

## 1. Executive Summary

Since 2002, the programs of nongovernmental co-operation, co-financed by the DGCD, involved a few new actors - namely the Belgian trade-union organizations.

This new form of collaboration was reached in the form of agreements made between the DGCD and the Institute of international working Education (IEOI) attached to the CSC, the Institute of international trade-union Training (IFSI) attached to the FGTB and the Movement for International Solidarity (MSI) attached to the liberal trade union.

These agreements led to the establishment of multi-annual programmes of trade-union co-operation (2003-2005) that included a final evaluation of the activities performed at the end of each programme.

In December 2005 this final evaluation was entrusted to RAMBOLL MANAGEMENT BRUSSELS – a public management consultancy. Evaluation contract was signed by the SPF foreign Affaires, trade and development co-operation, which requested an analysis of the design and implementation of the *programmes of Belgian trade-union co-operation* over the period 2003-2005.

The RMB evaluation was selected based on methodological approach that answered generic evaluation questions such as the questions of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, utility and sustainability of the programme. Each one of these questions was analysed in individual chapters. The other advantage of the RMB evaluation was an offer to conduct a *process or dialog oriented* analysis.

The evaluation techniques used were of several kinds:

- Analysis of documents
- Face to face interviews
- Site visits (3 occasions)
- A seminar on the processes and the results of the trade-union co-operation
- Benchmarking (Denmark and The Netherlands)

Nevertheless it is also important to note the difficulties and limitations of the methodology making the final results only preliminary:

- the evaluation of the results obtained, and consequently, the evaluation of efficiency, durability and the value added were confronted with important program design and results conceptualisation imperfections.
- The time element
- Difficulties of collecting the relevant data

## **1.1 Evaluation of the programmes of trade-union co-operation on the basis of evaluation criteria**

### *1.1.1 Evaluation of coherence*

- Internal coherence

The internal coherence of the programs was overall insufficient. There were serious breaches in the logic of intervention of the programs. For instance there was lack of correspondence between the objectives of the actions and the objectives of the programme. Moreover, the analysis of the logical framework shows significant weaknesses in terms of measurable indicators and working hypothesis.

- External coherence

The analysis of external coherence with the Belgian framework detected the existence of a double logic behind the programs of trade-union co-operation. Whereas the Belgian administration encouraged the co-operation based on the law of 1999, which made *fight against poverty* the final and ultimate goal, trade-unions put an emphasis on the *reinforcement of the trade unions*, which became a goal in itself. These two different reasons of intervention are hardly related. They do not share the "principal" objective, but they use identical cause-and-effect relation.

This difference in "principal" objective focus provides an explanation for the methodological difficulties. Difficulties especially emerged at the level of logical framework design and allocation of adequate indicators. The problem of measuring the results is a clear illustration of this logic.

### *1.1.2 Evaluation of the effectiveness*

The methodological weaknesses of the programs prevented us from realistically answering the question of the programme effectiveness. If the management reports accounted for the activities' achievements little information was available on their effects. In addition, the weakness of the logical framework disallows to associate planned activities with a specific result.

We presume that the problems of the results partly arise from the double perception logic of the trade-union co-operation. Indeed, the definition of the results depends on the definition of the objectives; it is thus advisable to proceed in a non ambiguous way on this subject.

So not only there was a lack of "results-oriented approach" in the process of the programming the lack of apparent strategy was also felt *on the ground*.

1.1.3 *Evaluation of the relevance*

The criteria of relevance stated by the law of 1999 are overall covered in the completed projects.

Speaking of identification of needs they appeared relatively vague. The noticed weaknesses are partly due to the relatively recent character of the programs of trade-union co-operation. However it seems likely that the improvements will come in the following editions of these programmes.

Lastly, on the level of the relevance of the choice of the partner, the criteria of selection used by the Belgian trade-union organizations showed several intrinsic limits.

1.1.4 *Evaluation of durability*

It was not possible to assess the question of durability from researching the documents. Nevertheless these issues were addressed during the research phase that was conducted during the site-visits.

Talking of the structures of the trade-unions, these remain strongly dependant on the political and economic context of their operations. In terms of durability of the results they are hard to assess since there is a lack of visible outcomes.

1.1.5 *Evaluation of efficiency*

The criterion of efficiency could not be truly examined. The time allocated for site visit related research and the data available indeed did not make it possible to show if the achievements were obtained at a reasonable cost.

1.1.6 *Evaluation of the value-added*

Activities undertaken in Central Africa appear to be most useful in reinforcing the capacities of trade-unions (acquisition of knowledge via trainings, acquisition of material...). However if one notices the improvements in trade-union reinforcement one can not clearly link this to an improving overall socio-economic environment.

The actions undertaken within the framework of trade-union co-operation in South Africa seems to show added value with respect to the trade-union structures and the position of the workers. The value added of these actions carried out, as well as their impact, is nevertheless difficult to individually assess ("extract") in relation to the whole set of the actions carried in the domain of fighting HIV/AIDS.

1.1.7 *Evaluation of the complementarity*

In terms of coherence with the programs such as WSM or FOS, the assessment is not easy to clearly define. The document research revealed complementing topics however also confusion about the programmes' objectives and the risk of action overlapping.

On the ground there was no presence of overlapping (double) employment cases. However the observations carried out at the time of the site-visits were not enough to confirm this thoroughly. A specific analysis with emphasis on this issue should be a target of a separate study designed to answer double employment cases in more depth.

1.1.8 *The question of the working process ("dialog")*

The discussions were not always easy between trade unions and administration. However it seems that after more than three years of regular dialog, each party showed a better comprehension of each side.

It seems that today it is necessary for both sides to clearly define their tasks and responsibilities in order to improve the dialog process.

1.1.9 *Partnerships*

Most of the stakeholders that met during the site visits were dynamic and showed a will to succeed. But these partnerships could still be improved especially in terms of "follow-up" which is the responsibility of the Belgian trade union vis-à-vis its partner in the south. The difficulty thus lies in finding a balance between the sovereignty of the southern trade union and the need for acting in accordance with the Belgian philosophy of the co-operation.

It also should be noted there is also space for improving communication within Belgian trade unions and within southern trade unions respectively.

1.1.10 *Methodology of follow-up and evaluation*

Deep gaps were noted in the follow-up of the systematic evaluation of the activities. The methodological deficiencies of the programs and the lack of indicators complicated the process even further. It must be noted nevertheless that the relevance of the data included improved as the programs continued over time.

**1.2 Benchmarking exercise**

The evaluation was finalized with a benchmarking exercise or a comparative analysis of Danish and Dutch trade-union co-operation programmes. A series of "good practices" could be established as a result - potentially reusable by Belgium. The following could be pointed out:

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- Both Danish and Dutch trade unions have the possibility to influence s decision-making via a developed process of parties' consultations in their countries.
- It was discovered that adopting a "directive-based" programme implementation process that takes trade union realities into account is a positive development
- There is a bond between poverty and reinforcement but this bond has to be clearly shown at the development and implementation stage of the trade union programmes.

### **1.3 Recommendations**

1. Priority - find common vision on objectives and reference framework
2. Analysis of context is a necessary precondition
3. A better structure of the methodology
4. More results-oriented approach
5. Optimize the process of dialog as well as the procedures of follow-up and evaluation
6. Optimize procedures within the administration

<sup>1</sup>DGCD: [http://www.dgcd.be/fr/acteurs/programmes\\_speciaux/programmes\\_syndicaux.html](http://www.dgcd.be/fr/acteurs/programmes_speciaux/programmes_syndicaux.html)