

Partners in development evaluation – learning and accountability, DAC-OECD workshop 25-26 March 2003, Paris.

Session 1 – Evaluation practices of donors and civil society organisations

AMBITIONS OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ISOs AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: EVALUATING WITH A VIEW TO CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS AN OVERHAUL OF PUBLIC POLICIES

Abstract

Dialogue between French ISOs and public authorities on the evaluation of non governmental action has, over the last ten years or so, helped to spread the practice of evaluation in ISOs. They have indeed assimilated evaluation as a method of accountability, of putting their results to debate, but above all with regard to donors although progress still needs to be made in relation to other stakeholders in their interventions (beneficiaries, partners and private donors). They have also successfully assimilated evaluation as a tool for improving their projects and intervention strategies. The credo "evaluating in order to evolve" has become an effective practice.

Now that ISOs evaluate their projects, they have even more legitimacy to participate in a comprehensive review exercise on cooperation. And even though, in terms of volume, they marginally contribute to development assistance policy, they still claim an effective role in regulating the policies of cooperation, and in particular those emerging in terms of the fight against poverty and inequalities. Such new policies, known as "intermediate policies" – i.e. at the point where microeconomic and macroeconomic levels intersect, or where the logics of grassroots protagonists and public decisions intersect – require a new partnership for evaluation. Indeed, evaluation, practised in a concerted fashion, must be one of the pillars in the construction and regulation of such concerted policies aimed to fight poverty.

THE AMBITIONS OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ISOs AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: EVALUATION IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS AN OVERHAUL OF PUBLIC POLICIES

What can one learn from the evaluation practice of French international solidarity organisations (ISOs) over the last ten years or so ? How can this be useful to parties involved in the cooperation at European level – non-governmental organisations and public authorities ?

Summarising the experience of French ISOs in terms of evaluation is of necessity a partial exercise, bearing in mind the diversity of the French associative sector. In order to contribute to this seminar, F3E organised two preparatory meetings during the second half of 2002, attended, amongst others, by some fifty ISOs¹. F3E's experience is also a source of lessons². This associative player that regroups close to fifty French ISOs involved in cooperation for development, aims to promote evaluation and study approaches with non-governmental parties. Its creation in 1994 marked a clear acceleration in the dialogue between ISOs and French public authorities on the evaluation of non-governmental action.

The diversity of French international solidarity organisations.

The 1,000 or so French ISOs form a very heterogeneous sector, still strongly marked by a division between those involved in emergency aid and those involved in development aid. In addition, French organisations involved in development aid are small in size compared with their German and British counterparts.

Germany, Italy, Switzerland and France have the highest number of ISOs, while the 5 biggest European ISO's in terms of budget are British (Oxfam, Save the Children), German (Misereor) and Dutch (Novib and Cordaid).

- The biggest French ISOs, in financial volume, act in priority in the field of emergency aid, with a predominance towards medical and food aid (Médecins sans frontières, Médecins du monde, Action contre la faim, Handicap International which however intervenes less directly in emergency contexts).
- The other important area involves denominational organisations (such as Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement, Secours catholique) with a partnership approach and programmes focusing on economic and social development.
- The third area is comprised of two types of organisation: firstly, ISOs specialising in a given field and often approached by the Agence française de développement or multilateral donors; secondly, organisations that function as associative research offices or cooperatives [...]. Such organisations combine the provision of services and an involvement in the non-governmental sphere (Gret for example).
- Lastly, there are a few atypical cases, such as the French Committee for Unicef, the main role of which is the collection of funds in France on behalf of Unicef, or the Association française des volontaires du progrès which is endowed with substantial public resources for the development of voluntary work.

Without claiming to portray the diversity of evaluation practices used by all French ISO's involved in development assistance, this communication therefore proposes to retrace in a first chapter the main lines of change in the use of evaluation by French ISOs over the last ten years or so. This background and, in particular, the partnership built up with public authorities in the context of F3E, will help, in a second chapter, to open up some new views in a revamped approach to cooperation policies at French

¹ Report "evaluation practices of French parties involved in development and humanitarian work, 16-17.12.02" and contributions on www.f3e.asso.fr

² cf. presentation on F3E's experience in the context of session 4 of this workshop "enhancing evaluation capabilities.

and European levels, in particular in the new structure of the fight against poverty and inequalities. The structure in fact places consultation between public authorities and civil society at the centre of its approach.

