

# PUTTING LOCALISATION INTO PRACTICE IN SIERRA LEONE

Learning from the 'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies (SCORE)' Programme



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# ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PREFACE: AN UNUSUAL OUTCOME, AN UNUSUAL YEAR

Trócaire is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) that has worked to promote a just and peaceful world while supporting the strengthening of civil society globally for nearly fifty years. In Sierra Leone, Trócaire works in a context that has faced considerable challenges over the past 30 years, including a decade of civil war, Ebola and cholera outbreaks, floods, mudslides, and the COVID pandemic. In addition, Sierra Leone lags behind other countries according to various development indices, including the human development index, the gender inequality index, and food security indices.

The 'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies (SCORE)' programme was funded by the EACEA under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. It was implemented by Trócaire and Cordaid, in consortium with 12 local partner organisations in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and DRC.

The overarching objective of the SCORE programme is to promote a leading role for local actors in humanitarian response by strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations (CSOs) to respond effectively to crises, thereby increasing the resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities. The specific objectives are to:

- 1 Strengthen emergency preparedness (E-Prep) and contingency planning (CP) in local CSOs.
- 2 Strengthen capacity and readiness of local CSOs to deliver timely, high quality and needs-based humanitarian assistance.
- 3 Promote organisational learning within the consortium and with other relevant stakeholders by documenting and disseminating lessons learned and examples of good practice.

In Sierra Leone, Trócaire implemented the SCORE programme with local partners Action for Advocacy and Development-Sierra Leone (AAD-SL) and Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO), who operate in Bombali, Port Loko, and Karene districts and Kambia, Falaba, and Koinadugu districts respectively.

By empowering local actors to respond more effectively to emergencies, the SCORE programme has contributed to the localisation of aid, a topic that has been at the forefront of humanitarian discourse since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Localisation centres on partnership and equitable engagement in humanitarian response and sustainable development. As Trócaire is a partnership organisation and signatory to the Charter for Change, localisation is core to its work.

Despite Sierra Leone's legacy of war and other disasters, AAD-SL and KADDRO, along with most local organisations in Sierra Leone, were unprepared in the way of emergency preparedness when Ebola struck in 2014. Back then, UN agencies and INGOs played a leading role in the response, with national actors often not welcomed into decision-making or coordination spaces.

Trócaire identified this as a problem, and has undertaken many efforts since then to not only strengthen the capacities of local civil society, but to ensure that they are perceived and understood as relevant actors during emergencies. As a result of their partnership with Trócaire, AAD-SL and KADDRO were designated as leaders to help coordinate COVID-19 response efforts with government authorities in their operational districts. Through a rapid-response mechanism designed by Trócaire, AAD-SL and KADDRO were able to be first responders during the crisis, which enabled them to put their knowledge from the SCORE programme into practice.

Isatu Samura from Kargboto, Sierra Leone, benefitted from Trócaire and KADDRO's quarantined household and livelihoods support.  
**Photo** Michael Solis

To achieve its objective, the SCORE Programme employed the following strategies:

- **Capacity strengthening** in the following areas:
  - Emergency preparedness and contingency planning
  - Rapid response capacity, including needs assessments
  - Use of new modalities (cash transfer, digital technologies)
  - Incorporation of Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), with a particular focus on protection mainstreaming
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Staff/volunteer conduct, care and management
- **Experiential learning** – e.g. workshops, mentoring/coaching, exchange visits, e-modules, and simulation exercises.
- **Disseminating learning and best practice** in relation to capacity strengthening approaches

With its specific scope, the SCORE programme in Sierra Leone has successfully supported two local civil society organisations on their journeys of growth and influence during humanitarian crises. This document extracts several of the lessons learned from this programme, which may inform the design of future interventions. **The document also illustrates how localisation, as both a means and an end, can change the paradigms of aid and development in ways that challenge the status quo.**

“SCORE tells you, yes, there are locals who also have capacity, but they don’t have the required platform to express or share their experiences, their talent or their skills. Bringing in that kind of discourse will contribute to a **paradigm shift in the way people think**: the way people look at things, the way people view the local partners. I’m sure if this kind of discourse continues, it will be a very big opportunity for local partners to showcase their skills, their strength, and knowledge. **Localisation is very key because that will serve as a catalyst for ensuring the local organisations are also empowered**, and they are also able to take on certain responsibilities on their own.”

Ibrahim Fatu Kamara  
Programme Director, AAD-Sierra Leone

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

Trócaire Sierra Leone engaged a consultant to prepare a report on the learnings and best practices from the implementation of SCORE. While the original intention was to collect data through in-person interviews, due to travel restrictions in the wake of COVID-19, the consultant worked remotely and conducted interviews online.

The consultant conducted interviews with staff from Trócaire, including the Country Director, Programme Manager, and EU Programme Officer. With the local partners, the consultant conducted interviews with AAD-SL, including the Programme Director, Programme Officer, and SCORE Project Officer, and KADDRO, including the SCORE Focal Point/District Coordinator, Finance & Admin Manager, and Project Officer.

All interviews were conducted in English and recorded. The consultant took notes and transcribed all interviews to generate the qualitative findings that informed this report. The Trócaire team supported with the review and editing of the draft findings.

## 1.3 MEET THE SCORE PARTNERS

*“Partnership has been at the heart of Trócaire’s mission since its inception” ~ Eimear Lynch, Programme Manager, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

The SCORE programme in Sierra Leone functioned as a consortium, which was led by Trócaire. Trócaire designed the programme’s work plan and led in the design and delivery of the training models, in close collaboration with other Trócaire colleagues at the head office in Ireland and in the other country offices. AAD-SL and KADDRO were beneficiaries of the training and learning that was undertaken, and they also received small grants to support their coordination, travel, and other learning costs. The three organisations met regularly, typically on a monthly basis, to engage in SCORE activities over the programme period.

## TRÓCAIRE

*“The partnership approach at Trócaire goes **beyond just the money**, so that if we are working with organisations, they will be able to transform themselves in positive ways as a result of that relationship” ~ Michael Solis, Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

Trócaire was initially established in 1973 by the Bishops Conference of Ireland in response to the injustices conference members had seen across the world in developing countries. From the start,



Training on Cash and Voucher Assistance to AAD and KADDRO Staff.  
**Photo** William H.A. Miller

Trócaire worked through partnership with local civil society, with a focus on human rights and justice. Ever since, Trócaire has worked to strengthen local civil society in the countries where it nurtures a presence.

