



EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

Minka: a relevant fund for action in crisis situations

Scope The Minka Peace and Resilience Fund
Area of intervention Sahel, Lake Chad, Central African Republic, Middle East
Donor AFD
Amount €653 M committed to 100+ projects*
Period evaluated 2017-2020
Evaluation conducted by Technopolis Group**

Progress made in development is under threat from increasingly complex crises. In response, Team France created a funding tool dedicated to peacebuilding: the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund. An independent evaluation of the Minka Fund was conducted to ensure its effectiveness in the field and to further the sustainability of its results.

Background

In 2017, AFD Group launched the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund. Its purpose is to successfully carry out projects in crisis and conflict situations, in order to mitigate vulnerabilities and build lasting peace. This positioning—in line with the French strategy “Prevention, resilience and sustainable peace”—focuses on the humanitarian-development nexus. Its objective is to prevent violent conflicts via long-term and far-reaching actions, by working primarily on the determinants of crises. Four crisis areas are targeted through “initiatives”: Sahel, Lake Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Middle East.

Minka works to reduce tensions over access to natural resources, ensure fair use of public services, bolster the media, address gender-based violence, support women’s civic participation, and more. While its actions vary greatly, a common point is the need for rapid response and thorough knowledge of the local context.

Growth and improvement of Minka’s tools made it possible to conduct an independent evaluation from 2021, to learn from the experience gained and to meet the needs of accountability.

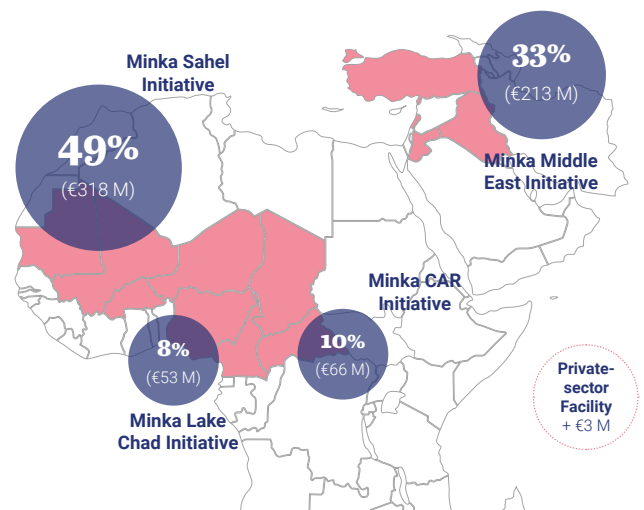


Two thirds of Minka funding is allocated to African initiatives. By country, Lebanon, Mali and CAR are the top three beneficiaries of Minka projects.

Breakdown of the Minka portfolio

Priority to the Sahel

The geographical distribution of grants complies with the 2018 guidelines of the French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID).



50%+ of projects swiftly deployed visible activities within 6 months

78% of projects promoted gender equality (Target: 50%)

67% of projects developed a suitable monitoring & evaluation plan (Target: 100%)

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HOW CAN WE BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN CRISIS ZONES?

The distinctive qualities of the Minka Fund’s purpose and effectiveness lie in the specific methods of operation developed within projects, such as the following:

- In-depth analysis of conflicts and contexts
- Relevant, streamlined, and flexible procedures
- Use of the most appropriate and best-established project manager locally, which can best manage the project in crisis situations. This may be the government, a civil society organization, an international organization, Expertise France, or others.
- Phased intervention in 2 stages (one triggers the other), with rapid short-term achievements, accompanied by long-term structural support
- The “do no harm” principle taken into account, in a conflict-sensitive approach
- A regional approach in multi-country contexts
- Heightened attention to gender issues
- The development of an in-depth monitoring and evaluation system

Evaluation conclusions



Relevance and coherence of the approach

- **Strategy:** Creation of the Minka Fund was relevant as a way for France to position itself as an international player in responding to the challenges of crises and conflicts, particularly in crisis areas that are high on the list of the strategic priorities of French diplomacy.
- **Geographical location:** Using a local approach by crisis area, it was possible to tackle cross-border and transnational problems, which are common in crisis areas. In 2017–2020, 18% of projects had a multi-country approach.

