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ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE NGO AMITIÉS LUXEMBOURG – AMÉRIQUE LATINE ASBL (ALAL)

In 2022, the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs commissioned an organisational evaluation of 11 NGOs benefiting from public funding. Among these was ALAL. The evaluation was carried out by “Artemis Information management s.a”. A summary of the main results is given below.

The analysis made and the recommendations expressed in this document represent the views of the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry or of the NGDO.

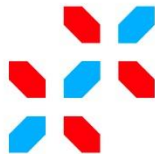
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Amitiés Luxembourg – Amérique Latine asbl (ALAL) is a Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO) incorporated as an association in 1996. The purpose of the organisation is to work for development cooperation in developing countries. The association's activities began in Latin America and gradually moved towards South East Asia, more particularly, to the Philippines and Laos.

ALAL is one of 11 Luxembourg NGDOs for which the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE) initiated an organisational evaluation process in 2022/2023. The evaluation took place at the same time as a process of rapprochement was underway between ALAL and Aide Philippines (AP), a Luxembourg humanitarian aid association active in the Philippines. The work was carried out between November 2022 and April 2023. The evaluation took place in good conditions and with full transparency. The NGO was indeed very open and available.

The organisational evaluation determined that the NGDO ALAL has not yet fully emerged from the critical situation it has been going through in recent years at the organisational and financial level, but the end of the tunnel seems now in sight since a new team has been set up within the Board of Directors (the Board). The NGO's sustainability depends on several projects to be carried out in the short term: (i) identifying and formulating a new project to justify the renewal of ALAL's approval or obtaining approval for the new entity and (ii) finalising the plan to merge ALAL with AP.

At the organisational level, ALAL's governance essentially relies on two people, the chairperson and the secretary/treasurer. The association was familiar with the highly personal style of the incumbent chairman and founder. His style was characterised by combining governance (strategy) and executive (operational and financial management) functions, the centralisation of information and rigorous risk management at all levels. However, this centralisation did not preclude open discussions and exchanges during board meetings and GMs. In 2022, the former chairman suggested that the chair of AP should take his place and take over ALAL's activities and/or that ALAL should merge with AP. Five AP members have joined ALAL's Board. The new Board is currently facing the issue of recovering the NGO's institutional memory.

As regards financial capacity, the evaluation noted a weak financial capacity after the fundraising policy was called to a halt and its savings (equity and reserves) were redistributed, since the NGO was not sure at that time whether it was going to be taken over by another NGO and wanted to prepare for its dissolution.

As regards partnership management, a prudent approach was required, with the use of local branches of international NGOs for project management, until 2015, when the NGO initiated a pilot project with a French NGO based in Laos before embarking on a more ambitious project. All partnerships are systematically formalised through agreements. Conversely, the evaluation found poor communication with some local partners, an unbalanced partnership approach, and a lack of partner capacity building.

As regards project management, the NGO engages in reflection upstream of a project on the issue of sustainability, which suffers from a lack of follow-up once the project has ended. The evaluation noted that the NGO's interpretation of the concept of sustainability does not correspond to development cooperation standards. Lastly, the evaluation also observed the lack of learning and continuous improvement mechanisms, at both organisational and project levels.

On the issue of cross-cutting themes, the Board remains unbalanced, with underrepresentation of women. The issue of human rights is scarcely taken into account in projects.

interesting practices were noted at ALAL and AP

- **BP 1** – Due to ALAL’s prudence, it has implemented a progressive approach in its local partnerships. This approach consisted of “testing” the partners as part of a pilot project, allowing them to get to know each other better and to appreciate the proper functioning of the collaboration between the two organisations, before rolling out a larger project with them.
- **BP 2** – AP closely involves beneficiaries in its projects. When the projects concern the construction of housing, the beneficiaries have to participate in the construction of their own dwelling and those of the community. Moreover, AP makes the beneficiaries sign partnership protocols in the case of purchases to start an economic activity. A contract of this kind encourages individuals to reinvest any profits in the means of production and obliges them not to sell the equipment purchased in this way. Lastly, AP ensures that the beneficiary families undertake to send their children to school.

Artemis has put forward **11 recommendations** for the NGO ALAL:

In terms of **governance, organisation and human resources**, the evaluation recommends stabilising the distribution of roles and responsibilities within the new Board and ensuring that the workload is evenly shared among the members, and updating volunteers’ skills in the field of project and partnership management. The evaluation also recommends ensuring diversity within the Board by including more women.

In terms of **strategy**, the evaluation recommends quickly defining a plan to merge with AP.

In terms of **financial capacity**, the evaluation recommends the rapid development of an external communication and fundraising strategy for the new entity.

In terms of **project management and sustainability**, the evaluation recommends selecting projects based on the criteria aligned with the entity’s new mission, providing for an exit strategy as soon as a project is formulated and then, before the end of the project, ensuring the implementation of the exit conditions and, finally, ensuring monitoring of its successful completion.

In terms of **partnership management**, the evaluation recommends defining the criteria for selecting partners that are aligned with the entity’s new mission, identifying a local association to manage the next co-financed project in the field and setting up the terms for a balanced partnership.

In terms of **documentation management**, the evaluation recommends adopting the shared document management system set up by AP.

In terms of **continuous improvement and learning**, the evaluation recommends obtaining structured and periodic feedback at NGO level and sharing experiences and good practices with other NGOs and partners in order to learn from others and improve its own practices.