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## ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE NGO Fondation Luxembourg-El Salvador

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 the Fondation Luxembourg - El Salvador (FOLES). 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 NGO.

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Between November 2022 and April 2023, Artemis evaluated the organisational capacity of 11 Luxembourgish development NGOs on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs – Directorate for Development Cooperation (MAEE-DCD). These NGOs included the Fondation Luxembourg - El Salvador (FOLES). The MAEE and the NGOs concerned were informed in advance of the methodology to be used during the evaluation, which included in particular a self-diagnosis workshop as a framework for an exchange between the evaluators and the NGO on the preliminary conclusions of the work, and a meeting to present the provisional report to the MAEE. The report presents the analyses carried out by the team of evaluators, together with their conclusions and recommendations.

FOLES is today the only, or one of the only, Luxembourgish non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) active in El Salvador. Since its inception, FOLES has benefited from having dual footholds in both Luxembourg and El Salvador. It is deeply rooted in the civil society of Luxembourg and is a recognised actor in the areas of intervention in El Salvador.

FOLES' mission was initially to promote and support “any social and educational activity” with the distressed population of El Salvador as its target. Today, the NGDO defines its mission more broadly as “helping the poor people of El Salvador”. The NGO plans to eventually merge with its northern partner, the “Komm hëllef mat Préizerdaul” asbl association, with which FOLES has been working for a number of years.

At the time of the evaluation, the Board of Directors (BoD) is incomplete, since it has no chairperson or treasurer. The day-to-day business is managed by the new vice-chair who has temporarily taken on some of the chairperson's tasks. The NGO does not employ any salaried staff. Since there are no volunteers to take over, its human resources are limited to the 3 to 5 members of the board who are involved in the activities and the running of the NGO. To counteract the increasing fatigue of this group of stalwarts, the NGO is considering hiring someone to manage the foundation and its budget.

Two board members underwent training in project cycle management more than 10 years ago. Up to now, the NGO has relied heavily on its main local partner whom it deems sufficiently competent in the matter. Today, the two volunteers feel that they no longer have the energy needed to update their skills and review their project management methods, and wish to hand over to a qualified, experienced person who has yet to be identified.

The NGDO does not have a shared information system allowing directors access to management and project documents.

Financially, FOLES has been able to build a relationship of trust with its donors and its current financial situation is sound, the equivalent of four years of operation. It is therefore highly autonomous, able to carry out significant activities with its own funds, and does not need to depend on state subsidies, although these are perceived as an important added value for the implementation of more ambitious projects. FOLES does not have a proper communication, awareness-raising, and fundraising strategy, but implements various kinds of actions.

The NGDO's overall performance is good, in terms of its partners' satisfaction and the results it obtains. The NGDO meets MAEE requirements and the needs of its local partner and is a financially efficient Foundation. In the future, appropriate steps should be taken to provide for the costs of external consultancy and/or an employee, depending on the decisions that are to be made. As regards operations, efficiency is more mixed, with reports submitted late to the MAEE and delays in the last co-financed project.

The relevance of FOLES' mission and interventions is rooted in the local Salvadorian context. FOLES seeks to initiate local actions in keeping with the country's priorities. However, the reference programmes and strategies mentioned in the co-funding requests are sometimes no longer in effect.

The main guarantees for FOLES' sustainability as an NGDO lie in the organisation's strong financial capacity and its visibility in Luxembourg. These guarantees need to be consolidated. In addition, the fatigue felt by the BoD associated with the problems in recruiting new members poses a risk to FOLES' sustainability as an institution.

FOLES is a signatory to the SEAH charter for the prevention of harassment and sexual harassment. Two directors have undergone online training. However, the NGDO has not implemented any concrete prevention or monitoring measures at this level. The milk production improvement project mainly addresses the issue of human rights through the prism of good governance, which is one of the local partner's priorities. This project had an environmental marker of 1. The housing construction project in San Agustín aims to realise the right to housing and a decent life, and the right to health. The NGDO board is currently unbalanced in terms of gender, with 3 women out of 14 directors. FOLES' strategy defines women as priority target beneficiaries of its projects, in the same way as children and young people.

Despite being a member of the NGDO Cooperation Circle, FOLES has little contact with other Luxembourg NGDOs, and therefore loses out on opportunities for synergies or exchanges of good practices.

Two interesting practices were identified during the evaluation:

- The occasional use of external expertise on projects to ensure their successful completion.
- Implementation of a participatory diagnosis during a project's identification phase.

In this context, the evaluators have put forward a series of 18 recommendations that target different aspects of the NGO's work.

In terms of governance, organisation and resources, the evaluation recommends quickly identifying a chairperson and a treasurer, ensuring the succession of missing or unavailable directors and making use of the services of an external consultant.

In terms of strategy, the evaluation recommends organising a strategic seminar to make the necessary decisions in terms of the positioning and financing of projects.

In terms of financial capacity, the evaluation mainly recommends defining and then implementing a communication and fundraising strategy.

In terms of project management and sustainability, the evaluation mainly recommends strengthening the NGO's project management capacities; systematically carrying out an initial participatory diagnosis to analyse needs and risks before launching a new project; considering an exit strategy for co-financed projects; taking into greater account the new general conditions governing contractual relations between the MAEE and NGDOs; and training the local partner on these conditions and the reporting requirements.

In terms of partnership management, the evaluation essentially recommends working towards building the capacity of the local partners.

In terms of document management, the evaluation recommends setting up a shared computer storage space.

In terms of continuous improvement, the evaluation recommends systematising and formalising feedback and capitalisation procedures and project evaluations.

Lastly, the evaluation recommends anchoring the projects in the national reference frameworks in force and improving the formulation of indicators for cross-cutting themes.