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ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NGO “Kindernothilfe Luxembourg a.s.b.l.”

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 “Kindernothilfe Luxembourg a.s.b.l.”. 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.

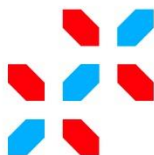
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Between November 2022 and April 2023, Artemis carried out an organisational evaluation of 11 Luxembourgish non-governmental development organisations (NGDO) on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs – Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs (MAEE-DCDAH). These NGDOs included “Kindernothilfe Luxembourg a.s.b.l.” (KNHL). The MAEE and the NGDOs concerned were informed in advance of the methodology to be used during the evaluation process, 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.

KNHL was set up in 2009 as a result of Luxembourg-based donors to the KNH network wishing to implement advocacy operations for the protection of children’s rights in and outside the country. The NGO “pursues the objective of contributing to the long-term improvement of the living conditions of children and young people in need, regardless of gender, race or religion”.

In just a few years, KNHL has become a medium-sized NGO which employs 5 permanent staff (part-time and full-time) and which manages a portfolio of projects worth more than one million euros per year. In 2023, it is implementing 7 projects co-financed by the MAEE, but also by the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development (MECDD), in the fields of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. It also manages a framework agreement funded by the MAEE on development education and awareness raising. Its development cooperation projects are being implemented with partners in Malawi and Zambia, its humanitarian projects are in Lebanon and Zambia and the climate project is being deployed in the Philippines.

The NGO benefits from an extensive, stable donor base comprising individuals, companies, and a foundation, and which is kept informed and mobilised through an effective communication strategy based around them. Its finances are sound.

The NGO has set up effective procedures for managing projects and mobilising public funding in Luxembourg, thanks to the legacy of the KNH network and especially KNHD, the oldest and most important branch of the network. This has enabled very rapid growth in terms of resources and activities. The progress made by the NGO in less than 15 years is impressive; other NGOs in Luxembourg have taken many years, sometimes even double or triple the time, to reach this level of visibility and activity. KNHD’s technical and financial contributions are clearly related to this success. In this context, while belonging to the KNH network enables KNHL to benefit from a wealth of experience, this is paid for in terms of autonomy and identity. Nevertheless, the NGO has already invested in areas where it can deploy its own identity, and this is particularly the case with development education and awareness activities in Luxembourg. There are lessons to be learned from this experience.

Management is now envisaging a new stage of growth, the idea being to move on to a framework agreement model with the MAEE, but also to roll out new activities in other areas. A strategic reflection was initiated in 2022 by the permanent team, under the supervision of the Board of Directors (BoD), on the best ways to view KNHL’s position within the KNH group and to drive potential new interventions. Management plans to recruit staff to support this growth because the permanent team, although highly motivated, has now reached its full absorption capacity.

In this respect, it is feared that the NGO’s structure could be weakened by a new quantitative leap in its interventions. It is already very complex to drive the existing interventions due to the diverse nature of the operations carried out by the NGO, even if the central theme of child protection makes it possible to stay on course. There is a need for consolidation and significant reflection, particularly on the NGO’s priorities and on its autonomy and positioning within the KNH group. This must be considered in light of the NGO’s ambition to move on to the framework agreement model in its relations with the MAEE. An organisational

audit was conducted in this context, but did not answer key questions such as the NGO's capacity to develop and maintain synergies between its various interventions but also between its various partners, or the question of the transfer of capacity towards partners and beneficiaries in the South.

Analyses of the NGO's strengths and weaknesses that were carried out both internally and by the evaluators converge on many diagnostic points and concur on the need to take a step back to document and evaluate its practices. Taking stock in this way could highlight clear priorities for its activities and therefore a more relevant positioning for the NGO in Luxembourg.

All these conclusions, which are extensively detailed and evidenced in the report, led the evaluators to propose 21 recommendations, including four general recommendations, four recommendations on organisation and operation, three recommendations on strategy, three recommendations on financial management, four recommendations concerning the projects implemented by the NGO, and three recommendations on cross-cutting issues. These were discussed with the NGO and the MAEE during the feedback meeting held on 7 March 2023.

As a general recommendation, the evaluators suggest that the NGO consolidates its strategic and operational bases considering the forthcoming transition to the framework agreement model. This would entail continuing the efforts made in 2022 by reflecting on the fundamental themes of future interventions such as priorities, synergies and the transfer of capacity.

Regarding the organisation and operation of the NGO, it is recommended to strengthen the current team and to dedicate more time to documentation and capitalisation on its operational experience. Increasing the number of members of the BoD by introducing some diversity could also lead to different viewpoints.

In terms of strategy, the development cooperation activities carried out by the NGO require further anchoring within the Luxembourg civil society through generating ties of solidarity with the beneficiaries of its interventions in the South.

The evaluators recommend conducting a full financial audit starting with the year a co-financing was first granted by the MAEE. The NGO's usual financial monitoring system does not present a table of donors by origin with their associated donations; it focuses instead on the mobilisation of its own funds to supply the NGO's co-financing counterpart. Since the origin of its own funds used in the context of co-financing cannot be directly linked to its origin, this needs to be verified.

Regarding development cooperation projects, more emphasis should be placed on the transfer of know-how and capacities, and on the systematic and regular identification of monitoring indicators. Similarly, the implementation of lessons learned, and recommendations made by evaluations should be monitored more accurately and in greater detail to effectively improve the quality of the NGO's interventions.

Finally, in terms of cross-cutting issues (gender, human rights, and the environment), the NGO specifically takes them into account in its project proposals but struggles to effectively monitor their concrete implementation in the projects. A further recommendation is thus to properly integrate the monitoring methods proposed in the action plans recently developed by the MAEE on these matters.