I. EVALUATION OF FRENCH ISOs, A TOOL FOR TWO MAJOR AIMS: ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT OF INTERVENTIONS

A number of French ISOs were more or less pressed to start using evaluation, especially external evaluation, by their donors. It is interesting to measure the road covered in ten years through the intermediary of two meetings between the ISOs and the French public authorities. The "Evaluating in order to evolve" meeting, organised in 1993³, covered the issue of promoting the evaluation culture among French ISOs, which were for most part reluctant to take part in the exercise. The meeting organised in 2002, under the title "*Evaluation practices of French parties involved in development and humanitarian actions*", has confirmed the existence of an extensive use of evaluation among French ISOs and has made it possible to compare the experiences of these ISOs with those of various other players, such as public authorities, local authorities and businesses. In ten years, the use of evaluation has therefore become an undeniable part of ISO practice, as can be witnessed by the eighty or so ex-post evaluations upheld by F3E since 1994, together with a number of methodological guides produced by French ISOs⁴.

Although, at the beginning, considered as a constraint by French ISOs, evaluation has gradually become a means of communicating with their principals and of explaining their actions. They have also become aware, little by little, of the leverage for change that could be produced by evaluation.

³ *Evaluating in order to evolve*. Round table. Development cooperation commission, 1994. Preparatory document, report and bibliography.

⁴ Among the works which make reference:
Evaluation charter in the context of development work, Fondation de France, September 1995.
MC Guéneau, E Beaudoux, *Evaluation, a tool at the service of action*, Iram / F3E, December 1996.
<http://www.f3e.asso.fr/methodo/index.htm>

D Neu, *Evaluating: appraising quality in order to facilitate decision-making: six scores for contributing to the effectiveness of evaluations*, document no.21 from Gret's scientific department, March 2001.
<http://www.gret.org/publications>

A policy of transparency and responsibility that has moved forward, but which is still aimed in priority at donors.

French ISOs admit today that they need to be accountable for their actions, because they are commissioned by institutions and by their activists, because they are partners of organisations in the North or the South, because they use money from private donors and because they have a moral responsibility towards their beneficiaries. However, in practice, they are accountable very unequally to these different types of bodies.

• **The donors** are the ones to which French ISOs are most accountable, as this is increasingly one of the conditions for the renewal of funding. External and ex-post evaluation is the preferred method. Results are not only circulated but also, increasingly, debated, particularly at the time of refunds. The new funding guides for 2002 from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁵ indicate that any application for funding must provide for the ex-post evaluation of the project or programme being envisaged. This practice is of longer date at the European Commission although experience has shown that amounts set aside for evaluations were often not enough.

• Since 1989, French organisations calling on the public's generosity have acquired tools for improving transparency with regard to their **private donors**. The *Comité de la charte*⁶ defines a code of ethics in the field of private fundraising, communication and management. It evaluates the manner in which each organisation complies with commitments that it makes in this respect. Every year, it issues a seal of approval to organisations that comply with the code of ethics and transparency. On the other hand, this committee does not judge the quality of interventions. A number of French ISOs recognise that the evaluation is little used as such in communication to private donors. This practice, considered by the latter to be technical and costly, issues a far more complex message than those which go straight to their heart.

• Many French ISOs associate their **partners from the North and South** at varying levels, with the implementation and returns of evaluations that they have sponsored. Partner participation in carrying out the evaluation is in fact essential to the correct performance of the evaluation, the collection of information and the internalizing of results. However, evaluations frequently reproduce the asymmetry of the relationship linking the Northern ISO to its Southern partner. Indeed, evaluations are often restricted to analysing the Southern partner's effectiveness, rather than tackling the partner relationship itself or the Northern ISO's action in relation to its partner.

• The evaluation is more or less well perceived by the **associative and activist base** of French ISOs. Traditionally, evaluation, as an element of professionalisation, stands against the activist and spontaneous aspect of many ISOs. Certain evaluations or evaluation policies have sometimes provoked or accelerated internal crises between the professionals and activists in an ISO. In fact, evaluation is far better perceived when it brings the activists together and is promoted less as a technical mechanism

⁵ cf. Vade-mecum *The co-financing of ISO projects and programmes*, French Foreign Office, DGCID 2002.

⁶ <http://www.comitecharte.org>

than as a space for shared reflection.

Artisans du Monde is accountable to its activists as well as to its partners...

