



## Executive Summary

### Purpose

To provide an overview of scope for Health programs in the MEER during. To review their impact and sustainability

To highlight best practices in MEER

To address limitations with a set of clear recommendations

### Challenges

NO staff was overwhelmed, not available for the review process

Massive volume of information was left scattered and not properly archived

Some programs were not included due to lack of documents, Basic information was missing

### Main findings

WV has a strong presence in MEER in the area of Health

85% or more of the planned outcomes were achieved

Inference from Goal to Outcome, Output and Activities is not always logical or consistent

Rather poor and inconsistent assessments. Lack of objective and clear impact assessment

Lack of important documents

Poor analysis of quantitative data, though these were already collected



## REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

More than **10 years** experience in health programming in MEER



In 6 years (2007—2013):

Touched the lives of

**17.6 million**

people in need



Carried out **89** programmes



Invested

**46.4 million**

USD



Half of the programmes completed

**88%** or more of the proposed outcomes

Prevalent programme themes:



## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING OUR HEALTH PROGRAMMING

### 1. INVEST ON QUANTITATIVE DATA

We should follow a mixed approach where qualitative tools are used at an early stage in an exploratory fashion to understand the problem and the context and quantitative tools are used to monitor and evaluate program impact and effectiveness.

Benefits of enhancing the quantitative data analysis:

- We are already utilizing a wide array of qualitative data collection and analysis tools.
- Once quantitative data is collected, it is easier and more efficient to handle, as they come in a standardized format which is comparable across different contexts and platforms.
- It allows the employment of more scientifically robust methods of data analysis and evidence building.

### 4. DEFINE AND JUSTIFY CLEAR TARGETS

Programs must have clear and measurable targets, both at outcome and output level. Target sizes must be clearly justified and linked to the theoretical framework. Existing tools can facilitate this process e.g. Indicator Tracking Table.

Programs need to have theoretical direction and tangible targets, not only for monitoring purposes but also for clarity and transparency. Only 50% of programs had targets. In addition, only a fraction included a description of the process that lead to their demarcation. For the most part, targets seemed to be placed almost arbitrary, without any justification about the expected progress or how it is connected/expected to contribute to the long-term theoretical implications of the program.

### 7. CHANGE THE ANALYSIS STRATEGY

Information is power but only when it is used properly and efficiently. Once the data collection is complete, an analysis plan is necessary to describe how the data will be utilised effectively to build evidence. Using the exact same data we can utilize a set of more advanced analyses that allow a deeper and more accurate understanding of our impact.

Based on our findings, from the 12% of programs that were collecting information on a pre-post design the vast majority was providing only a descriptive comparison between averages and if the difference was positive it was reported as success. Although this is not far from the truth, this type of analysis is not sufficient to explain if indeed the program intervention is responsible for the change that was recorded.

### 2. INCLUDE FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES IN PROGRAM OUTCOMES

We need to rethink the way we collaborate with our local partners so that we can utilize their full potential, both at the design and implementation phase, but more importantly at securing the sustainability of the programs. We recommend to include fund raising activities in program outcomes as part of the sustainability strategy of the programs. Also, we can consider including a provision for in-kind contribution from local partners.

WV programs have been relying primarily on internal sources (73%+) which no longer appear to be sustainable. Local communities depended on WV's presence and financial support to implement any developmental activities. In fact, it was widely recognized that once/if WV disengaged, programs would either fail or collapse.

### 5. ALIGN PROGRAMS WITH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGY

Evidence of optimal strategic direction is a delivery on our commitment for sustainable impact and improved child well-being.

Our strategies reflect our commitment to children, the communities and our donors. The national and regional strategies are the primary tools designed to steer our efforts in that direction. Even though for the most part our review revealed that programs were well aligned to their national strategies (MEER average 3.6/4), some programs were not (MEER min 2.5). Although it was not possible to measure program alignment to the regional strategy for this particular timeframe, for post FY13 programs, strategy alignment should extend to the regional level.

### 8. MAKE REPORTING OF BASIC INFORMATION MANDATORY

It is imperative to be able to demonstrate proof of our work and our impact in the communities. The most vital information in this process is the number of people who benefited from our programs. Surprisingly only 73% of programs actually reported this information.

While it is not always easy to estimate and collect this data, it is preferable to use an imperfect method of calculation, as long as it is clearly explained and reported, rather than including the entire community based on population census. Only 54% of programs provided a disaggregation of the beneficiaries by gender and 57% by age group. Not having this information is not only limiting our communications department capacity to tell the stories right, it is also limiting our ability to develop targeted strategies and interventions.

### 3. DESIGN MORE SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMS

Community engagement from an early stage is the key to program success and sustainability. There are two factors that were found to be positively linked to each other and almost every other indicator of program sustainability:

- understanding the context and external confounding factors that may exist. This is not common practice as only 30% of programs had a baseline study.
- understanding the internal dynamics of programs, so that we can connect and fine tune all the moving pieces that make a project more effective and sustainable. Irrespective of budget or outcome success, programs are mostly affected by the level of engagement with the local community.

### 6. GET THE RIGHT DATA AT THE RIGHT TIME

Getting the right information at the right time is crucial for proper monitoring and evaluation. Having information about the context before we implement our programs is essential for estimating our impact. It is preferable to limit the frequency of collecting information than not having previous knowledge about the context.

Our programs are collecting a wealth of information in search of evidence. Despite the plethora of data, only 28% of the programs were able to demonstrate progress at target level and 66% did not have a baseline. Based on this review, only 12% of programs were following this principle, which clearly indicates a methodological gap.

### 9. ESTABLISH AN ARCHIVING POLICY

Sorting and storing information at the end of each program is very important to avoid data loss. Also, for reporting purposes it can maximize efficiency, by saving time and effort.

The primary weakness we experienced when we started the data collection process was the lack of a dedicated archive. The next challenge was to sort out and classify all the raw information that was collected. The entire process derailed our planned timeline by a month. The final archive of more than 700 documents is now sorted and registered in a cloud data bank with easy access and sharing controls. Based on the large number of missing information, we estimate that a significant amount of documents was never retrieved or is lost.