Meta Report

WSM Final Evaluation DGD programme 2017-2021

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2   Executive Summary in English

Introduction and Evaluation Questions

This report is the meta evaluation report drawing the main findings and recommendations from the WSM DGD program 2017-2021 which was part of the joint program of WSM, ACV-CSI and BIS-MSI and framed within the JSF Decent Work. Underlying this report are 5 sub-reports covering the following countries: Belgium, Benin, Guatemala, Nepal and RD Congo. This meta-report is therefore a summary of the detailed findings in these sub-reports and formulates conclusions and recommendations for WSM as a global network organization.

The first main objective of the evaluation was to be accountable to the donor, DGD. A second main objective is to draw from the findings recommendations that can support WSM in the implementation of the next program.

Based on the evaluation questions formulated in the Terms of Reference, a detailed evaluation matrix has been developed during the inception phase. Eight evaluation questions have been defined of which three question were considered the main (accountability) questions:

1. To what extent did the use of resources (funds, expertise, time,...) and the developed strategies contribute to the expected changes among the target groups/beneficiaries at the end of the program? (Efficiency)
2. To what extent have the specific objectives (1/2/5/7/9/10/11) of the joint program and the different results per specific objective been achieved or are they on the way of being achieved? (Effectiveness)
3. After the program ends, will the partners sustainably continue the results of the program? (Sustainability)

Besides the three main questions four other evaluation questions have been formulated to meet the DAC criteria. These questions refer to relevance, impact, and transversal themes. A last question has assessed the impact of, and lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology

Detailed research of the evaluation questions began with a comprehensive analysis of numerous documents provided by the various teams at WSM. An initial triangulation of findings was carried out based on these documents. Based on the document analysis, initial answers to the evaluation questions were formulated and data gaps were identified, which were then further filled during the data collection phase.

To further triangulate and deepen the initial findings, 4 missions (RD Congo, Guatemala, Benin, and Nepal) were organized. The following type of respondents have been interviewed:

- Relevant WSM-staff
- Key stakeholders of each of the local partners.
- Interviews with the target groups (vulnerable as defined in each of the 4 countries)

A mix of semi-structured interviews and focus groups were set up.

In addition to the missions, an online survey of all WSM partners in all countries and all continents was also organized. The survey has been translated to Spanish (Latin-America), English (Asia) and French (Africa) and has been sent out to key stakeholders of all the partners. The response rates on

these online surveys can be considered very high (compared to other similar online surveys): 49% for Asia, 66% for Africa and 41% in Latin America. The online survey served primarily to assess the impact of Covid-19 and to triangulate this data with the data analyzed from the interviews and the documents.

For the Belgian component, interviews or Focus Groups were organized by WSM identified respondents at ACV METEA and MOC Liège. For the policy influencing work, different stakeholders in Belgian and International organizations were interviewed. The data collected during these interviews were then triangulated with the findings of the desk research.

In short, more than 150 people were spoken to in the five countries evaluated and more than 120 respondents from partner organizations in 24 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa participated in the online survey.

The main limitation of this evaluation study is in the extrapolating the findings to the whole program. Only one country case was selected in each of the four continental programs. Although we have noted that WSM practices are similar in many countries and therefore it can be assumed that many of the findings can be extrapolated, a factor of uncertainty remains.

This also applies to the Belgian component, for which both parts of the country have one partner organization included in the analysis.

Main findings on Relevance, LNOB and Multistakeholder Approach

The evaluators rate the relevance of the program as very high. Moreover, the relevance of the program is strategically well operationalized through WSM network approach.

The intrinsic relevance of the WSM program is reinforced by WSM's strategic choices to focus fully on the development of networks at the national, regional/continental, and international levels. The evaluators assess the introduction of INSP!R networks in all countries and continents as a very important choice that will prove to be a significant step in the realization of the organizational goals (e.g. universal social protection). The strength of WSM's strategy and operational implementations lies in its ability to engage a wide range of stakeholders at all levels. The great added value of WSM is the diversity of organizations that are part of the different networks (trade unions, mutualities, organizations of women, young or old, social and solidarity economy initiatives, etc). The fact that WSM succeeds in giving a voice to different CSOs and trade unions under one roof is considered by many external stakeholders as a great added value. Further developing these networks across countries and continents and opening them up to organizations that are not part of DGD funding but that share INPS!R values will increase the expertise-building and representativeness of the networks. This means that WSM has the potential to weigh even more heavily on the policy agendas of national governments and international organizations in the future. (Recommendation 1).