Minka Fund and project efficiency

- **Responsiveness, flexibility, speed:** The procedures specific to Minka resulted in projects that were generally a little faster and that allowed for adaptation during implementation (in particular to meet the needs caused by Covid-19).
- **A more efficient portfolio:** The projects were of better quality (according to AFD standards), and only 15% of them were in difficulty, compared to 30% for the entire AFD portfolio financed by grants.

Project effectiveness and sustainability

- Despite delays, the **levels of achievement** were quite satisfactory given the complexity of the situations and the effects of the pandemic.
- **Positive effects** were noted among the final beneficiaries, communities, and sometimes territories. More broadly, **potential contributions to ending crises** or to reducing fragility were observed (from the economic or psychosocial benefits identified).
- Several **factors behind effectiveness** became apparent: the experiences and skills of the project managers and AFD as well as the knowledge-generation and adaptation capacities based on a rigorous research and evaluation system.
- The Minka projects generally focus on **capacity-building** support for public project managers.



- **Strategy:** While the action strategies were based on detailed analyses of situations on the ground, they lack readability (and run the risk of "minkawashing": some have been labeled as Minka without complying with the Minka strategy).

• Geographical location:

- Added value varies from one initiative to another (very high in the Middle East, mixed in Africa).
- Scopes of action are static when crises evolve or occur (Covid-19, port of Beirut explosion, spread of conflicts to non-Minka countries in the Gulf of Guinea, etc.).

• Room for better use of Minka's special features:

- Not all the flexible features provided for in the Minka management procedures were systematically applied.
- Minka's special features are included at the start of projects, but they were often not effectively applied, especially when the public sector headed project management.

- **Screening of final beneficiaries:** Due to the way the rules preventing the financing of terrorism were interpreted, several Minka projects were blocked (involving €150 million, or nearly one year of Minka grants).

- It is still **difficult to quantify and aggregate the results**, for each separate initiative and for the Minka Fund overall, especially as some projects were still in progress at the time of the evaluation.

- Progress and sustainability of results are fragile because they **depend on external factors** (such as how the situation worsens or improves).

- For some projects, **risks of adverse effects** require continuous vigilance, particularly in managing the expectations of non-recipients.

- **Exit strategies** are not always established (i.e., ending or transferring activities). There are also limits to the sustainability of the actions, which depends on **how involved local partners really are**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Consolidate the Minka Fund's action strategy** (by concentrating resources on priority areas) **and allow for flexibility** in actions outside the pre-identified crisis areas or the strategies determined for these areas.

- **Ensure that Minka's special features are applied throughout the implementation of projects**, in consultation with project managers (especially public ones).

- **Strengthen Minka's partnerships, both at headquarters and in the field:** Team France, Team Europe, civil society organizations, etc.

- **Strengthen accountability and highlight lessons learned:** production and dissemination of the knowledge base (ties with the research world), consolidation of indicators, qualitative analysis of results and impacts, evaluations, etc.

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THE NENGO PROJECT

In the Central African Republic (CAR), sexual violence increased by 174% between 2014 and 2019. Women and girls are the most affected, and access to care is limited.

Nengo is a project funded by the Minka CAR Initiative. It has been providing medical, legal, and psychosocial support to victims of gender-based violence in the country since 2020. More than 4,000 patients have received treatment through Nengo since September 2020. Interviews with staff of the hospital and the Central African Association of Women Lawyers also indicated positive effects on capacity building for local



partners, thereby contributing to the professionalization of legal support for victims.

However, the sustainability of the outcomes will continue to depend on the cost of care in public hospitals and the effectiveness of justice in CAR.



Read more details by stakeholders on afd.fr