



THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Directorate for Development Cooperation
and Humanitarian Affairs

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NGOs HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL LUXEMBOURG (HIL) AND ACTION SOLIDARITÉ TIERS MONDE (ASTM) IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS RISING

Executive Summary
January 2017

The findings and recommendations presented in this document were elaborated on the basis of the evaluator's methods, processes, techniques and know-how. They do not necessarily reflect the Ministry's point of view.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **mid-term evaluation** refers to:

- **Two framework agreements** for cooperation on development education and awareness-raising in Luxembourg.
 - o 1. « *Le fléau de la violence armée contre les populations civiles en période de conflits et de post-conflit : ses causes, ses conséquences, et comment l'endiguer* », which included a grant of 527 584 € to Handicap International Luxembourg (HIL); and
 - o 2. « *Les citoyens au Luxembourg, acteurs de changement social pour un monde plus juste* », which involved a 810 000 € grant to the organisation, l'Action solidarité tiers-monde (ASTM);
- A **mandate** of « Information spécialisée sur le développement et services à la collectivité », for the *Centre d'information tiers-monde* (Citim), which included 970 283,53 € in funding for ASTM.

These three instruments cover the period from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2017. The contractual agreements date back to January 29, 2015. The evaluation covers the 2015-2016 period.

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Apart from verifying the proper use of public funds, the initial purpose of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et Européennes (MAEE) was to help ASTM and HIL to: reflect on their respective interventions; promote an enhanced dialogue between partners; and contribute to the development of a working culture focused on results and learning.

For this purpose, the MAEE decided to conduct a joint evaluation of both organisations, which are very different. Such an evaluation allows for a more in-depth comparison of their respective activities, to determine what is shared and structural, and what is situational and specific to each organisation.

1.2. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

In Luxembourg, one of the main priorities for the cooperation sector is to ensure the participation of NGOs. For instance, in 2015, out of the €325 million allocated to development aid, 16% were for NGOs. A specific budget-heading was dedicated to both awareness-raising and development education in 2015 (€1 871 928).

In total, 13 framework-agreements and 11 annual projects were co-financed in 2015. The two framework agreements evaluated here accounted for **25.85% of the global annual disbursement of the MAEE for development education**, through budget-heading 017.33.00– « *Participation aux frais d'organisations non gouvernementales pour la réalisation d'actions de sensibilisation de l'opinion publique luxembourgeoise concernant la coopération au développement et autres mesures à cet effet* ». The mandate for Citim was financed by another financial instrument, the *Fonds de la Coopération au Développement*.

Many development educational activities took place in 2015, in particular within the context of Luxembourg's EU Council Presidency and the European Year for Development. It was also the second year of application of the revised terms and conditions regulating NGO projects funded by the MAEE (in relation to the measures of the "*Paquet d'avenir (Zukunftspak)*"), implemented in October 2014.

1.3. APPROACH AND METHOD

The experts involved carried out the evaluation of the three instruments (framework-agreements and mandate) using a "change-based" approach. Changes (in terms of knowledge, values, attitudes; individual or collective) constitute the most important part of the added-value of development education and awareness-raising projects, which, ultimately, aim to encourage citizens to act in favor of a more just and sustainable world.

The evaluation process was conducted in four successive phases: briefing (May-July 2016), data collection (July-September), fieldwork (to present the first findings to the different stakeholders), and the reporting phase.

For each NGO, the experts organised a focus-group during the briefing phase, to ascertain the views and opinions of employees. They also conducted complementary interviews with several teams and officials from the wider NGO sector in Luxembourg and in neighboring countries in order to identify “best practices”.

The experts identified tangible aspects of the pedagogic approach and the general message of the two organisations involved through the observation of their day-to-day activities. In order to qualitatively assess the impact of their actions, two surveys of the targeted audience were conducted (one online and one face-to-face).

