors together around a certain theme proved to be a major added value of such workshops and seminars in the evaluation. If the issues addressed during the workshop are assigned importance by the trade unions invited and the participants have a mandate from their trade unions, they inform their home organisations' leadership and disseminate the information gained during the seminar to other key stakeholders in their respective countries. In addition, different participants remain in contact and continue to exchange information with one another via WhatsApp groups or other means. This creates an interesting dynamic: partners feel they are members of a 'family'. The evaluation confirmed that good preparation of the seminar by the organisers as well as by the invited trade unions is essential in terms of the selection of the participants and the involvement of the partners in the preparation and follow-up of the workshop.

Regional seminars and workshops are other important activities that contribute to the effectiveness of lobbying and advocacy processes. The continental - and for Africa regional - workshops that the evaluation team analysed have different objectives, which in many cases are combined.

One objective is to influence regional policies/agendas on social protection or social dialogue or workers' rights. The participants in the workshops join forces and develop alternatives and strategies to be heard and to gain access to the regional arenas in which decisions/positions are taken, e.g. UEMOA, ILO, UN or international trade union arenas. At the end of the workshop a statement is formulated and published and taken up by the media. The experiences related to this objective are recent and need to be developed further. More reflection is needed on what the specific contribution of such seminars could be to policy processes taking place at regional or continental level and how that contribution can be enhanced. It is important to look at synergies that can be created with other initiatives at regional or continental level.

The second objective is to develop a coherent and complementary approach in the different countries within a region to avoid policy changes in one country having a negative impact on another, as for example with the work on Multinational Companies. The evaluation confirms that such a coherent approach is needed and that these regional workshops contribute to developing such an approach.

A third objective is the capacity-building of the participants and the contribution to the development of national lobbying and advocacy strategies on a particular topic through exchange and learning between the participants. By placing more emphasis on exchange on the processes in the different realities experienced by the participants, as well as the sharing of reflections on the difficulties encountered in achieving practice changes, the potential of these workshops can be exploited further, for example by systematising findings and proposals and sharing these with the national levels.

An additional effect is that during these workshops alliances and networks can be built and that by inviting additional stakeholders such as government officials, research institutes and others, opportunities can be created to build new alliances. The evaluation noted that participation in these workshops has a positive effect on the profile and legitimacy of the different participants in their respective environments. A side-effect is that by inviting the right stakeholders, opportunities are created to be invited into other arenas in which decisions are taken.

The national and local workshops put emphasis on the exchange between the participants. In some cases, they go a step further and concretise and adapt the claims, alternatives and arguments as well as the communication strategy to the local context. Through exchange and common reflection, concrete arguments and alternatives for practice and local policy changes are formulated and lobbying and advocacy strategies are developed. Capacity-building of the actors involved in the practice changes and local/national policy changes is the main objective of these workshops. Besides the content, the possibilities these workshops present for networking and exchange on the issues are important. The evaluation recommends that these workshops be given a more important role in the monitoring of the lobbying and advocacy processes taking place at

national and local level. If a national network does not develop proposals together, but mainly tends to adapt proposals coming from a particular member, then national workshops could be an opportunity to broaden the involvement of affiliates in the development of analysis, alternatives and advocacy strategies.

Peer-to-peer exchanges were organised between the trade unions of two different countries. Such exchanges can be very important provided that the socio-political and economic contexts of the two countries are not too different, so that learning can take place, and provided these exchanges are well prepared by the two organisations involved. The preparation involves a clear definition of and agreement on the objectives and the expectations, good selection and preparation of the participants, the development of a clear agenda, etc.

The **binational exchanges** between trade unions in Haiti and Dominican Republic enhance their relevance due to the shared border and similar contexts in the two countries, especially in the free trade zones, which opens up potential for mutual capacity-building and for coordinated actions aimed at influencing multinational enterprises, (bi)national policy and international agendas (e.g. ILO).

Recommendation 6: The evaluation recommends continuing to develop workshops and seminars at international, continental, regional, national and local level and specifying further the different objectives of the workshops and situating them in the policy-influencing process taking place in the different arenas. The workshops need to be prepared to reflect of these objectives well in advance so that the 'right' persons will be invited and the organisations these participants represent will invest in the preparation, the dissemination and take-up of the results and the follow-up of the workshop. It is recommended that more emphasis be placed on capitalising and communicating the information and experiences gained. The evaluation recommends paying more attention to the preparation and follow-up of the peer-to-peer exchanges and also looking at opportunities to organise additional peer-to-peer exchanges within a country.

Building alliances

The evaluation observed that many of the partners formed **alliances** with other organisations or were engaged in other networks. These alliances, which in most cases are formed without specific support of the programme, take different forms. They can be informal and ad hoc or more formalised. The relationships can be limited to exchanges on specific issues at regular intervals, to working together for an activity needed to achieve a specific practice change or to joining forces to ensure they are better heard. The relationships can be very local or situated at national level; they can be very loose or dormant during a period but intensified when needed. In all the cases studied by the evaluation team, these alliances contributed significantly to the success of the lobbying and advocacy activities.

Recommendation 7: Because these alliances are crucial to achieving changes and because the formation of alliances involves local processes taking place in different contexts, the evaluation team recommends that the programme pay more attention to stimulating the building of alliances and to facilitating, say, the organisation of a seminar or a common action so that the actors involved create the reciprocity needed to develop alliances.

