



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et européennes

Direction de la coopération
au développement et
de l'action humanitaire

Evaluation of six development NGOs accredited by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Synthesis report Fondation Meninos e Meninas de Rua (FMMR)

EVAL/2013/01

Extract of the final version dated December, 23 2013 :
Fact-sheet and Executive summary

In 2013, the Directorate of Development Cooperation and humanitarian action of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs commissioned an independent evaluation of six development NGOs accredited by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, included the NGO Fondation Meninos e Meninas de Rua. The evaluation was conducted by the consortium Artemis/Insyde. The Ministry publishes below a summary of the main results of this exercise.

Observations, assessments and recommendations expressed in this document represent the views of the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry.

FACT-SHEET

FMMR	Established in	Accredited in	Co-financed since	Previous evaluation
	1993	1993	1993	NO
Missions	Assist children in distress in all possible ways			
Axes of intervention	Education, infrastructures, supporting educational programs, basic needs (food, health, hygiene, agriculture, water, irrigation), and the prevention of marginalisation in all forms			
Financing tools	Co-financing and own funds			
Strategy	Concentration in the Nordeste region (Brazil). Target: street children in emergency situations, between birth and adulthood. Approach in the field: "saving children via education"			
No. projects	6 in 2013			
No. sectors	2 (education, social)			
Co-financed project budget	€578,000 budgeted in 2013			

Results	Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Risks
Organisational & structural audit	Strong leadership and commitment of the President. Consideration of the transformation of the NGO into a foundation	Continuity of the activities of the NGO and its partners depending on one person
Strategic & operational analysis	Operations focused in the Nordeste region (Brazil) and on children in distress	No formal strategy. Tight control of partners. Split of fund transfers
Sample evaluation of projects ¹	Highly positive evaluation of the ASPP project, "Devenir citoyen" (Become a citizen)	Mitigated evaluation of the "Education and citizenship" project of the ACACB and the "Grants" projects of the 2 partners
Accounting & financial analysis	Financial management guided by prudence and rigor Expenses in accordance with the logical framework, with supporting documents	Low level of formalisation of relations with partners

Conclusions

FMMR is managed with discipline and rigor. The continuity of the activities of the NGO and its partners strongly depends on the availability of one single, but key, person. The NGO carries out checks of its partners and breaks down expenses on the basis of a monthly report. This practice is based on prudence and allows the NGO to manage its budget precisely. However, this practice carry risks in terms of partnership balance, previsibility and local ownership. The organisational and management capacities of FMMR partners vary and have not been sufficiently reinforced.

Principle recommendations





Short term	Discussion between MAE and FMMR on the results of the evaluation in view of identifying potential means of improvements Formalise relations with local partners. Adjust the level of control and relations based on the capacities of the partner.
Medium term	Identify means of ensuring the future and continuity of the NGO Regularly monitor the integration of any recommendations adopted by MAE and FMMR

¹ Four projects supported by FMMR were assessed in a "traditional, but limited", manner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 The mandate

This work has been carried out in the context of the services contract granted to Artemis, in consortium with the company, InSyDe, to evaluate 6 NGO that benefit from financial aid from MAE either through co-financing or framework agreements. This evaluation had two precise aims: assess the capacity of FMMR to effectively and efficiently implement the projects supported by MAE and assess whether the special partnership (co-financing) concluded between MAE and FMMR is relevant and suitable. Four operations were carried out simultaneously for this purpose:

-  An organisational and structural audit
-  An evaluation of the strategic and operational approach of the NGO
-  A "traditional, but limited" evaluation of a sample of projects
-  An accounting and financial analysis of a project.

2 The NGO evaluated

FMMR, founded in 1993 by the De Bernardi family, focuses its operations in the Nordeste region of Brazil. Its aims are the demarginalisation of children via educational programmes and the awareness initiatives for populations in the north. Its initiatives are based on the strong values of social justice, rigor and prudence.

3 The approach and methodology implemented

The improvement of the quality of interventions is the central concern of the work of evaluation. It is not a case of rating the actors involved but of helping them reviewing their practices, not only in their relations with MAE who finances them, but also in terms of their relationship with local partners who are implementing the projects in the field. The work of evaluation is an integral part of the project and is one of its "natural" stage.

Work was launched in May 2013 with an initial Steering committee meeting. The Steering committee, consisting of the NGO, MAE and the evaluation team, is the body which tracks the evaluation process. It was followed up by a documentary study (documents gathered from the NGO) and by a series of meetings at the head office of the NGO with the permanent team. Contact is also generally made with the members of the board of the NGO evaluated. In this case, the President of the board did not allow the evaluators to meet its members. This first part of the work was the subject of a discussion with MAE and the NGO in July 2013 in the context of the Steering committee meeting.

The missions were then organised in Brazil in August when two partners supported by the FMMR were visited. In November 2013, at the 3rd Steering committee meeting, evaluators presented the main conclusions of the evaluation as a whole and, more specifically, the conclusions of the "traditional, but limited" evaluation of 4 projects. The NGO indicated its disagreement in terms of the methodology and approach used for the evaluation. With reference to conclusions, they remain the conclusions of the evaluators, but they will however be discussed between partners, i.e. between the NGO and MAE and between the NGO and its partners in the south.

This report is the synthesis of all the above.

The Artemis/InSyDe consortium mobilised several experts to contribute to the work on the organisational and strategic aspects (Marc Roure), on the project aspects (Edneia Gonçalves and Joke Oranje), on the accounting and financial aspects (RSM auditors) and on the overall synthesis (Sandrine Beaujean, Artemis).