Trócaire has been working in Sierra Leone since the 1990s and established an office in Freetown in 2008. Trócaire's programming began with a focus on gender and governance, and in 2014 Trócaire established a livelihoods programme to support with food security and income generation in vulnerable areas. The programme was interrupted by the West African Ebola crisis, so Trócaire and its partners redirected their efforts to support the people and communities affected by the virus. Since then, Trócaire and its partners have engaged in integrated women's empowerment programming, with a focus on women's economic, social, and political empowerment. Additionally, Trócaire proactively supports the organisational development and capacity strengthening of more than 20 local civil society partner organisations, with a focus on institutional, technical, financial, and managerial capacities. Trócaire's approach aims to ensure that its local partners can operate in a more sustainable and effective manner in the long term.

## AAD-SL

Action for Advocacy and Development Sierra Leone (AAD-SL) is a national non-governmental organisation that originated from the exit process of the international NGO, War Child Holland. War Child Holland operated in Sierra Leone until 2012. The Sierra Leonean staff members who had worked

with War Child Holland formed a management team of their own to discuss the exit process of War Child and develop ways to sustain their work. Together, they established AAD-SL in 2011, before War Child's complete exit from Sierra Leone. Today, AAD-SL focuses primarily on agriculture and livelihoods; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and humanitarian response.

Historically, AAD-SL has operated in Bombali and Port Loko districts in the northern region of Sierra Leone. During the COVID-19 pandemic, AAD-SL, with the support of Trócaire and the EU, was able to extend its expertise and support to local authorities and vulnerable populations in Karene district.

## KADDRO

The Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO) is a national NGO in Sierra Leone that supports the poor and marginalised in the areas of: 1) nutrition and food security, 2) agriculture, 3) livelihoods support, 4) water, sanitation, and hygiene, and 5) humanitarian response. KADDRO was founded in 1999 to support with Kambia district's rehabilitation during and after the civil war. KADDRO engages women and youth across the district to become self-reliant.

KADDRO has advanced to become a key player supporting the development of Kambia District, with ongoing work in seven of the most vulnerable chiefdoms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, KADDRO, with the support of Trócaire and the EU, was able to extend its expertise and support to local authorities and vulnerable populations in Falaba district.







## 1.4 IN THEIR OWN WORDS: A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

*“Ideally, SCORE will enable our partners to eventually design, implement, and monitor humanitarian interventions by themselves, without necessarily needing the technical support of an INGO like Trócaire” ~ Michael Solis, Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

### 1.4.1 CASE STORY: KADDRO

**“Trócaire and KADDRO partnered to support quarantined households during Ebola.** The government was quarantining entire communities, and these were often farming communities. So people were stuck in their homes, and they couldn’t get to their farms. It was during a key time during the crop cycle, where if they didn’t tend to their farms, they would lose all their harvest. They would have extremely high levels of food insecurity. They’d probably go hungry and people would suffer.

KADDRO paid farmers from outside of the communities that were under quarantine to come in to work to support the households that were in quarantine. We also hired supervisors to supervise the work. This had to be a trusted person, since the community people felt there was a risk that the hired groups might not do anything or could steal the crops. The community people told us that they wanted someone to be able to supervise the work, and then through technology or photos or whatnot, to be able to show them the progress. So we had to redesign our intervention to meet their needs.

It sounds simple, and that’s what you kind of want: **to find simple solutions in humanitarian crises that will actually have an impact on people’s lives.** But that intervention was a really good one. And the people in the homes had radios so they could listen to the news as things were changing. They could have some form of entertainment in addition to the other items that they were being provided by not only us but other agencies. Whilst other agencies were maybe supplying water, food, etc., we were trying to support a **dignified** way for hardworking farmers to tend to their farms when they couldn’t actually be there.”

**Malikie Barrie**

SCORE Focal Point/District Coordinator, KADDRO

### 1.4.2 CASE STORY: AAD-SL

“AAD-SL was able to secure EU funding thanks to Trócaire’s encouragement to lead a consortium. **This was our very first time doing this ever.** AAD-SL, imagine! AAD-SL is leading a whole consortium of four NGOs. We’re a local NGO and we’re standing tall.

When we were War Child, this was immediately after the war, we focused mainly on livelihoods. We learned more about emergency response when we came in contact with Trócaire. We’ve gained lots of experience and training, and during COVID-19 we were even selected by the Government of Sierra Leone, among many organisations, to be the district coordination lead in Karene district!

**AAD-SL was also the very first local organisation to be brought into the Civil Society Strengthening Group, coordinated by Trócaire.** We were invited, alongside other bigger players – the EU, Trócaire, the Irish Embassy, WHH, DFID, the UN. We’re a young organisation, a small one for that matter, and yet we were there to make a presentation to discuss our experience with partnership and donors. **Those kind of platforms are very essential.** We need the space to share our experiences, **to call for what we call localisation. It’s a global call.”**

**Ibrahim Fatu Kamara**

Programme Director, AAD-SL

Mr. Samura, whose home was quarantined during the Ebola crisis, received livelihoods support and food and non-food items.  
**Photo** Michael Solis

# TWO: SCORE PROJECT FINDINGS

## 2.1 OVERALL RESPONSE

### 2.1.1 A SUCCESSFUL PANDEMIC RESPONSE

*“When COVID-19 came about, we were able to secure funding to support an early response, which KADDRO and AAD-SL were able to lead in their respective districts. Both organisations supported the government’s efforts and were selected as district-level coordination leads for the first time in their histories. You could see the impact of the SCORE training and capacity building that had happened in the previous months” ~ William Miller, Programme Officer, Trócaire*

In short, the SCORE programme worked. That the SCORE programme was successful in its goal of strengthening local partners’ capacity to respond to emergencies went uncontested among the responses from all nine people interviewed at Trócaire, AAD-SL, and KADDRO. The singular nature and narrow scope of the SCORE programme’s objectives, combined with Trócaire’s effectiveness as a trusted and competent partner agency to local civil society organisations, yielded a high degree of satisfaction from all respondents, with very few qualifications.

