



tearfund

NGANGU

creating equitable partnerships



**IMPACT ANALYSIS – EXECUTIF SUMMERY
of the NGANGU project
in the Central African Republic**

**Towards a contextualized proxi-mentorship
of local associations
in the strengthening of their capacities**

August 2024



INTRODUCTION

Capacity strengthening of local associations faces many challenges. How can we achieve organizational strengthening that is not limited to technical aspects since the most important challenges lie in the attitudes of partners (local and international) such as fear of change, feelings of misunderstanding or depreciation or risks of mimicry? How can we enhance the complementarity of each actor by integrating their specificities, their diverse knowledge and experiences?

In a fragile context such as that of the Central African Republic, the problem is historical and structural. Many local associations are former informal groups that became NGOs at the time of crises. This hybrid and organic model has many advantages, particularly for community mobilization, but also has disadvantages for international partnerships due to the lack of benchmarks and operational models, the need for time and mentorship to appropriate the operating and management methods of humanitarian and development NGOs.

IMPACTS IN FOUR AREAS

NGANGU's theory of change is built around four priority intervention areas to effectively address the causes of the problems:

- **self-awareness** (becoming aware of one's strengths, specificities and identity in order to enhance one's strong points and identify areas for improvement)
- **self-confidence** (believing in the potential and capabilities of one's association)
- **the ability to constantly adapt** to context, resources and needs
- **the search for complementarity and reciprocity** (valuing respective strengths and supporting each other in front of difficulties and constraints linked to the context)

Thus, CERAR and TEARFUND CAR set up the NGANGU pilot project ('strength' in Sango). This project sought to strengthen equitable partnerships between TEARFUND CAR and its local partners to strengthen civil society and the ability of local actors to make choices in an effective and contextualized manner. For the NGANGU project, CERAR developed an alternative capacity strengthening and local mentorship approach, based on innovative principles, methods and tools and aimed at better reciprocity, complementarity and moving towards co-leadership between national and international organizations. These principles and methods allow local associations to integrate their learning into their everyday practices and are applicable with the means available according to the context and the circumstances of each local association. This contextualization to each situation and each association makes the NGANGU methodology transferable to other contexts or sectors.



Responses to challenges through NGANGU impacts

- A better understanding of the realities of local associations allowed them to make their specificities visible and valued and to be recognized by their partners. NGANGU allowed them to understand that their specificities are strengths for their positioning in the world of NGOs.
- Their ability to articulate their vision, mission, roles and priorities and the acquisition of contextualized, inspiring and encouraging role models, allowed them to take ownership of the methods and tools adapted to their needs and to invest in longer-term plans.
- A different perception of resources (financial, but also human and logistical) even limited, has led to an unblocking and a setting into motion. Local associations have learned to plan with the available resources and in case of challenges, to be creative and to look for alternatives oriented towards the expected results and the objectives set.
- The ability to prioritize and limit changes based on objective criteria (priority for the association, feasibility within a realistic time frame, availability of necessary resources) has made it possible to acquire successful experiences of success and reduce the fear of change.
- Enhanced abilities to make independent decisions, manage challenges and achieve goals, as well as better management of responsibilities and partnerships have increased self-confidence.
- Better pooling of capacities and more collegial leadership, stimulating teamwork, has made it possible to distance themselves from the individual action of leaders and overly personalized management.

Thus, the unblocking of feelings of fear and helplessness, the more realistic vision of strengths and areas for improvement, of positioning in relation to the expectations of associations and their partners, as well as an awareness of their specificities and capacities have strengthened the self-confidence of local associations. This has resulted in more proactive and assertive internal and external communication, more professional organizational functioning, the sharing of responsibilities and decision-making reducing feelings of lack of legitimacy.

The NGANGU project helped local associations adapt planning to changing contexts or constraints without

compromising the achievement of objectives and without feeling insecure by going beyond the pre-established framework. Constant adaptation resulted in strengthening structural and organizational capacities, creating an enabling environment, integrating learning into everyday operations and capitalizing on them. This flexibility strengthened the climate of change and the desire to learn continuously. After strengthening their internal capacities, their awareness and self-confidence, the associations managed to open up to others and contribute to dialogue and initiatives with mutual and complementary respect and a desire for emulation between partners.



NGANGU'S INNOVATION IN ITS PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

The innovations of the project are linked to the founding principles developed by CERAR which guided the development of methods and tools but also all the activities carried out and attitudes towards learning. The main approaches are:

- The Spider Web Theory
- The Small Change Theory
- strengths-based approach and search for complementarity

- A pedagogical approach focused on learning by doing

The strength and originality of the NGANGU approach lies in the combination in a coherent and contextualized manner throughout the duration of the project of these principles and methods such as 360° self-evaluable, an adjustable action plan built on 3 pivotal changes, contextualized proximity mentorship, capitalization, contextualization and the gradual and phased approach.

THE IMPACTS OF THE NGANGU PROJECT INNOVATIONS

NGANGU's innovations, whether cross-cutting or specific methods, have contributed to the impacts of the overall project. By bringing innovative variations

to the methods of self-evaluation, action planning or peer learning, NGANGU project has operationalized the principles of localized capacity strengthening.