In 2001, Artisans du Monde evaluated the impact of its fair trade action on Southern producers. The organisation started from the observation that there was a huge distance between the French activists and the producers, in particular because the relationship was increasingly limited to a commercial exchange, delegated to the buying group. It therefore attempted to reconcile the requirements of a professional level evaluation with the activists' strong desire for involvement. External professionals of the impact evaluation have thus developed a methodology, tested it at the time of evaluations in certain countries, then trained and monitored groups of two French activists before, during and after each country evaluation. Local experts were associated with the process.

The involvement of activists in carrying out the evaluation has made it easier to revise the organisation's very strong axioms with regard to fair trade, particularly on the level of prices paid to producers and on the impact of fair trade in terms of socio-economic dynamics (an impact which has shown itself to be very weak). The involvement of activists has thus facilitated the internalizing of the results of evaluation and change within Artisans du Monde.

The overall evaluation was the subject of a workshop in Paris attended by some ten Southern producer organisations, with activists from Artisans du Monde. Representatives from these organisations asked for an evaluation similar to the one in which they had been involved to be carried out with Artisans du Monde in France and with the activists, so as to enable them to have a better understanding of their Northern partner's method of operation, environment, constraints, etc...

- Although the ISOs accord prime importance to the **beneficiaries** of their interventions, the latter are often required to supply the necessary information for evaluations, but less often the addressees of the evaluation results. Many tools have been developed to encourage involvement and the return of an evaluation to beneficiaries of the intervention⁷. Practices for self-evaluation have been developed⁸. Nonetheless, an evaluation involving the participation of beneficiaries rarely contains, in practice, any willingness to be accountable to them. Implementing a participatory evaluation is not the equivalent of being accountable to beneficiaries of the action.

While French ISOs are increasingly involving the different stakeholders in evaluations, while they are increasingly informing their partners and the private donors of their interventions, it is really only with the donors that they are constructing evaluation processes and putting their results to debate. This observation is only the illustration of the power relationships existing around the design and orientation of interventions, most often conditioned by available resources, even if recognition of users is at the heart of an ISO's involvement.

⁷ cf. E Beaudoux, G De Crombrughe, F Douxchamps, MC Guéneau, M Nieuwkerk, *Routings of a development action – from identification to evaluation*, L'harmattan 1992 and JL Schmitz, P Willot, *Methods and tools for participatory evaluation*, Cota asbl / Fondation de France, 1997.

⁸ cf. MH Pierret, P Kwan Kai Hong, B Lecomte, *Five tools for self-evaluation*, Groupe de Réalisations et d'Animation pour le Développement - Grad.

Evaluating in order to change one's practices

Having been encouraged by the donors to use evaluation procedures as a means to accountability, the French ISOs have gradually started to use evaluation as a tool to improve their practices.

•**Most French ISOs that have experimented with evaluation acknowledge that this represents a powerful tool for change, if a certain number of conditions are met.**

Assimilating the results of the evaluation of the convention on objectives between CICDA and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One of CICDA's aims is to bolster up peasant farming in Latin America. It has benefited from 4 years of funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for the implementation of local projects and cross-disciplinary actions.

Taking into account the scope of this convention on objectives and the newness of the system, evaluation represented a strong challenge for CICDA as well as for the MFA.

CICDA has devoted a great deal of attention to involving different bodies from the association as well as operational and financial partners. Prior to evaluation, CICDA's teams, head office and partners drew up a review of the convention on objectives. External evaluators then worked on this internal peer review.

These elements have favoured the internalising of the evaluation results, even though this question had not been asked as such at the time of evaluation. All those involved had focused on the collective construction of the results. It was understood that this would allow results to be internalised.

This evaluation has resulted in the introduction of a relatively elaborate internal monitoring system (continual analysis of CICDA's strategies within national frameworks, monitoring of indicators for the convention on objectives, measurement of impacts for each of the actions with certain shared indicators, protocol for monitoring peasant farming) and the establishment of steering committees for MFA/ISO conventions on objectives. It has also enabled CICDA to build up its power through the elaboration of a programme convention with the European Commission.

Evaluation can only be used on a project that is based on a minimum of strategy, programming and steering. It has to be endogenous – sponsored and designed by the ISO – although this does not exclude coaching, since these aspects require considerable competences and resources. It must factor in the requirement of external and professional observation, which allows a certain level of hindsight. It must involve and obtain the participation of parties concerned from design to return. Lastly, it must be part of a policy or global strategy for change in the ISO.