Staff members of AAD-SL and KADDRO felt the SCORE programme was fundamental in enabling them to respond to COVID-19 with more agility and success, compared to their Ebola response. They also felt they had much more influence and recognition during the COVID-19 response compared to how local NGOs were perceived during the Ebola crisis.

Both AAD-SL and KADDRO had not had formal training in emergency preparedness planning or response prior to partnering with Trócaire. Trócaire helped build these capacities over time and formally through SCORE. Beyond the CSOs, Trócaire made sure to include local authorities (government staff) in the cash transfer training conducted by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP).

Having seen how easily NGOs could be pushed to the side-lines during the Ebola crisis, Trócaire advocated for their inclusion on district level-coordination structures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The original intent from the government was for only one international NGO to be assigned to support district-level coordination. Instead of putting itself forward as a district lead, Trócaire

consulted with its partners, who agreed to having themselves be put forward instead. This resulted in a model of one international NGO and one national NGO coordination lead per district. Consequently, local NGOs, including AAD-SL and KADDRO, had a very prominent role to play in these structures.

There were still challenges, as there are with most responses. Trócaire stepped in to support partners on issues relating to value for money, and with engaging in adaptive programming that continuously changes and pivots to meet changing needs and circumstances. The accompaniment, support, and guidance that Trócaire normally provides to its partners proved helpful during COVID-19, and enabled AAD-SL and KADDRO to identify and engage in improved ways of working.

*“At the beginning of COVID, I was at meetings with official stakeholders who would mention how national NGOs were ‘doing great work, preparing jingles and raising awareness.’ The SCORE programme and the experience of COVID have proven that local NGOs aren’t just developers of jingles and radio messages. They can and should design, lead, and implement humanitarian interventions.”*

*Michael Solis  
Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

### 2.1.2 SUCCESSFUL LOCALISATION

The 2019 Trócaire publication “Partnership in Practice: Steps to Localisation” identifies a need to support its partners with “*continuous improvement in knowledge, skills, and capabilities.*” The SCORE programme took significant steps to address this particular need with AAD-SL and KADDRO. Respondents from both partner organisations expressed a desire for SCORE to continue beyond its established period, given the complexities and vastness of humanitarian responses. In the words of one respondent, many staff members felt that, before SCORE, their knowledge was “next to nothing.” Respondents also felt that the learnings from SCORE should be shared across other local organisations engaged in emergency responses.



Localisation as an end and a means is not for the faint of heart, but if the success of the Sierra Leone SCORE programme is any indication, localisation is a necessary next step for the humanitarian aid and development sectors.

The story these findings tell is that when localisation is done right, in an emergency response or any other sector, capacity building takes centre stage and community partners are empowered. SCORE ensured the former, and Trócaire makes it a point to foment the latter. It remains to be seen how donors will adapt their models, structures, and frameworks to enable localisation to take root and grow in practice.

## 2.2 WHAT WORKED WELL

*“During Ebola, national NGOs wouldn’t have been at the table on any decision making or coordination spaces with international NGOs or UN agencies, but now...they’re leading on coordination efforts in their districts. Visibility has improved, and the way they’re taken seriously by government authorities has greatly changed, and a lot of that is a testament to that journey they’ve been on with Trócaire” ~ Michael Solis, Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

The success of the SCORE programme has been unanimously confirmed across respondents from Trócaire, AAD-SL, and KADDRO. This section outlines some of the factors highlighted across the interviews as being crucial to the programme’s success.

*“Trócaire is very friendly, and we are close. There is a tendency to understand each other more, and communicate more. There is the space for everyone to be creative and innovative” ~ Joseph Morgan, Programme Accountant, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

### A. Working Culture

**Trócaire creates and demonstrates an atmosphere of generosity, genteel professional guidance, and informal pedagogies in addition to the employment of formal workshop modalities.** This working culture caused trainees and mentees in AAD-SL and KADDRO to feel comfortable asking questions: because Trócaire is relentlessly transparent about answering them and admitting when the answer isn’t readily available. This enables partners to feel comfortable asking questions. One financial officer interviewed gave the example of the “soft audit,” a process that allowed him to oversee how grants are implemented -- **“soft capacity-building,”** if you will – a new and different way to do their job that

involved interaction on professional bases (the audit itself) and informal bases (being able to ask questions about the audit and observe how one is carried out by internationally trained professionals). Overall, the **atmosphere of mentorship, good humour, and the example Trócaire sets simply by allowing partners to observe them doing what they do over time** produced an environment of confidence and trust. This in turn inspired partners to feel the confidence it took to assume leadership roles when the national government asked them to.

### B. Workshop Style

Workshops were the main way that SCORE’s objective of capacity building was carried out. Trócaire’s mentorship style supports a culture of **pedagogical generosity and inclusivity around capacity-building in the workshop setting.** More than one interviewee mentioned the example of “learning methods” through a “cafe” where workshop participants break into groups and document their brainstorming ideas in a rotating fashion, where each group gets to add to the ideas of the previous one. Then the small groups share the ideas in presentations, then the whole group works together to identify the gaps. One interviewee humorously pointed out that the cafe style workshop resembled America’s 2020 presidential election, wherein the process begins with one apparent outcome, but as more votes came in, a different picture emerged. This was an agreeable and organic way to **ensure collective information-sharing, brainstorming, and the democratic assessment suggesting a broader culture of social progress** that all led to a full picture of the landscape in which project partners work.

*“Our workshops are interactive. We push ourselves to be up-to-date and to give our partners the information that they need. Partners will ask a lot of questions about donor regulations, policies, regulations around financial management, and programmatic aspects of the work we are doing. And if we do not have answers to those questions, we can refer to the programme officers and managers, who often come along to the workshops. We always come with slides and information to help partners grow their abilities to meet the donor’s needs.”*

*Joseph Morgan, Programme Accountant  
Trócaire Sierra Leone*







### C. Tiered Capacity Building

SCORE enabled not only building the capacity of staff, but also building the capacity of the organisations. Staff from various levels, including finance, programmes, and management, were involved, to ensure collective learning and growth. With this approach, trainees experienced both the personal confidence-building of the individual capacity building efforts, but also the confidence that their organisation as a whole was growing more capable as they worked together to develop policies and practices to effectively respond to emergencies.