1.4. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

The **structural and organisational cross-audit** found that the operational modalities of each body were well-defined. ASTM was created in 1969 and HIL in 1997. Both follow the general rules and legislation pertaining to associations. The general assemblies of both organisations (35 members for ASTM, 22 for HIL) take decisions on reports, strategic priorities and budgets. Also, members of their respective administration councils (eight members at ASTM, nine at HIL) participate in working committees with the operational teams (14 full-time equivalents at ASTM and 10.5 at HIL). Internal developments, such as the “organisational reinforcement process” (PRO) (ASTM) or the new scheduling system (per project) at HIL, show the desire of both organisations to improve the implementation of their actions. The objective is to clarify the decision-making processes and to encourage the direct participation of administrators in the day-to-day activities. The annual accounts of both NGOs comply with the relevant regulations and legal provisions in Luxembourg. In 2015, the global outgoings of ASTM were of €3 003 941, and €6 968 626 for HIL. The proportion of awareness-raising and development education activities in Luxembourg were 27% and 2% respectively. Accounts are verified by an independent auditor, as required for framework-agreements, and are approved unconditionally. Both organisations are well-established in the development sector, notably through the *Cercle de Coopération*, although HIL does not actively participate in its associated group on “development education and volunteering (Gedev)”. It is the fourth framework-agreement for ASTM, but only the second for HIL.

The analysis of the project cycle management and of the inherent risks showed a weak mobilisation of the Theory of Change. The framework-agreements appeared to contribute to the missions of the two NGOs, rather than to the goals of stand alone projects. This is even more pronounced when the issues addressed are as diverse as they are for ASTM. Development education is still very much focused on the awareness-raising and advocacy aspects, even though its educational dimension has recently been reinforced. If a concern for quality control emerges during the implementation of activities, the follow-up mechanism is, at present, more geared towards meeting contractual commitments, rather than improving the implementation process (drawing lessons from the experience and improving future actions).

Both organisations’ action programmes are in accordance with the strategies for cooperation on development education in Luxembourg, as shown by the analysis of their strategic and operational approaches. They follow each step of the “development education *continuum*”, promoted by the EU, from raising awareness among the general public to the recruitment of volunteers and multipliers. They also takes account of the fact that development education is itself an intermediary step, the ultimate aim of which is to strengthen the desire and capacity of citizens to act.

Luxembourg has published a charter for sustainable development education, mostly focused on the better integration of people and their environment and the protection of the planet’s resources. In general, HIL and ASTM follow the general principles of this charter.

Based on the reconstitution of both logical frameworks by the experts, one can identify two different rationales: HIL is very results oriented, while ASTM focuses more on its activities. There is also a significant difference in terms of the relative attention given to awareness-raising and educational activities, with a ratio of 20%/80% for ASTM and 12%/78% for HIL. However, even though the interventions and the expected results are complementary, the leverage effect used to commit citizens is not well documented. Each activity is coherent with the global project, and fragmentation has been avoided through the development of operational approach.

Regarding the **evaluation of activities**, an analysis of the relevance of the actions undertaken shows they are not sufficiently linked to strategic objectives. However, some lessons from the previous evaluation have been implemented. NGOs are conscious of their need to reinforce the needs analysis of their respective target groups (especially those identified by ASTM as multipliers), as well as their reflection on less prevalent groups. HIL completed a baseline study but as yet there has been limited mobilisation of these less prevalent groups. ASTM and HIL focus on very different activities, although both wish to achieve the double objective of “living together better” and “doing together better”, which is particularly pertinent in the current environment, where political discourses are increasingly hardline and discriminatory. Their grounding in the South helps when it comes to involving local protagonists, in order to illustrate global issues and bring new perspectives to the discussion. The development education strategies of both organisations would, however, be more relevant if there were stronger links with other institutional or civil society actors working on the same issues in the same areas.

Despite a few exceptions, most activities are very **effective**. In both projects, awareness-raising activities are still preponderant, even though less numerous than in the previous framework agreement. ASTM tends towards a more targeted approach, whereas the HIL takes a broader perspective. The **Efficiency** of the various activities undertaken is sufficiently assessed. Because efficiency indicators are not clearly appraised (quantitatively), the experts focused on comparing each NGOs’ achievements for both framework agreements. The results are undeniable. However, the experts identified a lack of appropriation and some lassitude among target-groups regarding recurring activities. Some of the activities did sufficiently mobilise their relevant target groups. Advocacy activities are in line with the level of commitment observed in the previous agreements. This could be carried out by national and international networks, in a collective and concerted manner. Education activities would have a much stronger impact if relations between active NGOs and the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth were more structured and organised.