LNOB is considered by the UN as one of the basic principles in the realization of the SDG`s. "Leaving no one behind not only entails reaching the poorest of the poor, but also seeks to combat discrimination and rising inequalities within and amongst countries, and their root causes. The concept of decent work explicitly refers to the elimination of poverty, inequalities and all forms of discrimination and exclusion. WSM, and its partners, consider the decent work agenda as a crucial policy strategy. The DGD program of WSM (and its partners) aligns seamlessly with the principle of LNOB. It forms the basis of the change theory, the identification of target groups and stakeholders, of the thematic choices. In the five case studies we conducted for this evaluation study, the centrality of the LNOB principle is confirmed.

Main findings on Efficiency.

Although this evaluation does not involve a financial audit, it was possible to infer from the activity reports that all organized activities and initiatives were related to the realization of the program's objectives and results. This was the case in all five country cases examined within the scope of this evaluation.

In general terms, it can be concluded that the partners had more than sufficient absorption capacity to effectively implement the provided budgets to the provided activities. The overall expenditure rate for the whole program was 99.7%. For the JSF Decent Work this was 99.04 and for JSF Belgium it was 103%. The execution rate in all continents is above 90%, which is obviously extremely high. This illustrates that WSM and its partners are able to absorb the budgets.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic (see Covid-19 chapter), some activities had to be postponed and certain activities were replaced by online activities, but these had no major impact on the achievement of objectives and results. WSM learned from this that in the future several online activities will continue to be organized, which obviously increases the efficient use of resources (because online activities are often cheaper than live activities). It is important to note, however, that many WSM partners in the different continents indicated that they had less income due to Covid-19 (non-WSM income, survey results see annexes). It will be important for WSM to monitor whether this loss of income among partner organizations is a temporary or a structural fact.

The evaluators have a strong appreciation for WSM's monitoring system, which is an accurate system for measuring progress in implementation of activities and outcome indicators achieved. Although WSM has increased partners' monitoring capacities in the recent period, the next program would best continue these efforts (Recommendation 5). Within this framework, it should also be mentioned that there is an enormous amount of good practice across countries and programs. However, these good practices are not always well documented. It is therefore recommended that the knowledge management system be further analyzed and developed to enable internal learning and sharing (Recommendation 3). The evaluators also believe that a minority of the outcome indicators are still too much at the output level. It therefore seems relevant to screen the outcome indicators and possibly modify them so that they can measure actual change (which does exist) at the outcome level (recommendation 4).

Main findings on Effectiveness and Impact.

In general terms WSM has achieved the objectives (outcomes) and results for all the 5 countries, which have been subject of the evaluation. The evaluation team is validating the performances scores and explanations, based on the desk review and the additional data collection during the field work. These performance scores had to be submitted to DGD on yearly basis. So, in general terms WSM's accountability is by the evaluators considered as very high. In those cases where certain indicators were not achieved, this is largely explained by the impact of Covid-19. In many cases, these indicators were on track through 2019, after which they sometimes made no or little progress from 2020. However, this was only the case for a small minority of indicators.

For the Belgian program a very large number of people (more than 250.000) were reached by the pivotal figures and managers of the organizations of the Beweging.net/MOC during the implementation of the program. Starting from 2020 WSM made a shift from a campaign logic to a process logic focused on organizational change in the movement's organizations. The focus of the operation came to be on processes in and with organizations. This change also implies that sensitization, formation, and mobilization are developed by these organizations themselves (Recommendation 9). WSM has

also achieved very good results in the area of policy advocacy. All predefined indicators were achieved. WSM is a pioneer in Belgium in the field of social protection and HRDD. It had a decisive voice in several policy documents. WSM has an extensive and varied political network and given its networks, has privileged relations with a wide range of civil society organizations on both themes. In addition, WSM is one of the main international NGOs in the field of Universal Social Protection. It is recognized as such by major stakeholders such as the ILO. The reason for this is two-fold: 1/ the expertise on this theme is highly valued by outsiders and 2/ the high representative character of WSM which gives it a unique profile for the outside world by including both trade unions and civil society organizations in its networks. The evaluators consider the Policy and Research department of WSM as vital and are suggesting continuing to invest in it (Recommendation 2).