This is an improvement upon previous ways of supporting partner capacity building (for example, inviting one to three staff per partner to a training and expecting that they will then cascade their learnings to other staff). However, it does require more time from the partner staff, many of whom are funded by various projects, as having most of the team engaged meant focusing solely on SCORE during the training periods.

*“For me personally, SCORE has built my confidence, my ability, and my knowledge and even the capacity to be able to respond, to be able to collaborate with other district stakeholders in terms of response.”*

*Malikie Barrie, SCORE Focal Point/District Coordinator, KADDRO*

### D. Mentorship Over Time

**Trócaire takes the business of mentorship seriously, and carries out that mentorship with partner CSOs over time.** Trócaire has been working with AAD-SL and KADDRO since 2014, providing a long-term model of mentorship and partnering with them in livelihoods and agriculture focused programmes.

This operative longevity paid off during capacity building, because the trust so foundational to coordination efforts, especially rapid ones, was already there. Trócaire had nurtured that trust for years.

Kadi Kamara and her son in Kargboto community. Kadi was supported to produce okra, pepper, maize, cucumbers, and rice during Ebola.  
**Photo** Michael Solis

*“If not for the endowment of knowledge of the facilitators like [Trócaire Project Officer] William, I mean, most of us are not, but the man was so patient in making sure that even the last individual was able to understand the concept itself.”*

*Abass Ibrahim Turay  
Project Officer, KADDRO*

### E. Proactive Shifts in Leadership Roles

**Trócaire did not only mentor its partner organisations, but actively encouraged them to take the lead on projects before SCORE’s capacity building and the COVID-19 crisis response combined to propel AAD-SL and KADDRO to nationally recognised leadership positions.** Inherent to this approach at Trócaire is a fundamental respect in the potential of their partners in local civil society, and a shared dignity at work on every level of that approach. When the Government of Sierra Leone committed to establishing district-level coordination committees with INGO leads, Trócaire advocated for national NGOs, including AAD-SL and KADDRO, to be leads in districts where their presence was strong. This resulted in a new model being adopted, with 1 INGO coordination lead and 1 national NGO coordination lead designated per district. This placed national NGOs at the coordination table in a way that they had not been during previous crises.

*“SCORE is not about one-off training. It’s about working with the partners. We agreed their needs in capacity building for humanitarian response ... there were trainings that were organised, and there were different activities. Then we were also working together throughout the project, through the check-ins, and the relationship between William’s role [EU Programme Officer] in Trócaire and the directors and the SCORE focal people in the partners ... From that point of view, it certainly promotes the dignity and participation of the partner staff.”*

*Eimear Lynch, Programme Manager  
Trócaire Sierra Leone*

## F. Partnership Approach

**Trócaire's programming and partnership efforts were sensitive and needs-specific** with AAD-SL and KADDRO both before SCORE and through SCORE (not just during). For instance, Trócaire had supported both AAD-SL and KADDRO to assess their institutional capacities across a variety of areas (financial, managerial, leadership, safeguarding, etc.) using Trócaire's PCAS (Partner Capacity Assessment System) tool. Through this process, both organisations developed capacity building action plans, and they were recently reassessed in terms of their institutional capacity and updated their capacity building plans. This process placed the assessment and design for the way forward in the hands of the local partners, with support and funding coming from Trócaire and other donors to ensure that their institutional needs are met. The SCORE programme built on a need expressed by the local partners to further strengthen their humanitarian response capacities, beyond what they were able to accomplish during the Ebola crisis.

*"We at Trócaire don't have all the knowledge and we're not professing to say that by working in Sierra Leone we automatically have all of the solutions that our local partners need or want. At least with SCORE we were able to share the knowledge that we do have, but also to outsource the knowledge that we felt that we needed to offer the highest level of training possible."*

*Michael Solis  
Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

## G. The Right Priorities

The dedication of Trócaire's approach and SCORE's specialised focus suggest that **implementation of a localisation agenda in the context of emergency preparedness requires an emphasis on planning and coordination**. The hard work that SCORE programme partners put into learning those skills paid off almost immediately in Sierra Leone, because the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for putting those new skills to use, with a nearly immediate positive feedback of government recognition and expanded duties. KADDRO, for example, was able to design a **rapid needs assessment** form to use when quarantine

became a necessity. Respondents mentioned how meaningful the resultant confidence they felt was, as it helped them assume increased leadership and make faster, more effective decisions during a crisis. Workshops provided an opportunity for **storytelling** about what worked and what didn't, which in turn led to the opportunity to identify best practices **and the collective formulation of action points** to implement the practices identified. In their coordination mechanisms, AAD-SL and KADDRO were able to put to immediate use learning from SCORE workshops, including **mapping donors and resources** in each district, as well as evaluating response access locally. **Project partners called those identified as responders in each district to coordination meetings to plan roles and responsibilities** for each organisation as well as each team member in the event of an emergency.

*"I've been able to strengthen skills in areas I hadn't before, including capacity-building in the area of partnership management. Overseeing the work of partners, and supporting them in various ways, including grant management and mentorship."*

*William H.A. Miller  
Programme Officer, Trócaire*

Another success in terms of planning was supporting both AAD-SL and KADDRO to develop and update their Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPP). These plans are essentially blueprints that allow organisations to prioritise the most likely emergencies they could face, and steps to take that would allow them to respond efficiently and effectively. The plan provides an analysis of existing local actors and mechanisms, service providers, and potential supports to be drawn from to aid the response. Organisations also identify an emergency response team within existing staff, designate a humanitarian focal point, and define clear roles and responsibilities that go into effect should an emergency occur. These roles and responsibilities cover a variety of areas, including procurement and logistics, finances, stakeholder engagement, decision-making, communications, and programme implementation. **AAD-SL and KADDRO described the EPP as a highly important guiding document, even referring to it as the Koran or Bible of their ongoing and future emergency responses.**



Locally made handwashing facility in Falaba.  
Photo Malikie Barrie



“During Ebola, we did not have a response team. Everybody was just doing everything! There was no response team with clear roles and responsibilities. Everything was being indirectly directed: “Hey, you go there, let’s do this.” We realised it was not even coordinated. The coordination aspect was done by INGOs. We were only going there to work. **But now with SCORE, we coordinate people. They don’t coordinate us. So that’s the difference.**”

Malikie Barrie, SCORE Focal Point/District Coordinator, KADDRO

## H. Strengthened Local Presence

One strengthened capacity identified by interviewees is that of handling complaints, with each organisation trained in best practices for documenting and responding to complaints. For example, AAD-SL was able to create a flow chart illustrating their improved complaint handling mechanism, an action that assisted with information awareness by making that information accessible to more people. When COVID restrictions prevented the use of the physical “information kiosks” that had proven so helpful in the Ebola outbreak for informing the population of best practices, project partners adapted this model and brought information to civilians through a telephone hotline.