•**French ISOs are best equipped to implement effective evaluations:**

Evaluation and capitalisation in French ISOs

Evaluation and capitalisation are becoming increasingly visible in the organisation charts of French ISOs. By way of example, the assignment liaison unit at the Médecins du Monde head office acts as back-up to the technical and regional offices, in particular through internal evaluation assignments. Starting in 1995, Ecoliers du Monde / Aide et Action has introduced units for evaluation, monitoring and capitalisation within field programmes. While, to start with, they may have exercised an overriding control internal to the programme management service, their role has progressively evolved towards the implementation and monitoring of more training oriented evaluations.

At a more collective level, there is a diversity of fora for discussion and reflection. Only recently, Synergie Qualité has brought French humanitarian workers together. The Groupe Initiatives has, since 1989, grouped some ten French associations involved in international cooperation and development support. In particular, it has edited a series of articles on the capitalisation of experience or research, in the Traverses collection. F3E is another area of capitalisation, in particular by means of cross-disciplinary evaluations that it supports and specific work on capitalisation that it organises. Other more specialised areas exist such as Cerise (Comité d'échanges, de recherche et d'information sur les systèmes d'épargne-crédit – Committee on exchange, research and information on credit-saving systems), Réseau Pratiques (coordinated by Inter Aide)...

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development of evaluation training programmes and methodological guides;

- closer monitoring of actions and strategies, programming-monitoring-evaluation procedures;
- specific coaching on the utilisation of the results from an evaluation. This is carried out, either by the organisation's evaluation unit when this exists, or by the evaluator himself, in the context of an additional service to an external evaluation;
- articulation between evaluation and capitalisation, through the production of methodological tools, within each ISO but also within areas for discussion between ISOs.

●At the same time, evaluation practices are being threatened by decline:

- A tendency towards the standardisation and normalisation of evaluation tools, although experience shows that criteria can only be operational when suited to contexts.
- Making the exercise more commonplace – a compulsory part for renewing the funding on successive phases of a programme.
- A desire to assign to the evaluation objectives that are ever increasing in number and difficult to reconcile. For example, when an issue in the evaluation is negotiation with the donor on continuing a transaction, it is difficult to guarantee sincerity in introspection and questioning.

•ISOs demonstrate dynamism by combining different types of evaluations and by developing methodologies.

- Evaluation is no longer a rigid and single framework, since over the project cycle or the stages of the institution's life it covers a wide range of activities, from reporting to self-evaluations, internal / accompanied / external evaluations, etc... ISOs are gradually making the concrete distinction between the verification / audit evaluation (necessarily external) and the learning / negotiation evaluation requiring the participation of all stakeholders in the intervention.
- The methods of evaluation follow the evolution of intervention procedures. Alongside the effectiveness of projects in the strictest sense of the term, ISOs evaluate the relevance of their strategies or processes such as support for the institutional development of an organisation in the south. Such evaluations require specific approaches. In this way, innovations can be introduced into the modalities of evaluation, such as cross evaluations⁹.

To summarise, while donors have played an influential role with French ISOs in the initial promotion of evaluation, the latter now effectively use evaluation to provide accountability in their actions. However, the exercise is still conditioned by the power relationships between the different parties involved – members, private donors, partners, beneficiaries. On the other hand, French ISOs are increasingly also using evaluation to improve not only their projects but also their global strategy on intervention. And some initiatives concern the overall evaluation of non-governmental action at a collective level¹⁰, even though one sees little in the way of shared work on a European scale.

French ISOs must therefore resolve major issues in terms of evaluation:

- strengthening the transparency and debate of results with regard to beneficiaries and partners. The experience of European ISOs can be particularly instructive in this respect. A path that may be worth exploring would be to make the evaluation, or at least its modes of return, quite distinct in relation to donors, partners, beneficiaries and private donors.
- strengthening the use of evaluation as a tool for change, by linking it not only to the issue of fundraising but also to those of procedures.
- strengthening the collective evaluation of non-governmental action, in particular by means of cross evaluations from one country to another, following the example of the peer reviews experimented with by donors.

