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ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE NGO “TOUTES À L’ÉCOLE LUXEMBOURG ASBL” (TAE 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 “Toutes à l’école Luxembourg asbl” (TAE 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.

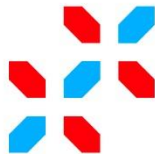
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Set up in 2010 and approved by the Luxembourg MAEE in 2015, the NGO “Toutes à l’école Luxembourg asbl” (TAE L) is thriving. Its current strength is based on widely shared values, a clear and unifying mission, and the dynamism of its volunteer members and permanent staff.

While its main objective is to support the education of the poorest young girls in the world, in its sole country of intervention, Cambodia, it facilitates the schooling and empowerment of young girls by setting up hostels for female students, implementing educational programmes and constructing a residential school for secondary school girls on the Happy Chandara (HC) campus, co-managed with TAE France. TAE L is a member of the TAE network, whose trademark licence it purchased. It has collaborative relationships and two cross-directorships with TAE France, but it remains an independent Luxembourg entity with its own strategy, its own organisation, its own mode of management and operation, its own information system and control of its projects. TAE L operates in synergy with TAE France in Cambodia.

Since the NGO had never been evaluated and the MAEE wanted to know more about its structure, its approach and its working methods in the field in Cambodia, it was included in the group of 11 NGOs benefiting from an organisational evaluation in 2022-2023. This evaluation was conducted by Artemis, which engaged a team of three experts. The evaluation took place in good conditions and in full transparency. The NGO was very open and available.

These are the results of the evaluation:

The NGO’s organisational capacity & project implementation performance

TAE L’s **governance** is healthy, with a chairperson elected for three years, renewable only once, and the systematic withdrawal of the chairperson from decision-making in the event of a conflict of interest. Its style of **leadership** is participatory and collaborative, with a collegial decision-making process. In addition to the roles and responsibilities covered by seven volunteer members, and benefiting from the strong leadership of the duo formed by the current chairperson/treasurer and a director with experience in the field, the Board relies on three permanent employees: one who has held the position of executive secretary of the Board since the beginning of 2019, a communication officer since the end of 2020 and an operations director since January 2022. These recruitments will allow the chairperson, who concurrently holds several functions, to take a step back with regard to the NGO’s operational management and development projects. The professional profile of the members is clearly oriented towards auditing, financial and legal professions, which clearly benefits the **financial and administrative management** of the NGO, which is meticulous and transparent. The chairperson/treasurer and the executive secretary work closely together to monitor financial movements and ensure payments. They work on the four-eyes principle. The mechanisms for the wide dissemination and publication of Board and GM minutes allow for a **transparent information flow**.

TAE L’s **financial situation** seems healthy and sustainable, with a diversity of funding sources: sponsorships, individual and corporate donations, public subsidies, etc., regular surplus earnings and sufficient contributions for its co-financed projects. However, TAE L remains dependent on the MAEE at this level, since salaries are involved.

Following a **strategic reflection** initiated by the vice-chair and conducted over several sessions in 2021, the NGO’s new mission has been redefined in a participatory manner as follows: “to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged girls in Cambodian society”, through the development of a material, educational and social support programme for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds who have completed their primary and secondary education at the HC school to pursue post-secondary studies. TAE L also offers accommodation to secondary school girls from HC (residential school). This strategic review also enabled the NGO to define its medium-term ambitions: the Board’s transition towards a less operational role, search for relevant efficiency and outcome indicators and reinforcement of synergies with TAE France. It

has imbued the NGO with a **dynamic of professionalism** in Luxembourg and of **empowerment** in the branch in Cambodia, where 24 people are working on the housing project and 9 people in the residential school, making a total of 33 employees. The five expatriates mainly hold leadership and management positions: four on a VSI (International Solidarity Volunteering) contract and one on a local expatriate contract. Despite various attempts, a local director who meets requirements has not been found.

As regards the NGO's **interventions**, the evaluation confirmed good project cycle management and results-based management (RBM), thanks to the skills of the chairperson/director duo and professional work habits. The association's other volunteers and permanent staff, on the other hand, have not had any other training on the effectiveness of development aid, partnerships or the sustainability of projects to complement their current skills. Identification is based on a good knowledge of the field and lessons learned from previous projects. Formulation is participatory and monitoring is carried out using indicators of success in studies, short-term professional integration and wellbeing at the residential school. The NGDO plans to review these to include indicators of efficiency, performance and longer-term monitoring of professional integration. Reports and monitoring missions are regular. An audit was carried out for the residential school 2 project, which also took into consideration the OECD DAC criteria, and a final external evaluation report is being finalised for the support project (housing). There are some interactions with other associations working in the same field in Cambodia with a view to sharing experiences.