**Both AAD-SL and KADDRO, with Trócaire’s support, designed a complaints handling mechanism for government quarantine facilities, in order to respond to various unmet needs of those in quarantine** (e.g. lack of electricity, running water, mosquito nets, fresh fruits and vegetables, and drinking water for security guards). **This allowed AAD-SL and KADDRO to adapt their interventions and suggest to Trócaire ways to support dignified quarantine, which informed the budgeting process.**

“And so for me, it is not magic. It is not and it is never and it will never be magic. It is as a result of the capacity they see in us, our contributions when we meet in coordination meetings, when we start to talk, when we do our presentation around what we do, when we invite stakeholders to our operational communities and they see what we do, they have confidence that, yes, we can deliver.”

Ibrahim Fatu Kamara  
Programme Director, AAD-SL







## 2.3 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### A. SCORE PROJECT TIMELINE

Respondents were more or less unanimous *across* all three organisations surveyed, and along a vertical axis *within* them, that **they found the 18-month timeline (later extended to 22 months) to be too short** for the purposes of capacity building. Further areas for capacity development were identified, particularly when AAD-SL and KADDRO began responding to COVID-19 in highly vulnerable districts, such as Karene and Falaba. The COVID-19 response forced organisations to apply the skills and knowledge acquired from SCORE and adapt on the ground during an emergency. This left less time to focus on formal capacity building efforts.

While not all emergencies are as protracted as the Ebola epidemic or the COVID pandemic, **the process of trust-building so central to sustainable capacity-building necessarily takes time.** While it technically fell outside the scope of the project, this observation was by far the most unanimous and forcefully delivered ‘gap’ identified by respondents. **Localisation takes time,** because coordination among community partners runs smoothly when there is a trusting process, including the time to develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan. Supporting SCORE’s objective beyond the COVID period is critical.

However, achieving such sustainability requires back-and-forth, upcountry presence, and the retaining of staff trained beyond the life of one grant cycle. Across the board, interviewees expressed a wish to expand capacity building beyond their own organisations to other local actors. The donor’s restrictions on how the partners could spend their funds proved counterproductive to sustained local capacity building. For example, they wished to train district-level actors in humanitarian disaster response, but according to donor regulations such costs would be deemed as ineligible. Trócaire tried to overcome this challenge with the Cash Transfer training conducted by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) by inviting local authorities to participate; however, Trócaire had to identify another funding source for the inclusion of local authorities, since costs relating to anyone other than the partner organisations would be deemed ineligible by the donor. The sustainability of capacity-building is a larger question for the donor community to consider, as it is key to implementing localisation efforts in the long-term.

Locally made face masks, distributed in Falaba District, Sierra Leone.  
**Photo** Malikie Barrie

### B. EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTICS

The desire for the administrative aspect of SCORE implementation to run more smoothly, and take up less staff time, came up in almost all interviews conducted. While accountability of donor funds is important, **the financial representatives of local partner organisations found it difficult to keep up with the ‘paper trail’ of documentation** that SCORE required of them, particularly when it came to scanning each document in a certain format according to donor compliance guidelines. As 100% of documents will be audited by the donor at the end of the project, ensuring meticulous documentation (including official SCORE stamps on all documents) was more rigorous than ordinary, even for a relatively small grant.

While the focus of the SCORE programme was not on provision of assets or technology to partners, these resources are vital elements for the partners’ capacity development and the success of their operations and programme delivery. Trócaire provided AAD-SL and KADDRO with the following vital pieces of equipment, which respondents voiced substantial appreciation for:

- Tablets (6 units) required for digital data collection
- Scales (2 units) for price monitoring
- A laptop for KADDRO (a laptop for AAD-SL was secured with external funding)
- Internet Modem Airbox 4G Orange for e-learning
- Scanner (2 units)

Local partners understood the need for transparency and accountability when it came to the expenditure of funds allowed to them. One partner felt that a two-in-one copier and scanner might be more helpful than a standalone scanner, but both partners appreciated that all equipment provided to them was new and in good working order.

Scanning was such an obstacle that **more than one respondent at various levels of authority mentioned the possibility of hiring an assistant just to take care of scanning.** Trócaire, for example, did use unused funds to hire a SCORE Project Assistant who focused significantly on scanning. While Trócaire had significantly more supporting documentation to scan as the lead agency of the SCORE programme, the partners still felt overwhelmed despite the small size of the grants they received.

Partner staff also discussed a challenge with software on the tablets to be used for monitoring and evaluation. The tablets were equipped with Kobo, a free software, but the training they received from Trócaire on M&E used Commcare



software, which enables developing questionnaires online. Commcare, though similar to Kobo, was viewed by partners as a superior software. However, Commcare requires a yearly subscription, which was not budgeted for by the project. **It is important for Trócaire to identify the software that partners should be trained on, ensure that all equipment has this software, and budget for the necessary expenditures that enable the partners to utilise this software.**

### C. BUDGET

Interviewees identified a tension between the practical demands of emergency response and the rigidity in the absence of flexible funding, especially given the high-stakes and rapid-change circumstance emergency response requires. One example of this was the cash transfer training process from CaLP, in which participants were duly trained in cash transfer programming through SCORE, but did not have funding to support the process of conducting cash transfers during emergencies. Another interviewee mentioned Rapid Needs Assessment as an area where they had been trained but not funded to do what they had been trained to do. **They had the capacity, but not the resources to put that capacity into practice.**