CROSS-CUTTING METHODS

The gradual and phased approach

As we mentioned in our analyses, each learner, whatever they may be, needs time and space to try and experiment with new learning, to identify lessons learned, take ownership of them and integrate them into everyday practices. Following this logic, NGANGU has proposed phased and progressive steps specific to each association.

Adopting a gradual and phased approach allowed local associations to gradually get back on their feet in different areas, to become familiar with the methods and to provide genuine framework and dynamics for continuous learning. By thus obtaining learning experiences and successes, the associations regained confidence in themselves and particularly in their capacities to learn and change.

Contextualization

Understanding the terminology, realities, issues and methods used by NGANGU was reinforced by a systematic concern to simplify and contextualize NGANGU to the realities of each association. This was done through an explanation of each term, the use of examples taken from the everyday life of the

associations and the creation of fictitious examples taken from African realities. These examples served as points of reference and of inspiration to open up to other perspectives and seek solutions related to each association' situation.



Capitalization

Capitalization allows lessons to be learned and assessments of changes and progress to be made, often at the end of a project. NGANGU's innovation is to have incorporated capitalization from day 1 of the project by asking each association to draw 3 lessons learned from each meeting or stage.

Contextualized Proximity Mentorship (CPM)

CPM, mentorship provided by CERAR and TEARFUND CAR, was essential in the NGANGU project for the four areas of intervention. Concerning self-awareness, mentorship and facilitation of reflections during the 360° self-evaluation, the valorization of the successes obtained (even minimal or intermediate according to the small change theory) and the constantly reinforced importance of taking into account one's identity and specificities have created a more realistic and positive vision of the capacities of each association. The feeling of being able to receive support - this 'proximity that gives confidence' - has reinforced the assertiveness and proactivity of

This made it possible to set up accountability mechanisms (coordination meetings) and specific internal tools (internal report - filing of documents) to document training and internal meetings.

associations. The same is true for CPM during the review of the adjustable action plans which made it possible to identify possible alternatives and to test other realistic opportunities while remaining faithful to the objectives and expected results. This mentorship in adapting to external and internal needs and constraints has reduced the fear of change and blockages in the operationalization of projects or in the organizational management. Finally, complementarity has been revealed both internally and externally and the mentorship has allowed the establishment of teamwork and exchanges between the associations.

SPECIFIC METHODS

360° self-evaluation

The specificity of this self-evaluation is to be 360°, to take into account the organizational factors and the results of each association on the basis of a list of open questions (rather than a checklist) thus to stimulate dialogue and self-reflection of representatives of various sectors and departments of each association. The associations testify that this 360° self-evaluation method has strengthened internal dialogue and led to a better awareness of its positioning, to greater confidence in collective capacities based on a more

realistic vision of the association in general and of its different levels and sectors in particular, as well as a better understanding of the context.

The 360° self-evaluation stimulated ownership (especially of one's own capacity strengthening process), understanding and internal motivation and enabled projection of possibilities and planning based on a realistic identification of resources.

The adjustable action plan based on three pivotal changes

The adjustable action plan (AAP) allowed associations to strengthen their capacity to plan and work in a structured manner, to take into account their contexts and to no longer remain blocked in front of challenges

or difficulties by adjusting their plans to achieve the expected results, while taking into account their resources available to be more independent and autonomous. The AAP also made it possible to achieve



three priorities, pivotal changes of the associations and thus put themselves in a situation of change.

Peer to peer learning

Peer to peer learning has had the impact of breaking with the spirit of competition between associations, offering benchmarks and other sources of inspiration,

becoming aware of and valuing one's strengths and successes in order to be recognized by others, seeking synergies and creating a spirit of mutual support.

THE IMPACTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL NGO

The impacts for the international organization involved in the project are essentially in the application of NGANGU's learning to the development of its own capacities and in the development of a more realistic perception of the circumstances and specificities of its positioning in the CAR and that of its local partners.

The most significant impact on the international NGO's 'partnership' department is its awareness that local associations must be supported in a flexible, contextualized and localised manner, differentiated for each association according to their needs. They recognized that NGANGU offers the appropriate principles, methods and tools.

CONCLUSION

In front of challenges identified in the CAR at the level of partnerships between local and international associations, NGANGU project provided an alternative response to strengthen the capacities of each partner. Thus, the general objective of NGANGU focused on creating a climate of change and continuous learning for each association with a view to its progressive empowerment in its capacities of choice and in the implementation of its strategic objectives, thus responding to the localization agenda.

development of methods and tools, but also all activities carried out and attitudes towards learning. By bringing its innovative variations to the methods of self-evaluation, action planning or peer learning, NGANGU project contributed to the impacts on the four areas of intervention.

All these lessons from the NGANGU project, led by CERAR and TEARFUND, have led local associations to strengthen their capacities and those of their teams, and have reinforced the 'getting moving' and the recommitment of these associations towards equitable partnerships.

The project's innovations are linked to the founding principles developed by CERAR, which guided the



6 local and 1 international associations



68 project participants



31 pivotal changes achieved



3 workshops



29 weekly meetings at the headquarters of local associations



17 weekly meetings online by association individually



11 online meetings inter-associations



tearfund

For more information on the
NGANGU project or on CERAR

Please contact
info@cerar.fr



© 2024 CERAR

Report produced by the CERAR team
under the coordination of Brigitte PIQUARD

Project funded by TEARFUND donors