



Evaluation Summary



International
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Fair recruitment and decent work for women migrant workers in South Asia and the Middle East - Global Component - Midterm evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon

Mid-Term Evaluation: September 2016-January 2017

Evaluation Mode: Independent

Administrative Office: DWT/CO-Delhi

Technical Office: FUNDAMENTALS

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Project Code: GLO/13/53/UKM

Donor(s) & Budget: DFID (8.3 million GBP)

Keywords: *Forced labour, migrant workers, gender, domestic work, garment work, migration, Asia, Middle East*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Work in Freedom (WIF) is a 5-year programme implemented by the ILO and funded by United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID) in the amount of 8.3 million GBP. The overall development objective is “Women are empowered to make informed migration decisions and an enabling environment is created for their safe migration into

decent work.” The programme focuses on 2 sectors – domestic work and garment work – across 5 countries: Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Lebanon and Nepal.

The programme’s overall desired impact speaks to the experience of vulnerability among South Asian women migrants traveling to and working in the Middle East: *reduced levels of vulnerability experienced among women and girls in South Asia migrating to work in the Middle East.* The WIF Theory of Change (TOC) identifies increased levels of empowerment experienced by women migrant workers and aspiring women migrant workers, together with an improved enabling environment, leads to the overall impact of reduced levels of vulnerability by women migrants to forced labour and trafficking.

The programme’s first 3 of its 5 components focus on the process of the labour migration experience – pre-departure decision-making (empowerment), fair recruitment, and organization of women workers into strong collectives. The 4th component relates to strengthening of laws and policies and advocacy, and the 5th to learning, assessing and researching what works to reduce vulnerability to human trafficking. The 5th component is designed to learn from and inform the first 4 components.

The ILO staffing structure includes a dedicated Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in New Delhi, and 5 national coordinators in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Lebanon, and Jordan supported by finance and administration assistants in each office. The national coordinators in Lebanon and Jordan are 50 percent time

on the programme, and the national coordinators in India, Nepal and Bangladesh are full-time. In implementing a complex 5-country 2-sector programme design WIF has over 30 diverse partners collaborating on activities, from local/state level, national, regional and international, including NGOs, employers associations and trade unions.

Present Situation of the Project

The 5-year programme began 20 April 2013 and is due to end on 15 March 2018. This Mid-term evaluation comes nearly a year after an evaluability assessment was completed and nearly mid-way between the first and second phases of work with various partners.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to cover the whole programme in all 5 countries, involving global and cooperative partners, yet focuses specifically on India as a source and destination country, Nepal as a source country, and Jordan as a destination country.

The evaluation is undertaken primarily to support project improvement by providing all stakeholders with information to assess and revise work plans, strategies, objectives, partnership arrangements and resources; as well as to provide recommendations for the remaining period of implementation. The purpose of the mid-term is largely focused on learning, but also relates to areas of accountability.

Methodology of evaluation

Data collection for the evaluation involved several methods, including review of documentation, observation, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, focus group discussions, and written survey. These methods were chosen on the basis of multiple factors: the interest to use varied approaches and means to interact with stakeholders; pragmatism given resources and time as well as language and facilitation of communication; and the interest to support learning through reflection by stakeholders.

The evaluation team collected data in India for nearly 2 weeks, in Nepal for one, and in Jordan for one. Following visits to the 3 countries, data was also collected during telephone interviews with stakeholders based in India, Belgium, the UK, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. All data were collected and analyzed by the team, and evidence was triangulated to arrive at the findings discussed below.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Since the start of WIF in April 2013 until the end of 2016, the ILO and its partners have made the most progress on overall developing a well conceived and implemented programme aimed to achieve the first half of the overall desired outcome of “*Women are empowered to make informed migration decisions*”. Yet much more remains to be done about the second half of the outcome, “*an enabling environment is created for their safe migration into decent work.*”

Greater levels of investment have been made in Component 1 in the origin countries of Nepal, India and Bangladesh. The investment in capacity building involving global partners, the work done at the local level in partnership with district and state governments, and the delivery of training and facilitation of pre-decision-making processes with aspiring migrants has yielded evidence of many women who have made clear decisions for themselves on whether or not to migrate based on information accessed through WIF. Yet greater focus on capacity building, clearer targeting of vulnerable women, and linking to alternatives to migration as a means of providing genuine choice would provide for a more relevant and impactful approach.

Progress in creating an enabling environment for safe migration into decent work has been uneven across the countries and between the 2 sectors. Notable achievements include the level of discourse and influence WIF has gained *vis-à-vis* the Government of Nepal (GoN), where at the district level safe migration and decent work have been integrated into development plans. Challenges for the remaining half of the programme involve influencing the domestic work sector in all countries due to its non-formal nature, better targeting of migrants who are most vulnerable to exploitation, and effectively engaging with recruitment agencies and managing and influencing competing interests.

Additional findings include:

Relevance of the programme design: With a focus on reducing levels of vulnerability experienced by women migrant workers along the whole spectrum of the

labour migration chain, WIF represents a rights-based approach fully focused on conditions in the workplace; the programme design is innovative in that it constitutes a departure from previous anti-trafficking initiatives primarily focused on awareness raising and information dissemination. The programme design's 5 components and their related outputs and outcomes are all relevant and collectively contribute to intended impact of reduced vulnerability, yet the complexity of the programme design suggests challenges both for implementation and evaluation with approximately 30 partners addressing both policy and direct service interventions across 5 countries and 2 sectors. The programme design is highly relevant to international development priorities, with direct links to the Declaration on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.