The nature of the SCORE grant, due to donor restrictions, is limited to capacity building activities only, rather than emergency response activities. As a result, Trócaire had to adopt other means and mechanisms to support local partners to respond to emergencies, outside of SCORE funding. The Emergency Response Grant (ERG) developed by Trócaire in Sierra Leone provided a small flexible fund with the local partners, AAD-SL and KADDRO, to be able to respond to potential emergencies, such as floods. The ERG mechanism tailors Trócaire's normal grant agreement in such a way that it places a flexible fund in a special bank account for each partner of 10,000 EUR each, which is designated generally for emergency responses. Trócaire's partners can easily request to use these funds on a needs-basis, thus **enabling local actors to respond to emergencies within 24 hours.**

The existence of the flexible fund alongside their SCORE grant enabled the partners to respond within the first days of the COVID-19 crisis in Sierra Leone. Even though the Emergency Response Grant was intended for other emergencies that the partners identified in their EPPs, such as floods, it proved extremely useful during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Again, and encouragingly, the vast majority of interview respondents had very little in the way of grievances about where the existing budget for SCORE is allocated. However, the issue of how the funds were allocated was flagged with regards to **direct access to emergency funding in support of actions that must be taken quickly in the rapidly evolving context of a humanitarian crisis.**

In moments of crisis, the steps required to access monetary support beyond the 'regular' three signatories were seen as an obstacle in that they risk slowing the processes described in the beneficiary organisations' Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPPs). **The normal practice that Trócaire uses for signing grant agreements and transferring funds for development programming is not designed for emergencies, and in the past it has actually contributed to slowing down local responses.** This is the reason why Trócaire designed and implemented the Emergency Response Grant.

To empower local actors to respond immediately (as they did during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic), more flexible mechanisms need to be in place. **It would be beneficial for Trócaire, AAD-SL, and KADDRO to conduct a formal review of this mechanism, and to adapt it should it require any modifications based on learnings from its first year of use.**

*"The bank system in Sierra Leone has several problems. In the past when we have made bank transfers to our partners, the money will go to the wrong bank account or the money will go to a completely different organisation or the money will just never go anywhere. This inevitably results in delays. By the time the money actually hits the partners' accounts, the emergency, the immediate crisis, has already passed" ~ Michael Solis Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

### D. STAFFING

*"If a CSO doesn't have enough funding from multiple donors to contribute to staff salary, they might not pay the worker 100% of what they are meant to receive in spite of a clause in their contract stipulating that 100% of their income has to come from one project" ~ Joseph Morgan, Programme Accountant, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

Unlike other areas under analysis here, staffing issues produced enough of a diversity of opinion between respondents, including within follow-up exchanges, that it deserves to perhaps be

workshopped and/or brainstormed moving forward in an inclusive manner: that is, with both administrative directorship and organisational leadership, and with partner representatives on the ground.

In wider research and literature on disaster response policy in the international humanitarian sector, it's possible to see a trend over the past five years in that sector identifying a troubling structural problem. That problem is a culture of 'sub-contracting' exacerbated by **temporary positions funded by grant-life-cycle supplied salaries.**

Project Officers interviewed tended to raise an insightful point that speaks to the larger need that SCORE, with its dedication to capacity-building, begins to address: namely, the inescapable reality that **employing staff temporarily** to work on one project that will inevitably finish at the end of its funding cycle, and not *retaining* the staff thereafter, **constitutes a real loss of expertise and continuity.**

To address this challenge, Trócaire ensured that the humanitarian focal points at AAD-SL and KADDRO, who were in charge of the SCORE Project, were existing staff. For AAD-SL, SCORE represented a percentage of the staff member's salary, whereas for KADDRO, this represented the full salary, given that the staff member's previous project had ended. KADDRO faced a challenge when it obtained another project that they wanted their humanitarian focal point to form part of. They assigned this staff member to two projects, which created challenges for the separate donors who approved funding for a single and separate role. **Clear communication on the part of the partner in such scenarios is important to ensure accountability and would be beneficial in allowing for brainstorming and identifying workable solutions that align with donor requirements.**

'Sub-contractor' culture tends to siphon power and agency from local service providers, vendors, and partner organisations *at precisely the moments when it would empower them* to be trusted with more than a short-term duty. After all, one of the key factors of SCORE's success in Sierra Leone is that Trócaire's local partner organisations were promoted to leadership roles during such a moment—namely, that of crisis response—by the government in Sierra Leone. Another factor of this case study's successful outcome was that the staff at partner organisations enjoyed mentorship from Trócaire over time. It stands to reason, therefore, that **had the sub-contractor culture of temporary local staff employment based on grant life-cycles governed Trócaire's partnership approach, the case of SCORE Project implementation**

**in Sierra Leone would have had a far less successful outcome.**

Trócaire can work with its local partners to discuss how staff are being included in future projects and proposals, to ensure that the knowledge acquired though SCORE is not lost. **Such a loss would be fundamentally antithetical to SCORE's nominal goal because it can get in the way of any sustained capacity building measures; and localisation depends, among other things, on sustained capacity building.**

However, administrative-level opinions expressed in interviews offered a more restrained consideration of the issue; namely, the risk of burnout, or "exhaustion factor." While local project staff themselves both look to be employed for longer than a temporary duration, *and* hope to move away from the short-term contract model central to the "sub-contractor" culture, **asking them to serve in more than one capacity between multiple projects stretches them thin, risking burnout.**

*"The SCORE programme only provided funding for capacity building. It provided no funding for emergency response if an emergency was to happen; it would provide no funding for community level activities, only funding to train our local staff and our own staff. So in that sense, the SCORE programme had limitations" ~ Michael Solis, Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone*

## E. PROGRAMMING

### E1. Limits to Information Sharing

The **lack of an information-sharing mechanism** wherein partners could share their experiences and learn from each other in the wake of disaster response was identified as a significant missed opportunity in the area of sustained human capacity building. Particularly as staff turnover can be high, especially when local staff salaries are dependent on grant life cycles, this poses risks for creating new knowledge and retaining it. Such a narrow avenue for impact runs counter to Trócaire's guiding philosophy of integrating various levels of community stakeholder participation, as well as the specific issue of practical implementation of sustainable and localised emergency response. To that end, several respondents mentioned that **SCORE was missing a key piece of information-sharing and collective reflection that would 'complete' the process of localising emergency response.**

A significant learning exchange was meant to be conducted in Ethiopia with representation of all

partners, international and local, that formed part of the multi-country SCORE programme. However, this could not take place due to COVID-19. **While online forums were held, there is a further need to reflect on lessons learned more broadly, including the findings of this and similar reports.**

## E2. Rigid Requirements

The largest area where SCORE might improve went more or less uncontested among *all* interviewees, was an issue of a **tension between the SCORE grant's larger goals, and the limiting specificity of its funding requirements and programming focus**. The majority of interviewees made sure to address what they felt was an **"unfinished" process** when it comes to the successful implementation of the SCORE project goals' larger vision of capacity building as a result of that rigidity.

