



**SLVB** CONSULTING SÀRL

**Evaluation of the framework agreement 2010-2012 of SOS Villages d'Enfants  
Monde asbl Luxembourg**

**Executive summary (english)**

## 1 Fact sheet

Context of the evaluation	Framework Agreement 2010-2012 signed by and between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SOS Villages d'Enfant Luxembourg
Framework agreement strategy	<p>"Improve the situation of under-age children by strengthening their vulnerable families or the SOS structures that provide care for them," through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Addressing the essential needs of children</li> <li>2. Socio-economic family strengthening</li> <li>3. Strengthening of the community and the authorities</li> <li>4. The establishment of SOS structures to provide care for children and younger juveniles</li> <li>5. The monitoring and evaluation of projects carried out</li> </ol>
Coherence of the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodological concentration: capacity building among the actors</li> </ul>
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 family strengthening programmes</li> <li>• 5 child care and education facilities</li> </ul>
Budget	Total: €6,625,568 over 3 years.
Governance and control	The NGO is a member of the world federation of Villages d'Enfants SOS-Kinderdorf International. It is part of an international structure that has deployed management tools used in all the group's projects.
Framework Agreement	The framework agreement is aimed at the social sector. Most of the projects are geared to family strengthening by addressing essential needs, providing psychological and micro-finance support, education and healthcare.
Contribution to the results (based on the evaluation of 4 projects: 2 in Cape Verde and 2 in Senegal)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The evaluations corroborated the response to essential needs</li> <li>2. The family strengthening programmes deserve additional investments</li> <li>3. Cooperation with the authorities must be improved</li> <li>4. The standards of Villages SOS are high compared with the local environment</li> <li>5. The evaluations must be more systematic</li> </ol>
Recommendations	<p><u>Framework Agreement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to shift focus to countries and allocate more means and resources to family resource programmes</li> </ul> <p><u>NGO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify, together with KDI, the role of PSA (Luxembourg) in relation to the Regional Office (RO)</li> <li>• Strengthen Luxembourg's outreach to the field</li> </ul>
Conclusions	The projects are implemented in the field by local SOS teams, supported by a regional system. This structure forms a basis for independent work. The challenge Luxembourg will have to take up will be to get gradually more involved.



## 2 Executive summary

Created in 1974, the Luxembourg-based non-profit association SOS Villages d'Enfants Monde asbl Luxembourg is a member of the world federation of Villages d'Enfants SOS-Kinderdorf International, (itself created in 1949), a non-governmental and non-denominational organisation that provides care for orphaned, abandoned or underprivileged children in 133 countries. More than 80,000 young people have thus found a new abode in one of the 533 Villages d'Enfants [Children's Villages] and 606 Foyers de jeunes SOS [youth care institutions]. More than 146,000 are being educated in 183 schools, 237 kindergartens, and 52 vocational training centres. Moreover, the organisation helps some 551,000 people through its 621 Family Strengthening Programmes by providing material, psychological and educational support.

This organisation is internationally recognised and has been nominated for a Nobel Prize on several occasions for its forceful rigour and systematic approach to management procedures. It works in close cooperation with many UN departments: ECOSOC, UNICEF, UN Human Rights Council, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the PAM. The projects it pursues concern a universal issue, namely the (physical, intellectual, moral) growth of a child outside the protective family environment (loss of parents or inability of the latter to assume their role properly for various reasons). For this reason, its vision, mission and strategic lines, which are shared by all members, are also universal and the basic approaches are consequently identical, irrespective of the country and the context.

In concrete terms, the projects are pursued in the best interest of the children, their family and their community, through two main methods of intervention: care for the children in SOS structures (villages) and/or the implementation of family strengthening programmes.

The "Villages" approach reaches the beneficiaries directly and has only little indirect impact. It aims to replace fully the failing family environment and to meet the basic and security needs of the children. This type of project is therefore carried out in villages built and financed by the NGO, which continues to provide financial support for an unspecified period (role of stable and reassuring parents, with an SOS mother on hand). It provides a global response because the health and education environments of the children are also taken into account through the establishment of SOS schools (which can be attended by other children of the community) and health facilities. Efforts are made to get the community involved -- if possible at several levels -- with the authorities (education programme, health system, social services) and/or professional services (micro-finance, education, training, etc.). The "villages" are geared more to the social dimension than to development by design.

For their part, whereas the family resource programmes (FRP) also fall under the social dimension, their approach is such as to support families so that they can assume their role in upbringing children. Such support may be psychosocial, but can also pertain to training, micro-finance, legal advice, etc. This recent direction is gradually gaining in importance and helps make the target groups more self-sufficient. Compared with the first option, therefore, which is not sustainable (continuous financial support), this second alternative provides sustainability prospects through self-sufficiency. A third option, particularly in demand by the public authorities, is to make places in the centres temporarily available for young persons with social integration problems or in a situation of hardship. Although the need seems dire, the current response of SOS Villages Enfants remains very limited.

SOS Villages Enfants Monde is a Promoting and Supporting Association within the KDI group. It has the power to gauge the development of the activities and to audit the use of funds for the projects it finances. More specifically, the projects are implemented by the National Associations (NAs) of SOS Villages d'Enfants, whose budget management and control are carried out via the Regional Office (RO), then by the Continental Office (CO) and ultimately the International Office (IO), which coordinates all the group's projects. Thanks to the size of its financial contribution, Luxembourg has managed to become a member of KDI's strategic decision-making groups. Furthermore, a platform



combining the operations of Luxembourg, and the RO and NA officers was set up at the initiative of the deputy director in 2012 to improve project coordination.