⁹ CIDR, Gret and Iram, in partnership with CIRAD within Cerise (comité d'échanges, de recherche et d'information sur les systèmes d'épargne-crédit), have just initiated a peer review procedure. This involves the evaluation, in turn, of the project/programme portfolio in microfinance of one in the group by the others and then reciprocally. By facilitating the divulgation of information and a critical look from peers, this procedure makes it possible to endorse the definition of strategies by organisation and strengthens exchanges between organisations.

¹⁰ cf. the cross-disciplinary surveys supported by F3E. For example: France Pays du Mékong, Agir abcd, Comité de Coopération avec le Laos, CCFD, Enfants et Développement, EMI, Médecin du Monde, Santé Sud – *Cross-disciplinary survey of training programmes for healthcare personnel in Laos*, C Bonnet, P Cateret, November 1998.

- strengthening the participation in public policies on development assistance, in particular through the intermediary of evaluation and through new approaches to the policy to fight against poverty and inequalities.

II. ISOs AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: FROM PARTNERSHIP FOR EVALUATION TO CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC POLICIES ?

The partnership between French ISOs and public authorities in terms of evaluation is a reality (F3E is the main forum for this) and has helped ISOs to make progress on this subject. However, the evaluation and regulation of public policies on cooperation lead to issues that are far more complex than those of ISO interventions. The latter nonetheless consider that they are participating in public policy on cooperation and are therefore taking part in its evaluation and construction.

ISO contribution to French public development aid is marginal

For historical reasons, the French development aid system is still very extensively dominated by public institutions. The ISO's place is minimal from the financial point of view as well as from the point of view of their contribution to the main strategic orientations. Nonetheless, areas of consultation are emerging...

- **A marginal contribution in terms of financial volumes**

The ISO share in fundraising for public development aid in France was 0.3% in 1998 (15 million dollars), i.e. the lowest proportion for all European countries¹¹. The great majority of resources and programmes are still put into operation by administrative departments or semi-public bodies and enterprises.

- **A marginal contribution to the orientations of policy and strategy**

Because of this, the "alternative" protagonists in the cooperation system – ISOs, local authorities or even businesses – remain little associated with the definition of orientations for public development aid. The French public authorities acknowledge this state of affairs. *"Increasing our aid by around 50% in five years will presuppose a modernisation of the instruments of our cooperation. This will also involve new methods: [such as], wider participation of parties involved in the cooperation represented by civil society and local authorities."*¹² In this context, the Haut Conseil de la Coopération Internationale (HCCI), represents a new tool. This body answers to the

¹¹ DAC – OCDE figures. The Potevin and Paquot survey for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives different figures – 0.6%, or 33 million euros. In the leading group, Luxembourg devotes 11.7% of its ODA (11.5 million euros) to funding ISOs, the Netherlands 9.8% (269 million euros), Belgium (65 million euros), Denmark (123 million euros) and Germany (403 million euros) around 8%. Just in front of France, we find Italy (0.9%), the United Kingdom and the European Commission (3.1%).

¹² Statement of conclusions from the Interdepartmental Committee on International Cooperation (CICID) dated 11 December 2002.

Prime Minister and regularly plays a consultation role with the different parties involved in international cooperation.

•However areas of consultation between public authorities and civil society are taking shape.

Apart from the HCCI, which groups together senior officials, ISO executives, elected representatives and researchers, more specific bodies are true fora for consultation: geographical platforms (Palestine, South East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe), Cités Unies France (decentralised cooperation), Coordination Sud (groups together approximately one hundred French ISOs, with a view to internal synergy and consultation with the public authorities)... F3E is one of these areas, on a niche that may be specific but is certainly strategic. For more than 10 years, the extensive support given to F3E by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Agence française de développement, has made it possible to promote evaluation within French ISOs, as well as giving credibility to non governmental action in itself. F3E is also a place for meetings between public authorities and ISOs and fundamental debates, on the quality of development interventions. This works so well that the French ISOs are beginning to think that the dialogue can work in both directions...

Rethinking the contribution of evaluation to changes in public policies

Evaluation, such as implemented by the French public authorities, contributes little to the debate on the results of the development cooperation policy and on its progress. Indeed, evaluation on its own cannot offset the lack of control over the French cooperation policy. However, new approaches in terms of policies aimed to fight poverty may lead to improvements.