Also, SCORE has limitations in that funds can only be spent to increase the capacity of Trócaire and partner staff (and not, in other words, that of local authorities or communities). If Trócaire wants to train local authorities—which it did with the CaLP cash transfer trainings, for example—or other community members, then under the current SCORE model, it needs to find other resources. The COVID-19 response, for example, was another area that SCORE could not fund, as there is **not a built-in mechanism to make the SCORE grant practical during a humanitarian crisis**, should one occur.

While the SCORE programme in Sierra Leone was originally budgeted with a simulation exercise to replicate a disaster and assess how people

respond, the donor's funding could not be used to support the local partners' to respond to an actual disaster, when it occurred. As capacities grow as partners build experiences during actual emergency scenarios, such rigid restrictions in the use of the donor's funds may be short-sighted on the part of the donor. Greater flexibility would allow for enhanced growth, learning, and strengthened localisation during emergencies, precisely when the partners require it most.

## E3. Donor Priorities versus Partner Priorities

The funding mechanism aimed to help local partner organisations manage and care for volunteers, specifically EU Aid Volunteers (EUAVs), who are funded by a related mechanism. While supporting local NGOs to host and care for volunteers can be a helpful endeavour, it did not match with the expressed needs of Trócaire or the local partners involved in the SCORE programme. Across both AAD-SL and KADDRO, the component around building this capacity was seen as counterintuitive to building stronger and more sustainable local capacities. Hosting foreign volunteers, while this can be beneficial, can also absorb time and resources from local agencies, and volunteers are temporary by nature. Instead of focusing time and efforts in this area, the local partners would prefer investing resources in local people.

Trócaire and its local partners would benefit from a more flexible fund that would support them during emergencies, should an emergency occur during the life cycle of a similar programme, and to strengthen local actors and local structures, in line with the commitments of the Charter for Change.



## PAUSE AND REFLECT

# WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

“You know, from experience, when we talk about capacity building, often people only limit their thinking and ideas around you being trained and that’s it, but it goes beyond that. **Capacity building also has to do with the self that is receiving the training.**

**You can train me one thousand times. If I’m not showing the willingness and readiness to reciprocate,** to respond to your training, to put into practice the training that you are conducting, to put into practice the ideas I’m gaining, to translate the ideas into practicality, **then there is no capacity in that sense.**

So for me, **capacity building is about translating the ideas you receive into workable situations.** How can you apply yourself? How can you adapt with those skills, those techniques? Just knowledge you gain from either a training, be it online or offline—be it in a classroom setting to the real life situation, can be used to make a change in the lives of people.

That’s the bottom line definition for capacity building. But again, capacity building could also have to do with the human resource in terms of training people, letting people understand what to do and what not to do. **How can they plan themselves better? How can they forecast and work towards their forecast?**

And **it also has to do with system building, which is also very unique with the SCORE programme looking at the capacity building in a holistic sense.** It focuses on the human, and it focuses on the systems within the organisations. We operate building the systems in terms of policy development or review, in terms of standards, in terms of procedures. All of these are capacity building.

Also, **capacity building has a logistical element.** For example, if I want to send you a document via email, internet is needed to communicate. That also forms part of capacity building – **not just giving me something, but showing me how to use it.**

Putting all of these together, I would say that yes, this is capacity building, and this is what we experienced with SCORE.”

**Ibrahim Fatu Kamara**  
Programme Director, AAD-SL

# THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, SCORE made significant progress against its objectives, to the satisfaction of the local NGOs involved. They unanimously wanted another programme like it, and to add to that programme.

That the efficacy and achievements of KADDRO and AAD-SL in handling the COVID-19 response were so quickly recognised and rewarded by community members and the national government demonstrates the success of what the SCORE programme can do. Within its scope, the unanimous opinion is simply that with the help of Trócaire's focus on partnership over time and a six-year working relationship with AAD-SL and KADDRO to support the process, SCORE has enabled both local partners to respond more effectively to emergencies, even compared to their earlier responses during the Ebola crisis.

As one respondent put it, with such a successful outcome for such a comparatively narrow scope, the question naturally becomes what happens next. The recommendations outlined in this section provide a practical set of suggestions that, if implemented, might help sustain the results achieved through SCORE and further Trócaire and its local partners on their localisation journeys.

## A. TIMELINE

**Recommendation: lobby for a 2-3 year timeline for future capacity building grants.**

The local partner organisations felt that the 18-month period was too short, and that capacity building could have extended over a longer period of time. While the addition of 4 months as a result of programming delays during COVID-19 was welcome, the donor may wish to consider a longer period from the start, particularly as the likelihood of disasters over an 18 month period is high. The programme design and length needs to be agile in supporting local actors to adapt to such contextual changes.

## B. EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTICS

**Recommendation: review equipment specifications with local partners.**

It is important to review equipment specifications with local partners, particularly if scanning requirements are considerable. It is worth conducting a bid analysis of different types of scanners, including two-in-one copiers that may prove even more useful than standalone scanners.

**Recommendation: ensure that all equipment provided has the necessary software, and that if software has a cost that this is covered by the project. Trainings should also relate to the software that the local partners have access to.**

This recommendation relates specifically to Commcare, as the local partners did not have access to this software but were trained in it. They understood the benefits of Commcare in comparison to Kobo, but they were unable to put its use into practice. Commcare costs should be budgeted into future projects.