It was not possible to apply the methodology as planned in the specifications of the request for tender and the technical response of the consortium. Most of the information was obtained from one single source for the work in Luxembourg. In the absence of other

sources (particularly board members), it was not possible to compare and consolidate information, which could potentially affect the solidity of the observations taken as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.






4 The results of the evaluation

Organisational and structural audit. The organisation and finances are managed with rigor and prudence. The President has shown strong personal commitment and leadership. The NGO can rely on a significant contribution to capital from the family of the President. The NGO controls its partners tightly.






Strategic and operational analysis. FMMR declares that it focuses its operations in one geographic segment: the Nordeste region of Brazil; and has one target: street children in emergency situations, between birth and adulthood, and a field approach which can be summarised as "saving children via education". FMMR is close to its partners, has worked with them for many years, and is well aware of their organisational and managerial capacities. The capacities of the two partners met during the evaluation process vary widely. FMMR monitors all partners in an identical manner, regardless of their capacities. Relations between FMMR and its partners are poorly formalised.

The traditional, but limited, evaluation of 4 projects is resumed below based on the 5 evaluation criteria of the CAD/OECD. A colour code is assigned to each criterion based on the level of achievement (green for fully achieved/guaranteed, orange for partially achieved/guaranteed and red for not achieved/guaranteed).





ACACB: Education and citizenship

Relevance		Significant cultural activities, but no evidence that this helps marginalised children to attend school.
Effectiveness		The planned activities were completed. No evidence was provided that these activities ultimately contribute to educational targets.
Efficiency		Precise monitoring. Low costs, use of volunteers, who receive compensation from ACACB. Relations between ACACB and its volunteers are informal.
Impact		The children have more confidence in themselves, and some have volunteered to contribute to the project. The project is not enough to counter the threat of drug trafficking.
Sustainability		Risk relating to inadequate communication between the project and sector institutions and authorities. Financial dependency on FMMR.

ASPP: Devenir citoyen (Become a citizen)

Relevance		The initiatives of ASPP are indispensable for the integration of children in the educational system
Effectiveness		The activities are consistent and help to achieve targets
Efficiency		The team is competent and supported by volunteers
Impact		The project offers a shelter and a reference system for children, which stimulates the government to include them in the protection system
Sustainability		Re-integration in families and access to social services when children return to school

ACACB/ASPP: Study grants

Relevance		Grants have a limited effect in terms of reducing poverty and inequalities
Effectiveness		The number of ACACB grant beneficiaries has dropped. The number of ASPP beneficiaries has remained stable.
Efficiency		Low level of achievement
Impact		It is difficult to identify the effect of grants on the success of the beneficiaries

However, these projects "Study grants" were instrumental in helping a group of children from poor families to complete high school and / or university.

The accounting and financial analysis focused on ACACB's project "Education and citizenship". Accounting and financial management is overseen with rigor and prudence. Any deviation between the planned budget and actual spending is justified. Actual expenses were well below the expenses initially planned. The analysis highlights the informal nature of the relations between FMMR and ACACB and between ACACB and its volunteers and the informal nature of the procedures applied for payments made to the partner. Almost 70% of project expenses represent personnel costs. The subsidies paid by FMMR to ACACB are used to cover safety and cleaning expenses for premises, expenses relating mainly to day-to-day management.

5 Conclusions and Good Practices

The founding President is highly committed and active within the NGO, which can rely on a significant and constant contribution from the President's family for operating purposes, as well as contributions from sources outside of the family circle, which vary more from year to year. The continuity of the activities of the NGO strongly depends on the availability of one single, but key, person, the President.

Elements of the strategy of FMMR were presented by the President. The strategy has not been explicitly formalised to date.

The accounting and financial management of the NGO is overseen with rigor and prudence. FMMR maintains tight control over its partners, which must submit regular financial reports. Partners also submit regular reports on the activities carried out and the number of beneficiaries having participated.

The cooperation policy applied by FMMR with its partners can imply certain risks for both the NGO and its partners. On the one hand, relations between partners are mostly informal. Secondly, the significant breakdown of funds transfer creates the risk of limiting the financial planning of partners and increasing their dependency on FMMR. Finally, the financial dependency of partners raises a risk in terms of the sustainability of the initiatives. The NGO qualifies relations with its partners as cordial and based on trust. Despite this, the policy applied by the NGO could be perceived as a form of mistrust towards its partners. The institutional reinforcement of partners is not explicitly provided for in the operations of the NGO.

This principle of prudence also leads the NGO to consider reducing budgets and the duration of its future projects, which could lead to diminished performance, particularly in terms of impact.

Good Practices – Monitoring indicators for the number of beneficiaries

FMMR calculates an indicator reflecting the number of beneficiaries based on information transmitted by partners on a monthly and half-yearly basis. FMMR applies a statistical approach based on a common definition of a "beneficiary" at an earlier stage. FMMR carries out validation tests for information and re-contacts its partners when any inconsistency in the figures is detected. These figures are used to promote the NGO to donors, but also for a more "technical" monitoring of operations.

6 Recommendations

Recommendations

Organisational and structural

Continue to prepare for the future by formulating guidelines to govern the organisation of the NGO in the form of policies, strategies or procedures, and confirming consistency between the target status of a foundation and its current accreditation as an NGO.

Strategic

Explicitly formulate the strategy of the NGO
 Ensure consistency between the targets of the NGO and purpose of its operations in the field.

On projects and partnerships

Formalise partner selection criteria and actual partnerships (partnership contract)
 Adjust cooperation procedures based on the capacities of the partners
 Improve the financial visibility of partners
 Analyse the effects of any reduction in budget and the duration of projects in terms of impact
 Consider what actions could be taken to reinforce capacity at local level and how to implement these actions