

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE DGD PROGRAM (2017 - 2021) ENTRAIDE & FRATERNITÉ –

Management Response - Philippines Report

1. Context

The project named “*Through the enhancement of food sovereignty, farming and fishing communities in Mindanao strengthen the development of resilient and sustainable rural livelihoods*” constitutes the seven specific objectives implemented in the Philippines by five partners organizations, notably, CONZARRD, AGRO-ECO (former DKMP-Lanao), LAFCCOD, SUMPAY, and KILOS KA as part of the 2017-2021 DGD program managed by Entraide & Fraternité’s called “*To make the Earth run smoothly: food sovereignty for all*”. A total amount of EUR 1.044.000 was allocated over five years. Its absorption rate is 98% from 2017 to 2020.

The evaluation covers the entire activities effects and results of the “*Mindanao Tripeople Programme on Food Sovereignty and Peacebuilding*” project according to the current regulatory framework governing the DGD programme. Key analysis criteria include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, Covid-19, as well as cross-cutting themes such as gender, environment, and human rights. A key focus was placed on the promotion of agroecological techniques among farmer organizations, as well as policy support, advocacy, and coordination work. The evaluation covers the period of 2017-2021 and takes stock of the final execution of the program by identifying the strengths and constraints, through an analysis of the predefined criteria. This involves the analysis of the extent to which specific objectives and the results underlying them have been achieved from a quantitative and qualitative point of view for the beneficiary in general and in a differentiated manner regarding women and men. Based on the evidence collected, the evaluation formulates programmatic recommendations and strategic orientations for future interventions.

The evaluation purpose is to support learning in order to draw lessons and improve impact. The main objective is to measure the achievement of results with a view to accountability, monitoring of interventions and improvement. Specific objectives cover:

- i) Report to all parties involved in the Entraide et Fraternité program (EF, public and private funders, local and strategic partners organizations, beneficiaries);
- ii) Guide EF and partners organizations to adjust the theory of change and implementation of the next five-year program (2022-2026); and
- iii) Contribute to cross-country learning/results. The main users of the evaluation are EF partners organizations, Entraide & Fraternité and the DGD.

The evaluation used a consultative and participatory approach involving stakeholders throughout the process. Mixed methods (desk review, semi-structured interviews, and group discussions) were used to collect information online from 14 February to 18 March 2022. Ten key informers interviews and 2 group discussions were conducted with 50% female and 50% male. Evidence gathered was triangulated through different methods and sources.

2. Evaluation’s conclusions

The project was **relevant** and aligned to the needs and priorities of the target audiences including women and men, through the development of resilient and sustainable rural livelihoods, using agroecological practices. Lobbying mechanism and capacity building were found as relevant tools to manage technical and legal assistance for conflicts related to land access with the authorities and/or landowners. But the project was limited in scope and coverage due to the budget constraints to allow room for other target farmer groups in need. The design of the project had an explicit focus of alignment with the main national agricultural goals and challenges in the Philippines as well as on targeted SDGs.

The project **effectiveness** was fully met given that it has significantly achieved its outputs and outcome (objective). The achieved target indicators were overreached under a strong synergy and complementarity built among partners organizations. Positive factors include capacity building trainings on agroecological topics, a timely support from E&F, the participation of the line agencies from the government, the revitalisation of environment by strengthening local economy and peace building, strong connection with indigenous organizations, the creation of seed banking for farmers, increase environmental awareness, building trust across political barriers for land ownership, strategic dialogue with the government of the Philippines, and the gender-sensitivity of the project to mostly involve women. But the performance of the project was affected by traditional norms and practices, the political situation of the country regarding land policy, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the climate change challenges coupled with the impact of natural disasters such as typhons and dry spells.

The project was **efficient** in achieving its results given its ability to develop a strong coordination to optimally use available resources and deliver the achieved results on time. Supporting strengths include the use of the revolving fund to maximise the utilisation of available resources. Synergies and complementarity of resources, a harmonized implementation approach and expertise have enhanced the efficiency of the project no matter the limited scale of fundings to cover logistic challenges, and the recruitment of skilful expertise to run the social enterprises created. However, the project does not provide a power-relation room to partners organizations to adjust expenses along the budget lines. Some delays to deliver the financial resources have impacted the livelihood component of the project as many farmers missed the production timeline.

The **sustainability** and existing exit strategy were useful to promote local ownership for financial sustainability of the intervention with focus on the revolving funds, capital build-up and local saving mechanisms put in place to ease a sustainable access to production assets. But social enterprises still need to be strengthened to ensure financial sustainability. The potential for sustainability of the project in terms of acquisition of skills and ownership was met. The creation of a seed bank reduced farmers' dependence on imported seeds and therefore improved the ownership of achieved results. Building block with local authorities and CSO, building trust and recognition locally are key assets to work collectively on and ensure a social cohesion. Empowerment actions helped people to claim their rights over land acquisition, but this requires substantial and continuous effort to enable a political change in the long run. Finally, at the political level, the sustainability of achieved results remains limited due to constant changes in the political situation in the Philippines.