The degree of compliance in **Guatemala** with the specific objectives of the program is very high (95.53% of indicators achieved), and the changes produced by the intervention are visible. These changes area covering the following areas: training & job placement, social economy, and Labor rights/Social protection. **For Benin**, the program has mainly achieved the specific objective, based on the analysis of the indicators carried out. Organizations have been strengthened and have worked to promote the right to Social Protection to national policy makers, despite a timid impact that it is difficult to observe. Although efforts have been made to ensure that workers, especially those in the informal sector, have access to social protection, there is still a long way to go and the results at the national level are still rather unrepresentative. Advocacy and strengthening relations with local and national authorities to promote laws and regulations that guarantee health rights for workers remains a priority for the coming phases and the WSM program has enabled partners to substantially improve and expand their services, while optimizing their financial management. **For RDC**, the program has mainly achieved the specific outcome, based on the analysis of the indicators. CSO partners have been strengthened and have worked to promote the right to Social Protection within national policy makers, although there is still a lot of work to be done. Even if efforts have been made to ensure that informal workers have access to social security, there is still much to be done for the next step, such as conducting more advocacy and strengthening relationships with local and national governments to promote laws and regulations that guarantee health rights for informal workers and people in precarious employment. **The program in Nepal** has almost fully achieved its specific objective. Most of indicators have been achieved and the budget has been spent according to the planned. By the end of the program, the evaluation can assess a good progress and implementation rate regarding what was planned. The activities coordinated by WSM and implemented by trade union partners and other civil society organizations helped the country to improve the workers' rights in terms of demanding better working conditions, increasing the coverage of social security and health (through services that organization offers) and promote advocacy actions to include workers' rights (including the informal economy) in the political agenda of Nepal, through legislations and other regulations.

Finally, it was noted that around central concepts (e.g. HRDD, universal social protection, mutual health insurance) there is not always a uniform definition used by partners. It is therefore worth considering discussing these concepts further with partners and agreeing on the definitions. Obviously, these concepts can be contextualized and made concrete. Subsequently, it is important to disseminate and communicate these concepts to the wider society (see recommendation 8).

Main findings on Transversal Themes.

The cross-cutting themes of environment (climate change) and gender mainstreaming are institutionally embedded in the WSM program. HRDD and Universal Social Protection contain extensive

gender and environmental components. These were also translated into various policy documents and activities. Thus, at the level of advocacy and policy proposals, both cross-cutting themes are embedded in terms of content. Notwithstanding that gender and environment are theoretically embedded in WSM's approaches, the evaluators believe there is still room for improvement. Both in terms of gender and environment, additional steps need to be taken in the new program with a view to transcending an ad hoc approach (Recommendation 7)

Main findings on Sustainability.

As clearly illustrated above, the policy work is strongly committed to HRDD and Universal Social Protection, and WSM is recognized both at the Belgian level and internationally as a representative partner with a wealth of expertise. At the time of writing, these objectives have not yet been achieved and the efforts should be continued in a subsequent program. WSM has prepared the dossiers in the past program in a sound conceptual way and is ready to take advantage of political opportunities. There is no doubt that the (partial) realizations of HRDD legislation and universal social protection would mean that vulnerable groups (workers and non-workers) have a greater chance of living a life free from poverty. Therefore, it is important for WSM to continue its efforts on these themes and political objectives.

The creation of the INSP!R networks are an important tool to achieve these political goals. Opening up these networks to a wide range of organizations, including those not included in the DGD program, increases the representativeness and expertise of the networks. The networks also have the potential to further develop themselves and generate additional funding. It has not escaped other donors that the INSP!R networks are a strengthened continuation of WSM's particular strengths, namely building networks of CSOs and trade unions. It is precisely the scale function with trade unions that makes WSM a unique NGO worldwide. The ILO in particular is asking for even more cooperation with WSM. It is therefore recommended that WSM continue to explore additional funding from ILO and other potential donors (see recommendation 6).

Main findings on Covid-19.

Based on the online survey results, 27 percent of respondents in Asia, 35 percent respondents in Latin America, and 38 percent in Africa indicated they lost funding (other than WSM-funding) because of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. In all these continents, this led to the cancellation of activities. These figures are important because it is not clear whether this lost funding could be reactivated once the Covid-19 pandemic is completely over. The loss of other than DGD funding obviously makes organizations vulnerable. It is a risk factor that will need to be monitored by WSM in the new program.

Perhaps the most important finding of all is that, according to almost all respondents, a significant proportion of their target groups suffered income loss because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Knowing that these target groups are vulnerable individuals, we should indicate that the final beneficiaries of the program were hit hard by the pandemic. Here too, it will be necessary to monitor whether these negative effects recover or whether a structural problem has arisen. This seems to be an important element that should be included in the next program.

All respondents indicated that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a switch to digital forms of work. Eighty percent of respondents indicated that a mix of forms of work (digital/live) will continue to exist. Thanks to Covid-19, digital forms of working have become embedded in the organization and will, given the right support, lead to important efficiency gains. There is a strong demand from partners to enable additional investments in digital infrastructure. Many respondents also indicated

that these investments should be made not only at headquarters, but in various often remote areas of the country. This could really be the added value of the digital revolution.