

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE “GOVERNANCE OF LABOUR MIGRATION SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA” (GOALS)

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: External independent final evaluation

Evaluator(s): PPMI (Rimantas Dumčius, Katarzyna Forska-D'Hondt, Loes van der Graaf, Anna Kiss-Pal, Kristina Zharkalliu)

Field visit dates: N/A

Final report date: 13 March 2024

Commissioned by: IOM Sri Lanka

Managed by: Angeline Wambanda

Evaluation purpose: The evaluation serves two main purposes: it contributes to accountability as it provides evidence-based data as well as impartial judgement on results achieved. It contributes to learning, as it provides timely and relevant information to be used to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UN Programmes – i.e., the lessons learned and good practices from the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, human rights and gender equality, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

Evaluation methodology: Document review, semi-structured interviews and survey

PROJECT SUMMARY

The GOALS Programme aimed to promote “safe, orderly and regular migration for all women and men” through support delivered to the Colombo Process (CP) and its member states, including India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

The Colombo Process (CP) is a regional consultative process. Established in 2003, it includes 12 labour-sending countries in South and Southeast Asia as Member States, and key destination countries as observers, as well as the IOM as its Secretariat. The platform was established to support overseas migrant workers, especially contract workers who – particularly women – face multiple risks, such as exploitation in contractual or seasonal positions, bad working conditions, and upon return, difficulties with reintegration.

The GOALS focused primarily on policy-oriented capacity building activities of member states, but it also aimed to strengthen the voice of migrant workers by increasing migrant worker representatives' involvement and strengthening engagement of all non-state actors at CP thematic area working group meetings.

The GOALS Programme aimed to address these issues through progressing towards three outcomes:

- The CP Member States (CPMS) develop and progress actionable commitments for strengthened labour migration governance and policy coherence

Project information:

Geographical coverage: The member States of the Colombo Process (South and South-East Asia)

Project type: Labour governance

Project code: LM.0408

Gender marker: 2b

Project period: 1 August 2020—31 January 2024

Donor: SDC

Budget: 5,165,289 USD

ence through multilateral dialogue.

- Selected member states in South Asia have improved labour migration policies and practices, in particular on skills development and qualifications recognition, fostering fair and ethical recruitment, and sustainable reintegration.
- The evidence base on labour migration is strengthened to inform knowledge, dialogue, policy-making and action.

The Programme was a unique collaboration, being implemented together by IOM, ILO and UN Women. The Programme aimed to include a gender-perspective in its design and implementation, focusing on women's unique needs and the inclusion of women's representatives as well.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The GOALS programme aimed to address the needs of migrant workers, particularly women, in the South and South-East Asian region. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability, the program remained relevant, effectively addressing key vulnerabilities of migrant workers. Notably, it succeeded in meeting most of its outcome targets and fostering collaboration among participating countries, through effectively supporting the CP Process. Efforts to improve policy environments and develop regulatory frameworks have, in some cases, resulted in policy change and have the potential to for long-term impact, although concerns remain about stakeholder ownership and sustainability.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender disparities in labor migration were actively addressed. Specific initiatives included providing tailored support and resources to women migrant workers, such as addressing gaps in skills development and reintegration, as well as fair and ethical recruitment. The program also focused on advocating for policy changes that prioritize gender equality in labor migration. Research on gender in migration informed the development of comprehensive strategies to address the unique needs and challenges experienced by women migrants.

GOOD PRACTICES

The use of a tri-agency approach created greater harmony and coherence among agencies, such as IOM, ILO, and UN WOMEN, providing more specialized support in complex projects and fostering long-term cooperation within the UN system.

Parallel support to regional platforms and national-level implementation fostered dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement, allowing countries to learn from each other's experiences and practices, while also involving regional non-state actors to address migrant workers' grievances effectively.

Encouraging peer learning and study visits proved effective in achieving program objectives and facilitating initiatives beyond the program's scope, as successes in one country inspired similar achievements in others,

enhancing collaboration among Colombo Process Member States.

LESSONS LEARNED

Political commitment is crucial for sustainability, necessitating its prioritization in program design, including activities to engage partner governments and foster long-term cooperation.

Adequate resources for technical support at the national level are essential for program impact and sustainability, as insufficient support may impede government capacity to continue labor migration governance efforts.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Participating UN Organisations and future programme implementors:

1. Dedicate specific attention to ownership and sustainability of the programme results.
2. Ensure that future programmes include an inception phase to establish the managerial and conceptual foundations of the programme.
3. Continue exploring opportunities to enhance the tri-agency approach (or One-UN approach) in development programming, particularly for labour migration governance.
4. Continue supporting regional organisations and regional structures to enhance labour migration governance at both regional and national levels.
5. Allocate time for implementation of new laws, policies, and frameworks within the programme timeline.

- Participating UN Organisations and NGOs:

6. Enhance attention to societal perceptions of (women) migrants, for example through more active collaboration with grassroots organisations.

- Participating UN Organisations and donors:

7. Enhance the focus on collaboration with countries of destination, particularly in the context of designing and negotiating bilateral labour migration agreements.