As already mentioned, the monitoring mechanism does not allow for a sufficient assessment of **efficiency**. However, both NGOs have started their own reflection on this issue. ASTM, for example, has reduced its total payroll and its proportion of the budget. This issue is even more crucial since both structures share an internal tension relative to their respective workloads. A break down of both budgets in 2015 confirmed the very different nature of the projects, with a prevalence of human resources in the case of ASTM (2/3 of the budget), which is typical of projects including a broad educative dimension, and a more pronounced service delivery approach to awareness raising by HIL, which implies more externalisation of activities. This distribution of expenditures fits the one presented during the project’s review.

Where they exist, objectively verifiable indicators are still very approximate with regards to **impacts**. There is no doubt about the contribution of NGOs, but measuring their impact in relation to the initial objectives is still complicated by a lack of solid indicators. Results still depend on each organisations’ strategy, since the partnerships and the structuring of the sector did not contribute substantially. This is less evident in the case of awareness-raising, however, as coordination among the main actors is still strong and helps to bring the target publics together.

The Eurobarometer completed for the European Year of Development provides interesting insights into the effects of development education in Luxembourg, even though they do not document links between these phenomena and the specific actions of both organisations.

Both NGOs took account of the **sustainability** of their relations with partners. However, the monitoring mechanism still focuses very much on the quantitative results of their actions, so the question of the appropriation (of methods and models) by the partners is only partly considered.

1.5. CONCLUSIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

In terms of **strategy**, development education is considered as a long term goal by both NGOs, within a sector conceptually divided between two approaches: the “environment-oriented” and the “development-oriented” approach. Progressively, after many years of giving prominence to awareness-raising activities, more attention is being given to education. But both NGOs are facing challenges: formalising their own educational strategies in an institutional environment which is not very supportive; and collectively capturing their own target audiences, which is mostly opportunistic.

Efforts have been made to open up the actions of both NGOs to less captive audiences, as shown by the **implementation** of their activities. As a consequence, they have started to update their educational tools. Those targeting multipliers favor both knowledge transfers and didactical skills, but the latter need to be strengthened. In general, both organisations need to be careful that new projects are not developed at the expense of what’s already existing and functional.

In terms of **monitoring-evaluation**, the concepts of qualitative monitoring and *ex-ante* evaluation are starting to grow in both NGOs. However, the existing monitoring mechanisms focus more on showing that they respect their contracts, rather than genuinely supporting learning and providing an opportunity to review the positive and negative aspects of their experience, so as to inform their future strategies. Finally, there is a need for capitalization tools in order to model the best practices of both NGOs’ in relation to their engagement with multipliers.

1.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a clear need to strengthen what already exists rather than to further develop it, in order to consolidate the general coherence and avoid risking an erosion of resources.

- ▶ ASTM could reinforce its efforts to reassess and prioritise its activities. High added-value actions (such as targeting multipliers) should be strengthened in order to better support local initiatives – through calls for initiatives, contests or project incubators, for instance. ASTM would benefit from completing a mapping of existing local citizens’ initiatives in which it could introduce its own actions, so as to strengthen already existing dynamics.

From a more political standpoint, ASTM would also benefit from an in-depth reflection on its own semantical approach to the notion of development education. ASTM should follow current initiatives at European level on the social and solidarity-based economy, human-rights and new types of citizens’ mobilisation. These discussions are now central to the sector and contribute to opening it up, through integrating experiences that are still confined to the periphery.

- ▶ HIL should focus on education as its strategic priority. It would in particular benefit from identifying and strengthening multipliers as a priority axis of its actions, in order to create a network of relays. HIL should participate in existing fora for dialogue and concertation between actors in the development education sector in Luxembourg and neighbouring regions, in order to nurture its own strategies and practices, while also sharing its own original approach with the wider sector.

Both NGOs need to strengthen their indicators in order to monitor the implementation of their actions, measure their impact, and develop and update their strategies accordingly.