Capacity-building is transversal in the sense that the different strategies contribute to the improvement of the capacities of the participants involved in the workshops and in the multi-actor networks. Participants are better informed, they exchange ideas and information, they build relationships, etc. The approach of giving responsibility to and involving the partners in the activities is very effective in enhancing different capacities. The critical engagement approach developed by the Belgian partners is appreciated. They comment in a constructive way on what the

partners are doing and engage in a critical dialogue with them. However, there is still a need for further training of the partners through exchanges and by inviting high-level experts on some issues related to social protection, social dialogue and workers' rights as well as some elements of the different building blocks that constitute lobbying and advocacy.

3.5 The multi-actor networks

Besides these alliances in which programme partners are involved, WSM invests in **multi-actor networks**, in which different programme partners engage to work together for a longer period in order to secure changes. The multi-actor networks that the evaluation looked at are situated at different levels and have developed quite differently in the three cases.

The national multi-actor networks started as a network of WSM partners. Other relevant social movements then joined them. The regional or continental multi-actor networks that are made up of representatives of the national networks invest in building the capacity of the individual members by organising training, exchanges and reflections and in influencing policy changes at regional, continental or international level through their presence in regional forums in which decisions are taken, such as UEMOA, CAN, ILO, UN, etc.

A multi-actor network provides added value to other, existing networks. The multi-actor networks are one of the possible concrete answers to the need for a systemic change to realise the right to social protection for all. To achieve systemic change, different types of social movements need to combine forces, knowledge, expertise and specific roles. Doing this through a multi-actor approach is an efficient way to cover the different needs for change regarding the right to social protection. An important objective of the multi-actor networks is to inform and exchange on different subjects, to raise awareness and to create a dynamic between the members. Many issues can and must be addressed. However, when it comes to concrete lobbying and advocacy, only a few issues can be covered because each issue demands specific expertise and a knowledge of the different arenas where decisions are taken. As already mentioned, this specific knowledge is needed to achieve practice changes.

The evaluation shows that bringing different expertise together in a multi-actor network is not an easy task. But if it is successful, it can have a major positive effect, especially on the achievement of policy and practice changes. The role of the trade unions in these networks is clear; they defend workers' rights, including the right to social protection. To gain access to health services, community-based health insurance systems can play an important role. Organisations other than trade unions, representing the informal sector or migrant workers, can contribute to developing social protection for the informal sector and migrant workers. Each organisation brings its own constituency and increases the legitimacy and profile of the network. The collaboration and the exchange between the members contribute to a better understanding of the context and contextual changes because every member has access to a specific arena and brings specific knowledge to bear. All this helps to develop more concrete and convincing arguments.

The evaluation shows that building such multi-actor networks involves processes for which there is no 'off-the-shelf' blueprint available. However, some principles can guide the development of such multi-actor networks. The aim of these networks, namely the fight for social protection, has to be shared. Each actor has to bring to bear its own strengths and capacities as well as its own expectations regarding the network. Mutual respect, making allowance for differences, has to be developed. The win-win for each member as well as for the network has to be made explicit, as does the contribution of each partner to the network. Diversity is a strength, but managing diversity, especially when strong trade unions and NGOs are involved, requires good and flexible leadership.

Recommendation 8: The evaluation team recommends that WSM invest further in the development of multi-actor networks and creates opportunities for the different partners to get to know each other better and to create respect and the confidence to work together. It has to enhance the capacity of these multi-actor networks so that they can develop in their own creative way and work together towards better social protection for all. A specific challenge is to strike the right balance between the different objectives, i.e. the objective of exchange and creating dynamics between the partners and the objective of achieving policy and especially practice changes. Regarding the latter, we recommend that the WSM programme concentrate on a few issues so that the required expertise can be obtained. It could be that in a multi-actor sub-networks are created to focus on a specific issue.

The added value of the joint programme

WSM, ANMC, IIWE and MIS have combined their efforts to implement this Decent Work development programme. Each organisation brings in its own expertise and strategies to bear. IIWE brings binational, continental and international policy- influencing strategies; WSM/ ANMC contribute the formation of national and regional multi-actor networks, and MIS concentrates more on the application of the ILO R204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. As demonstrated above, the workshops and seminars organised at international, regional and national level, one of the main activities of IIWE which the evaluators looked at, are very important moments for sharing information, building capacity and encouraging reflection. The formation by WSM of the different multi-actor networks is an important strategy that needs to be developed further. The transition from the informal to the formal economy remains a major challenge in the context of developing countries. The strategy of MIS of informing and raising awareness among actors and decision-makers regarding the informal economy needs to continue. It is important to persuade actors engaged in the informal sector of the importance and the benefits of becoming formalised. On the other hand, policy and practice changes need to be secured in order to guarantee that the advantages of becoming formalised are secured. It is important that MIS and CNTS together continue to raise awareness and inform and to achieve some tangible successes in practice changes that can persuade the informal sector to engage in a formalisation process. To be successful, MIS needs to concentrate on a small number of tangible practice changes.

The evaluation shows that the synergies created between the participating organisations can be developed further. The participation of the partners from WSM and MIS in the exchange and reflections at international, regional and national level organised by IIWE contributes to the success of the programme. CNTS, partner of WSM and MIS in Senegal, participates in the multi-actor network set up by WSM. The network has taken up the issue of providing social protection to those in the informal sector and contributes to the reflections on the transition from an informal to a formal economy.