## C. BUDGET

**Recommendation: review, refine, and continue the Emergency Response Grant.**

As the SCORE programme is unable to provide emergency response funding, it is critical to ensure that local CSOs who form part of a capacity-building grant such as SCORE can have rapid and flexible access to emergency funds, when required. Trócaire's normal procedure for disbursing grants to partners in Sierra Leone faces too many obstacles (including delays in grant agreement signing due to distance, delays in bank transfers, etc.). However, the Emergency Response Grant that Trócaire Sierra Leone designed for AAD-SL and KADDRO was a major success. This mechanism should be reviewed by Trócaire and its partners, and refined where required. It should also be shared across the organisation as a way to ensure that the partners who have graduated from the SCORE programme have ready access to emergency funds.



**Recommendation: advocate with donor for adaptations to programme design that include provisions for other local actors.**

A request from local partners was to include those organisations and institutions with which AAD-SL, KADDRO, and Trócaire coordinate and collaborate to carry out action points in their respective EPPs in a timely manner. They request that costs to include such actors in SCORE trainings be included, and that partners be provided with budgets that would enable them to incur costs for such trainings.

#### **D. STAFFING**

**Recommendation: consider funding finance assistants from the start of similar projects to ensure adequate programme support is in place.**

As long as the project documentation requirements are as relatively extensive and thorough as SCORE's are, a dedicated human resource may be required to assist the humanitarian focal points from the start. This may help reduce the risk of exhaustion and burnout.

**Recommendation: Trócaire to engage local partners in a process to review staffing structures for new grants, staff well being, staff retention across grants, and multi-directional accountability.**

The address human resource challenges in relation to sub-contracting, as well as the need for accountability when staffing changes are made or costs shared across grants, a brainstorming and problem-solving session may be beneficial, with agreements designed and implemented. This may result in varying approaches across organisations and differentiated preferences. Staffing should be discussed and agreed upon at the start of the grant, and reviewed throughout for effectiveness, efficiency, and value for money.

**Recommendation: Trócaire to engage other partnership-orientated INGOs to share lessons on how they approach staffing for local partners across projects, and how this can be done in a way that promotes the values of localisation**

**and staff dignity while also mitigating financial and donor compliance risks.**

This can be a future topic of conversation for the next Civil Society Strengthening Working Group discussion, as this is a space coordinated by Trócaire. It would be useful to see how other actors respond to such challenges, and how local CSOs can be further supported.

#### **E. PROGRAMMING**

**Recommendation: conduct lessons learning sessions/activities with other NGOs, CSOs, INGOs, and donors, in country and internationally.**

Trócaire and its partners can work together to identify key audiences and how to disseminate lessons learned in relation to the achievements of the SCORE programme. An in person session or an online webinar can be held that highlights the major achievements of the SCORE programme, as well as key findings, including from this research. The findings can be shared with other actors supporting localisation in Sierra Leone or who wish to strengthen localisation efforts. The webinar could also have a more specific focus on localisation during COVID-19 in Sierra Leone, and it could be opened regionally and internationally.

**Recommendation: Refresher Courses in M&E and Financial Management Tools.**

Those who learned monitoring and evaluation tools such as Kobo, and financial management tools such as Quickbooks, expressed a wish for refresher courses in the event that they would not use the skills for several months at a time, and/or they may not have access to the appropriate software.

**Recommendation: additional Capacity Building Programming Module in Fundraising.**

Both Trócaire and its project partners acknowledge that Sierra Leone civil society has capacity gaps in the area of fundraising or proposal development. Because this affects project partners' ability to meet their own needs outside of the SCORE programme to actually implement the skills SCORE

has taught them, fundraising is a key skill level to raise in partner organisations. In other words, as is, SCORE provides capacity to respond to emergencies, but not adequate resources to do so, nor the means of securing additional resources. Emergency response mechanisms can only work when there are both capacity and resources, and localisation will be more fully achieved when local CSOs can proactively develop and pitch their own ideas, with less dependence on Trócaire or other INGOs in the proposal development process.

**Recommendation: lobby donors for the design of capacity-building programmes with practical elements that respond to local needs.**

Specifically for the Sierra Leonean contexts, local partners have advocated for more flexible

programming that can support them to respond to emergencies where required and support the capacity building of local actors and authorities beyond their individual organisations.

*"We want to see that continue in the near future, in the long run, because that's the only way some of this work will continue to happen...It is very important. These international organisations will not be in Sierra Leone forever. They have a time frame that they will end up leaving this country. What if we as locals are empowered, and giving that kind of capacity? Then we'll be able to continue to engage our communities, continue to support our people that are deprived" ~ Lansana Mansaray, Programme Officer, AAD-SL.*

Post-quarantine food distribution in Karene District, Sierra Leone.  
**Photo** John J. Thullah





# FOUR: CONCLUSION

*"Because the interesting thing is diffusing the thinking in which, 'Everything that is local is not good. Everything that is local is not strong. Everything that is local is not serious. Everything that is international is best.' But this kind of engagement is proving otherwise" ~ Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Programme Director, AAD-SL*

It is clear from this review that the SCORE programme **was essential to the improvement of localised disaster response in the humanitarian sector in Sierra Leone, with learnings already applied across 5 districts by AAD-SL and KADDRO**. This is important, as a key takeaway from the SCORE programme is to remember that a localised approach will challenge previous models, frameworks, and modalities in the long-term. It will interrogate how projects are designed, how they are assessed, funding mechanisms, donor compliance models, and the duration of grant cycles.

A useful examination of SCORE demands a robust interrogation of what capacity building is, since capacity building is its chief objective. Empowering local actors and building capacity the way the SCORE programme did, together with the pedagogical example set by Trócaire as a

partner over time, will naturally result in the critical thinking, action points, and initiative that localisation demands.

The need for something like Trócaire Sierra Leone's flexible and innovative Emergency Response Grant to complement SCORE was necessary, as this enabled SCORE to be more practically useful when disaster struck. This mechanism lays bare the practical limitations of SCORE, namely the lack of certainty of complementary funding for humanitarian programming for local CSOs. It also demonstrates the importance of fomenting agile working relationships between INGOs and local CSOs that go beyond the traditional sub-contracting model into one that challenges power imbalances, thus promoting equity, dignity, and respect.

It is unusual for a disaster relief project to focus only on capacity building. Yet even with its specific focus, the SCORE programme succeeded in promoting the goals of the Charter for Change. It makes a leap into methodologies and modalities that defy the typical ways of working with local CSOs in Sierra Leone, while also opening new avenues for thought that can result in more examples of putting localisation into practice.









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