•Evaluation: a limited contribution to the regulation of public development policies

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee¹³ has observed that the evaluation of French official assistance remains confidential, even for the beneficiaries. The external circulation of results is variable depending on the entities. The mechanisms for feedback which make it possible to take the results of evaluations into consideration are considered very reduced. As a result of this, evaluation contributes little to the construction of French development assistance policy.

However, it is true that interventions in the area of cooperation suffer from particular problems, linked to their very nature. They take place outside of the country where sponsors are located, which makes information and transparency difficult (but no less crucial). In addition, their beneficiaries, by nature economically deprived (as well as socially and politically), have little means of making themselves heard by national and foreign decision-makers. The definition of projects and strategies is therefore still too frequently dominated by the donors, even in so-called "participatory" strategies such

¹³ Development Assistance Committee, *Development Cooperation Reviews: France*, OECD, 2000, p. 8 "Aid evaluation".

as those implemented for drawing up the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)¹⁴.

While evaluation can contribute to a better regulation of cooperation policies, this would be less through the improvement of evaluation techniques than through progress in the circulation of results, putting them to debate and reinvestment in strategic plans and new orientations.

Evaluation is a condition that is necessary but not sufficient to improve development assistance. It can do nothing without consultation. This awareness is at the centre of analyses on public policies to eradicate poverty and inequalities.

●A new way of thinking public policies on the fight against poverty

The World Bank 2000 report "*Attacking Poverty*" widens the problem of poverty to vulnerability, "*powerless and voicelessness*", and proposes to attack the "*growing inequalities and marginalisation of great numbers*"¹⁵. In parallel, a number of poor and very indebted countries are, with support from the international community, engaging themselves in the funding and implementation of strategies to reduce poverty and inequalities (cf. debt relief initiatives and debt relief and development agreements).

In France, a collaboration between researchers, development practitioners and public authorities has led to new approaches based on the concept of intermediate policies. "*The aim is to promote policies which are not reduced to social safety nets (compensatory or humanitarian measures, of the type assistance to people in need) but which recognise the "sector-based" and "category-based" issues and thereby implement measures capable of acting on the causes of inequalities. In other words, [it does not involve] specific policies for poor people that do not touch on the conditions of access to resources, but policies that are built on compromises between the diverging interests of groups of stakeholders.*"¹⁶ Such policies are called intermediate because they are "*at the meeting point between social trends and their incorporation into national policy decisions.*"¹⁷.

By emphasising the organisation of consultation between Southern protagonists, such policies should lead to new approaches from those involved in the cooperation and also strengthen new partnerships, in the North, on the evaluation of the different interventions and development of support strategies. Thus, a network was recently introduced in support of public policies to reduce poverty and inequalities, bringing together development practitioners, public stakeholders in cooperation activities and French research bodies. This network suggests, among other things, offering tools for monitoring / evaluating such policies to countries prepared to commit themselves with France to the process of reducing poverty and inequalities.

¹⁴ JP Cling, M Razafindrakoto & F Roubaud, 2002: *New international strategies in the fight against poverty*, DIAL-Economica, Paris, 406 p

¹⁵ DGCID, 2000 : *Fight against poverty and inequalities, survey-report on actions by the French cooperation (1995-1999)*, MFA, Paris, 195 p.

¹⁶ M Levy (dir), *How to reduce poverty and inequalities – for a public policy methodology*, Ird Karthala, 2002.

¹⁷ idem

Dialogue between ISOs and French public authorities on the evaluation of non governmental action, over the last ten years or so, has helped to spread the use of evaluation among ISOs. They have in fact assimilated evaluation well as a tool for accountability, for putting their results to debate, but particularly with donors. They still have progress to make in relation to other stakeholders in their interventions (beneficiaries, partners and private donors).

In addition, they have integrated evaluation well as a tool for improving their projects and strategies for intervention. The 1993 credo "evaluating in order to evolve" has become an effective practice.

Now that ISOs evaluate their projects, they have even more legitimacy to participate in a comprehensive review exercise on cooperation. And even though, in terms of volume, they marginally contribute to development assistance policy, they still claim an effective role in regulating the policies of cooperation, and in particular those emerging in terms of the fight against poverty and inequalities. Such new policies, known as "intermediate policies" – i.e. at the point where microeconomic and macroeconomic levels intersect, or where the logics of grassroots protagonists and public decisions intersect – require a new partnership for evaluation. Indeed, evaluation, practised in a concerted fashion, must be one of the pillars in the construction and regulation of such concerted policies aimed to fight poverty.