Positive direct **effects** due the agroecological practices from an economic standpoint include the ability for farming and fishing households to improve livelihoods through the diversification of their agricultural production. Farmers engaged tree planting at the household level as well as solid waste segregation to cope with environmental challenges. The number of farming households that practiced natural resource management using the DRR-CCA' strategies have increased. The established fora and farming network have consolidated beneficiaries' efforts in the land rights claiming process and improve land tenure for the most vulnerable peoples. Social enterprises have collectively developed an attitude of learning on how to produce quality products. Nevertheless, the reduction of harvest and therefore income loss due to the Covid-19 was recorded. The project provides more emphasis on agroecological techniques, and not enough on product marketing of farmers' products. Monitoring tools are used in project implementation but some difficulties in monitoring were experienced and might need further efforts among partners organizations on how to effectively use these tools to achieve the expected results. Nonetheless, the project has significantly contributed to advancing equality between women and men. Gender equality might be affected by the patriarchal nature of the society in the Philippines.

The **Covid-19 pandemic** has negatively impacted the achieved results and outcome due to lockdown. Various meetings including the coordination usually completed by EF was largely affected by travel restrictions, and field works were limited on a minimum monitoring scale. Most work was done remotely including meetings, but the availability of internet connectivity was very challenging due to very slow internet connection and the limited knowledge of some partners organizations on how to work remotely. The Covid-19 has enabled the adoption of a new way of working. Success factors in the responses to

the Covid-19 include the adoption of mobile market by farmers to sell their products, gathering farmers into clusters and platforms. The project used a contingency plan for natural disasters and promote community solidarity among farmer groups to enable them to learn and observe the climate pattern, identifying alternative crops to be planted in case of emergency that can be grown in a short period of time. Furthermore, the contingency plan was also used to communicate with community hit by disasters, to assess the needs during the crisis. This strategy has proven to be effective also in the case of the pandemic to stay in contact with the communities during the period of movement restriction during lockdowns. The pandemic reduces farmers' ability to adapt to disasters and related crisis. Hence, the project's planning could differ during the Covid-19, and therefore, it takes more time than usual to prepare an emergency plan which can help in mitigating its negative impacts. While remote working was never a choice, the new way of working is not sustainable.

3. Recommendations and managerial response: Philippines report

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| Person in charge of writing the managerial response : Federico Didone | | |
| A) For partners organizations | | |
| Recommendation 1 : | | |
| Partners organizations should reinforce their synergies and complementarity of actions, as well as partnership development with national and local organizations by inviting them during joint meetings. Synergies and complementarity will support the interlinkages between development and peace sectors as much as possible given the challenging political context in the Philippines. | | |
| Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation. EF's partnership strategy puts emphasis on the importance of creating synergies, encouraging the partner organizations to collaborate with the most relevant actors, both at the local, national or international level. This particular aspect was taken into account during the 2022-2026 DGD programme development as synergies were planned to strengthen its impact. These synergies include not only collaborations with Belgian partners within the Philippines JSF (Joint Strategic Framework), but also with local actors. Specific budget is provided to implement the different planned actions stated here underneath. | | |
| What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation? N/A | | |
| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
| Synergy on monitoring tools and documentation of best practices (EF and SolidAgro). | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Synergy on common issues and campaigns (11.11.11, EF, Viva Salud and SolidAgro) | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Synergy on the accompaniment and exchange of knowledge and experience on social enterprise development (EF, CSA, Trias) | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Synergy for cooperation in the promotion of Family Agriculture and sustainable Rural Development (EF, CSA, Trias) | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

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| Synergy: Exchange of knowledge and experience of organic agriculture, coastal resource management and fisherfolk organization (EF, CSA, Trias) | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Synergies with local organizations and international organizations. | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

Recommendation 2 :

Partners organizations should continue with the harmonization of data collection tools and the monitoring process among themselves through a joint M&E framework to better inform the decision-making process. The approach of the project was great but required strong collaboration for data collection so that disaggregated data can be generated to better inform partners in the decision-making process when needed. This will surely reinforce the gender-sensitivity nature of the project.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

The M&E framework was strengthened for the 2022-2026 programme going one step forward than an activity follow-up, with as an objective to better assess behavioral changes. EF will apply disaggregated indicators in different categories to monitor levels of vulnerability which are variable given the composition of the households. Categorization of disaggregated indicators will include jointly headed households, single female-headed households and single male-headed households. Indicators for individuals will be disaggregated by sex to measure specific progress for women and men.

In addition, an internal EF working group responsible for monitoring, evaluation and learning has been set up.