The evaluation mission reviewed 4 projects in the field: 2 in Cape Verde and 2 in Senegal. These projects are part of the first framework agreement signed by and between the government of Luxembourg and SOS Villages d'Enfants Monde asbl Luxembourg.

In terms of approach, three were FRP projects and one was a Village extension project (construction of a centre for young people).

The evaluations carried out enable us to draw specific conclusions for each of the projects, as well as cross-sectional conclusions, for which a commitment from SOS Villages d'Enfants Monde, and even from the different structural levels of the KDI group, will be necessary to continue its internal development.

We can underscore the good work carried out in the Social Centre in Cape Verde, in line with the national policy. Although not very sustainable at this stage, the project has already produced concrete result and has had a positive impact on the families and the community. We found the Social Centre's focus on action in the community and among facilities altogether pertinent and a guarantee of a capacity to think things over. On the other hand, we can only regret the closing of the "temporary accommodation" facility without prior consultation (in spite of the needs for such a facility in the field) as well as the absence of a conversion plan for the facilities of the Social Centre financed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (not yet depreciated).

The project to build a centre for young people in Sao Domingo is in line with the concepts of "Villages d'Enfants SOS." We noted that young people were provided quality care to address their needs in a pleasant and reassuring environment by a sufficient number of professional staff. On the other hand, the construction of such an additional accommodation structure did not seem self-evident. More specifically we did not see it necessarily as a matter of priority or in consistency with:

- The national needs<sup>1</sup> in terms of temporary places;<sup>2</sup>
- The needs of the population ("most requests have to do with problems of poverty versus social problems");
- The current occupancy rate of facilities in Cape Verde – which stood at 60% in the SOS villages in that country during our visit;
- The development of the cost structure per type of care: conventional care in an SOS Village (up to 18 to 20 years of age) versus temporary care in a village and FRP care in families and in communities; and
- The foreseeable drop in the methods of financing SOS Villages (donations, public funding);

Whether in Senegal (Kolda & Pikine) or in Cape Verde (Mindelo), the three evaluated FRP projects revealed in particular the complexity of the FRP approach. These are integrated, complex and ambitious programmes, adapted to their environment and to a specific target group. They go beyond charity and try and get individuals and families to assume their responsibilities. The results, which depend essentially on direct and indirect stakeholders, are consequently more uncertain and less visible than the "villages," but they do enable the target group to find their way out of their predicament by acquiring skills and resources. As already mentioned, this is an essential sustainability factor, unlike what was noted when evaluating a project to build the centre for young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency accommodation is currently made available under unfavourable conditions because it is provided only by understaffed public authorities that experience difficulties in coordinating their efforts with private facilities on this matter. There is a need for a relay structure for temporary care.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of court-ordered "temporary" placement of children/adolescents in difficulty deserves being examined in greater depth with the supervisory and court authorities.



We must nonetheless underscore that the FRPs should be reinforced, from a methodological<sup>3</sup> or a financial<sup>4</sup> perspective, for the sake of sustainability and results-based management. As spelled out in detail in the evaluations below, it is important to turn “social welfare” FRP projects into “development aid” projects. The identification processes pertain to these challenges in large measure. SOS must actually learn to identify more than vulnerable individuals (something it has done very well for a long time already), and must be able to identify the structural causes of such vulnerability if it wants to help families become self sufficient in the long term. Identifying the causes means being able to identify from the outset the segments to be broached through a partnership so as to implement sustainable systems (healthcare systems, decentralised financial systems, school monitoring and reinforcement systems, alert systems for humanitarian emergencies, etc.). Identifying the causes also means being able to define thresholds and conditions whence SOS support can be gradually reduced, as well as how, and on what segments, such reduction should be applied to foster economic and social development that will enable families to support themselves. Finally, an identification process must not be static if the FRPs of SOS are to be truly integrated and adapted to the setting. Lessons should be drawn from experience from one year to the next and from one FRP to the other, and be used to choose intervention strategies and modes of operation judiciously... The latter point requires the teams of the FRPs in the field to be more involved so as to identify and implement adjustment processes better. Top-down communication ensures precise and homogeneous SOS interventions. Bottom-up communication would lead to more reactive and dynamic projects, truly in line with the particular challenges faced by the FRPs. Participatory management with the involvement of teams from the field in the different key phases of a project would certainly go in that direction.

Against this background, we encourage SOS Villages d’Enfants Monde to update its planning and multi-year budget. Coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be needed to integrate these changes gradually, in the next Framework Agreement 2013-2017.

These project evaluations and the organisational audit of SOS Villages Luxembourg will moreover enable us to draw certain conclusions from a cross-sectional and structural perspective of the NGO:

When this evaluation was completed, it seemed clear to us that SOS Villages Luxembourg but also the KDI group, are at a turning point. Against this background, we encourage the Luxembourg-based NGO to support the future structural developments of the KDI group, which will stem from the organisational considerations currently in progress with the consulting firm BCG.

One organisational development actually seems vital to us for taking up the future challenges of SOS Villages Enfants Monde. Activities should be refocused on the needs in the field and in accordance with the probable development of its financial resources (economic crisis, drop in donations, etc.). The question of “How to do more with less?” will become unavoidable and inevitably lead to the development of the FRPs, in our view.

Finally, this evaluation covered also the Framework Agreement as a tool. In addition to the observations and recommendations made for the benefit of the NGO, we want to capitalise on this evaluation to recommend that the Ministry should spell out the conditions for granting a framework agreement (and have them applied) so that such an agreement can continue to serve as a strategic as well as a financial tool.

Luxembourg, 22 November 2012

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to stress sustainability as soon as the projects are identified.

<sup>4</sup> For results to be obtained with an FRP (sustainable family strengthening), sufficient human resources and time are needed, in addition to technical skills.