While the NGDO does not have a local partner, it makes use of a **branch office** and nevertheless contributes to strengthening the local fabric: recruitment of local staff, partnerships with relocated local or European companies, capacity building for young girls and indirectly for their communities. However, these results deserve to be given more prominence by the NGO.

Lastly, TAE L has a **firm foothold** in Luxembourg, which it would like to improve further, and enjoys **high-quality external communication**, enabling it to strengthen its image and enhance its repute.

Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NGO

TAE L's overall **performance** is good, in terms of its partners' satisfaction and the operational and financial results obtained. In terms of **efficiency**, the operating cost ratio of nearly 18%, which is high compared to the average among NGDOs with few or no permanent staff (ranging from 2 to 8%), is due to the number of employees in the North (3) and the South (29), stemming from a strategic choice made by the NGO. However, the evaluation was unable to demonstrate whether this choice makes a difference in effectiveness and impact in the field compared to an NGO that works with a local partner, apart from better control of the project on site and the creation of local jobs.

In the field, TAE L had initially rolled out a model based on Western culture and perceptions to meet its objectives. The NGDO considered certain pitfalls due to the local culture and setting, and one-off occurrences such as adapting to the health crisis, to adjust its educational strategy and open up a little more to the local setting. The NGO is aware of the approaches that will enable it to further improve its **relevance**, such as working with families, awareness raising and behaviour change communication.

TAE L's intervention strategy in Cambodia is a **consolidation strategy**, whose relies on the current capacity to accommodate female students, on the strengthening of the support to young women in order to increase their level of integration and on the empowerment of the branch office. TAE L and TAE LS have not yet defined an exit strategy from the project but are considering empowering the branch office in Cambodia. **Sustainability** is a fundamental issue for the NGDO as it covers all the salaries of the branch office.

Analysis of the integration of priority cross-cutting issues for Luxembourg's cooperation programme

A number of initiatives are aimed at a better understanding and consideration of **human rights**, such as information sessions on sexual and reproductive health rights, special attention to the physical and mental health of female students, awareness of cyberbullying and an undertaking to change the salary scale to balance the gaps between local and expatriate staff and to develop training. Training in the fight against harassment and sexual exploitation, which is compulsory for Luxembourg NGOs, has not, however, trickled down to the branch office. There is no engagement of staff (female or male) or partner companies at this level.

In terms of gender equality, TAE L has an exclusively female target audience with a project with a DAC score of 1 on gender equality. The training given on campus is not dependent on gender stereotypes and TAE LS is trying to gradually move towards more diversity by recruiting both male and female staff. However TAE L does not have a gender mainstreaming strategy, which would address more precisely the gender-specific needs of young girls, to understand their relationship with the local culture and to handle potential criticism of positive discrimination in favour of girls. There is no situational analysis that provides enough data to build a longer-term strategy and to define action strategies and objectives more clearly. Over the various stages of the evaluation process, TAE L got a better understanding of this observation and identified the approaches required to address the recommendations made on this point.

Lastly, the evaluation noted the NGO’s keen interest in **environmental sustainability** as regards the running of its homes, an interest which is supported by the functions of the current chairperson in terms of sustainable development. The project is sensitive to environmental issues and the jobs of tomorrow, including green jobs. It is not just TAE L’s projects that pursue this dynamic but the entire Happy Chandara campus.

Several interesting practices have been identified by the evaluation, which could be the subject of an analysis and possibly even an exchange with other NGOs: 1. Sound governance, participatory leadership and transparency, 2. Strategic review exercise with follow-up plan, and 3. Work on soft skills.

Artemis has put forward **10 recommendations** for the NGO TAE L, covering six main themes.

Governance, organisation and human resources	Strategy
R1 – Build human resource capacity R2 – Pursue efforts to separate governance and operational functions	R3 – Ensure regular and systematic monitoring of the NGO’s strategic plan (underway)
Financial management	Project monitoring and sustainability
R4 – Present more clearly the NGO’s share in the co-financing of a project by reviewing the logic governing the intended use of funds	R6 – Initiate a capitalisation process (underway)
Partnership management:	Cross-cutting themes
R7 – Improve its foothold in Luxembourg R8 – Strengthening of the local fabric	R9 – Structure and formulate intervention strategies for cross-cutting themes R10 – Contact other NGOs involved in vocational training for an exchange of practices