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| Digitalization will also be central for the strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation process. The partners organizations will make good use of new technologies, such as the KoboToolbox (to collect data using surveys through electronic devices such as android phones or tablets) or such as the use of drones in data gathering. | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Establishment of a M&E working group within the EF office. | Interdepartmental working group (EF) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

Recommendation 3 :

Partners organizations should provide constant efforts for capacity building trainings to group beneficiaries on how to use the monitoring tools prior to the project implementation. This will ease field monitoring and data collection.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

Working jointly with the beneficiaries is part of EF's development approach to empower the communities and their members, to develop, implement and follow-up their own project autonomously. Partners organizations engage continuously with the beneficiaries and follow-up on their evolving needs. This approach ensures that the needs and priorities are identified and defined by the beneficiaries themselves.

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| Specific budget lines are provided to ensure capacity need assessments and capacity building of POs and partners organizations. | Local coordination (SUMPAY) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

Recommendation 4 :

More awareness and sensitization campaigns should be developed to fight against traditional norms and practices so that farmer members who are mostly old can positively adopt agroecological practices. This will continuously support social cohesion and lead to community interactions and social transformation among the targeted beneficiaries.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

This aspect was taken into account in the 2022-2026 programme elaboration, as the sociocultural dimension of agroecology was given a stronger emphasis in this new programme. Result 4 of the programme aiming for “farmers and fisherfolks organizations to increase their effectiveness of its campaigns on rights claiming and policy/legislative propositions on AE, water and land rights, environment, human rights, women's rights, through continuous organizing, movement building and consolidation of efforts in lobbying and advocacy and capacitations”, will include awareness and sensitization campaigns.

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| Our partner organization, Kilos Ka, the rural movement of Mindanao, leading result 4, was provided with additional financial resources to strengthen the impact of the campaign initiated by their members. | Local partner organization (KilosKa) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| All the partners organizations of the programme in the Philippines will actively participate to the result 4, setting up awareness and sensitization campaigns on various topics, such as agroecology and access to land, gender or environmental preservation. | Local partners organization | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

B) A Entraide et Fraternité

Recommendation 1 :

Through an inclusive and participatory approach, EF should continue to engage its partners in the promotion of agroecological practices with selected livelihoods to cope with beneficiaries' needs as much as possible. Sufficient funds should be allocated with room for flexibility along the budget lines under a suitable timeframe.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

EF will continue to engage with the partner organizations through a, inclusive and participatory approach. Continuous exchanges (both physical and virtual) with local coordination and partners organizations are planned during the programme intervention period.

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| Visits and exposure exchanges with the local coordinator and the partners organizations are planned, both in Belgium and in the Philippines. | EF's international partnership department | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |
| Annual project planning will be implemented to ensure that partners organizations will be able to review the original 5 year planning. | EF's international partnership department | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

Recommendation 2 :

EF should recommend the development of a strong emergency preparedness plan to mitigate impacts of environmental and natural disasters with a working mechanism to be used when needed. Special focus should be devoted to capacity building of partners' staff and farmer organizations to enable the use of this emergency plan.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

This recommendation was taken into account during the 2022-2026 DGD programme elaboration. The previous programme experience showed the importance to prepare contingency plans for communities to be resilient in case of natural and human-made disasters (Typhoons, earthquakes, armed conflict, global pandemic). This is also part of the mitigation strategies included the risk analysis realized by the partners organizations.

Result 1 of the programme "*Farming and fishing households, especially youth and women, have increased capability to manage their natural resources and improve practices on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation*" includes activities focused on the development of emergency preparedness plans (disaster-risk management).

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| Specific budget line for disaster-risk management and climate change adaptation was included in the activities of R1. | Partners organizations (CONZARRD, AGROECO, LAFCCOD) | During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period. |

Recommendation 3 :

Future projects should allow a strong focus on lobbying and advocacy campaigns to continuously empower people to claim their rights over land acquisition, and therefore enable a political change which cannot be achieved in the short run.

Managerial response: EF agrees with the recommendation.

This aspect was taken into account in the 2022-2026 programme elaboration, as the political dimension of agroecology was given a stronger emphasis in this new programme. Additional financial resources are provided to partners organizations to strengthen the impact of the advocacy campaigns. Synergies are planned to bring the campaigns and people claims from the local to the national level.

What are the reasons in case of a disagreement or a partial disagreement with the recommendation?

N/A

| Planned action(s) : | Department(s) or person(s) responsible | Planned date |
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| <p>Our partner organization, Kilos Ka, the rural movement of Mindanao, leading result 4, was provided with additional financial resources to strengthen the impact of the advocacy campaign, putting the right to access resources as a central thematic.</p> | <p>Local partner organization (KilosKa)</p> | <p>During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period.</p> |
| <p>Synergy on common issues and campaigns (11.11.11, EF, Viva Salud and SolidAgro) and synergies with local actors will be essential to strengthen the impact of the campaigns and to coordinate them at a national level.</p> | <p>Local partner organization (KilosKa), local coordination (SUMPAY) and EF</p> | <p>During the 2022-2026 programme implementation period.</p> |