Effectiveness in reaching vulnerable women in communities of origin: Significant numbers of women and men in targeted source communities have been reached by WIF in both India and Nepal with information about safe migration; numbers reached have surpassed targets. The evaluation team found evidence of women who attended half-day workshops, learned about migration opportunities, and made their decisions whether to migrate – an indication of a facilitated process undertaken successfully. Yet there are real challenges for WIF in targeting and accessing those women migrants who may be characterized as more vulnerable. In both Nepal and India, distress migration is a reality, which makes decision-making based on genuine choice less relevant.

Minimal progress in promoting ethical recruitment: While efforts have been made through workshops with global partners to educate and raise awareness about fair recruitment, agencies in Nepal and Jordan are slow to see the value of finding a way to make a profit yet not charge migrant workers. WIF's work with recruitment agencies in Jordan has not been significant in the first half of the programme; and in India the informal nature of recruitment for domestic work and the non-recognition of the positive role placement agents play in reducing unemployment has meant little progress has been made at the national level in influencing the recruitment process.

Advocacy challenges and achievements: The complex political environment in India has made advocacy gains elusive for WIF, yet some progress has been made in forming coalitions and commenting on draft laws. WIF has had more success in Nepal in its lead role in the Katmandu Migration Group (KMG) in advocating against the migration ban, a process that has been successfully supported and informed by WIF research. WIF's primary advocacy contribution in Jordan has been providing inputs to the Anti-Trafficking Law, which, at the time of the evaluation, was an ongoing process.

There is limited evidence of the use of WIF studies for advocacy purposes. In addition to the advocacy work carried out in Nepal, the same study, "No Easy Exit" helped to inform a policy brief to thwart a similar policy in India. There is more evidence of WIF research used for learning and awareness-raising purposes.

The need for a sound M&E approach to more effectively monitor progress: While a detailed logframe exists and has been revised according to new learning, the programme lacks a developed M&E framework or system in place that is known, contextualized to each country context, and used by programme staff and partners. Such a framework would enable better identification and collection of pertinent data, its analysis and use to monitor progress toward reaching programme objectives, as well as provide greater depth to the evaluation process.

Assessment of Value for Money: The challenge to target women migrant workers who experience greater levels of vulnerability, the lack of an M&E framework to systematically guide monitoring efforts for all stakeholders, and the Workers Center's inefficient operations are areas of WIF programming that represent low value for money. Areas of good value for money include WIF's cost sharing with other ILO labour migration programmes, building upon existing structures and frameworks, and institutionalization of WIF's efforts and uptake by partners. These are all signs

of sustained progress for WIF, which constitute excellent value for money.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

The following 17 recommendations are grouped in 3 areas: improved targeting of migrant women workers, both in origin communities and destination; improved M&E of WIF; and improved capacity development efforts. The evaluation team puts priority on these 3 areas in order from first to last, with the most pressing need going forward is a focus on women domestic workers as the one population the least amount of work has been done on thus far yet as a group they are the most vulnerable. Improved targeting overall is an issue for the programme.

A. Improved targeting of migrant workers in both origin communities and destination: recommendations for ILO and partners

- 1) Better targeting of vulnerable women in communities of origin and greater effort in supporting genuine choice.
- 2) Consider advocating for an independent non-governmental body to monitor the recruitment process of domestic workers in Jordan.
- 3) Explore advocating for background checks for employers as a monitoring mechanism for reducing levels of vulnerabilities and offering protection to domestic workers in Jordan.
- 4) Explore the option of conducting ToTs for recruitment agencies to raise awareness of employers as a prerequisite application for domestic services.
- 5) In India encourage other source states to follow the Jharkhand example of registration of sub-agents and written contracts between worker, employer and agent.
- 6) Consider implementing a study of the Insurance Policy in Jordan.

7) Consider carrying out a study to determine the cost structure of the domestic work sector in Jordan.

8) Prioritize the exploration of various options to reach and organize migrant live-in domestic workers in both India and Jordan.

9) The evaluation team advises more focused financial support of the Workers Center that is specific to WIF objectives, namely, the support to collective action for migrant workers in the garment industry, and specifically for those who face greater vulnerability in the small sub-contractor companies.

10) Consider organizing training and raising awareness sessions targeting employers of small subcontractor company in cooperation with the Workers Center, the Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (J-GATE)¹ and the Association of owners of Factories, workshops and Garments (AOFWG).

11) Consider offering technical assistance to expedite the judicial process in prosecuting, institute or conduct legal proceedings against the small subcontractor companies violating migrant worker labor laws.

12) Consider targeting the workers committees in the factories as a means of building capacity and enabling better organization.

13) Consider offering technical assistance to assess and address the bottlenecks experienced and to determine how best to expedite the process of work permit issuance.

B. Promoting M&E and learning: recommendations for the ILO

14) Develop a sound comprehensive M&E and Learning system for the latter half of the programme to monitor progress toward and achievement of overall objective.

15) Strengthen the programme's capacity to document learnings.

16) Invest more in communication and coordination among the ILO WIF team to promote learning.

¹ As representative of large labor-intensive companies in the Ready-made Garment (RMG) sector in QIZ Jordan

**C. On capacity development approaches:
recommendations for the ILO and partners**

17) Utilize the DWCPs in developing stakeholder organization capacity development plans, employ a systematic approach to determining capacity development needs, and explore alternative means for developing capacity.