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SIERRA LEONE DIALOGUE MEETING ON LOCALISATION

Charter **4**
CHANGE

Date:

16th November 2021

Time:

9:00 am - 2:00 pm (GMT)

Venue:

**Radisson Blu, Freetown,
Sierra Leone**



DIALOGUE REPORT

Picture: Kadi Kamara and her son
in Kargboto community.
(Photographer: Michael Solis)

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Overseas Development



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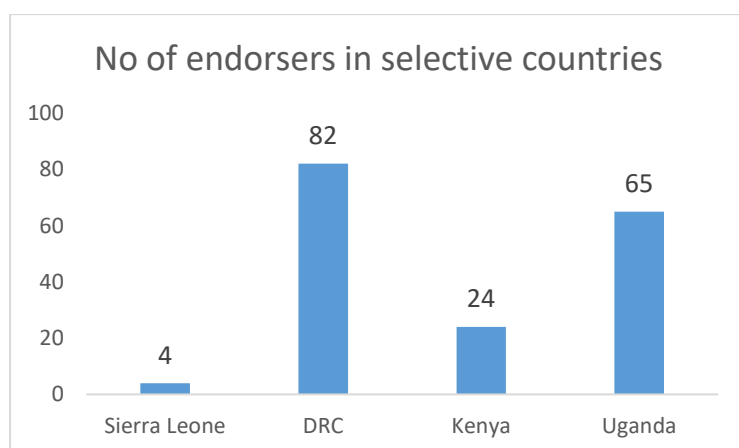
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INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone's Local, National, International NGOs, Donors and Government held a localisation dialogue meeting on 16 November 2021 from 0900 to 1400 hours in the Radisson Blu hotel. The event was organised by Trócaire, Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO), Action for Advocacy and Development-Sierra Leone (AAD-SL), Catholic Agency for International Development (CAFOD) and Action Aid. These organisations are signatories and endorsers of the Charter for Change commitments. The meeting objectives were:

1. To raise awareness among NGOs in Sierra Leone of the Charter for Change and other networks
2. To share examples of localisation and civil society strengthening efforts in Sierra Leone
3. To identify challenges and opportunities for advancing localisation in Sierra Leone; these ideas will feed into the upcoming Global Charter for Change Annual Meeting in December

At the time of this meeting, Sierra Leone had only four endorsers of Charter for Change commitments i.e. AAD – SL, Develop Salone (DESAL), KADDRO, and Women's Forum for Human Rights and Democracy-Sierra Leone (WOFHRAD-SL). This is a low number compared to other Africa countries where Trócaire works that have more active Charter for Change networks:



The following organisations are signatories of Charter for Change operating in Sierra Leone

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| i. Trócaire | v. Care |
| ii. Save the Children | vi. Street Child |
| iii. CAFOD | vii. Oxfam |
| iv. Action Aid | viii. Tear Fund |

The dialogue meeting was hybrid with both physical and online participants. 31 men and 19 women attended physically while 32 other participants joined online.

PRAYERS AND WELCOMING REMARKS

Prayers and welcoming remarks were done by Joseph Alieu Kamara, Executive Director, Welfare Society for the Disabled (WESOFOD). He welcomed participants and acknowledged the presence of different stakeholders i.e. donors, INGOs Government representatives, and Local and National NGOs, including participants joining in person and online. He recognised the work different players have done in championing localisation, noting that it is commendable and speaks for itself. He encouraged actors to continue doing more in ensuring that local and national actors are at the centre of emergency

response. He concluded by stating that organisations championing for persons with disability need to also be at the centre of localisation.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Ibrahim Njuguna, Trócaire Sierra Leone Country Director, shared with participants the purpose of the meeting. In his preamble speech, he noted that the dialogue was an opportune time, coming exactly three days after the world met to discuss the next course of actions concerning climate change crisis. He acknowledged that despite the climate impact coupled with Covid-19, situations that have shown us that those cause in crisis can and should take control of their own destinies, only 4.7% of global humanitarian funding was channelled to local and national organisations in 2020 against a target of 25% based on the Grand Bargain agreement.

Ibrahim reminded participants that they needed to have a dialogue on localising humanitarian, development and peace sectors. He opened up the engagement by giving a synopsis of Charter for Change, a global commitment that complements Grand Bargain and seeks to press for more deliberate action. This is an initiative, led by both local, national and international NGOs, to concretely implement changes in the

functioning of the humanitarian system to enable a locally led response. The coalition currently comprises 38 INGO Signatories and 440 local and national NGOs (LNNGO) Endorsers from 57 countries. These are the 8 Commitments which both signatories and endorsers are committed to:

- i. Increase direct funding to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action
- ii. Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership which include equity, transparency, result oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity
- iii. Increase transparency around resource transfers to national and local NGOs
- iv. Stop undermining local capacity to explore alternatives such as secondments, mentoring or supporting national surge initiatives
- v. Emphasize the importance of national actors
- vi. Address sub-contracting and ensure equality in decision making
- vii. Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening
- viii. Promote the role of local partners to media and public

He also presented challenges and good practices that can be replicated and built upon on based on the annual Charter for Change 2020 Signatories report. These include more support for flexible funding, strengthening localisation in the cluster system at the country level, increasing multi-year investments for capacity strengthening and beginning to unlock quality funding, including indirect costs, for local actors. The challenges include, tracking progress on funding to local actors, through to the donor level, meeting the 25% as directly as possible target, and limited multi-year funding accessible to local actors for response work.



His final remark was to request participants to have open mind, open will and open heart in coming up with practical solutions in shifting more power to local and national organisations.

OPENING REMARKS

Alpha Luyoyo, Senior Advisor for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, USAID

Alpha, in her speech, informed participants that the United States (US) is among the 25 member states that are signatories of the Grand Bargain¹ and it is working with other donors to close the humanitarian gap to get more means to people in need and improve effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian actions. She noted that one of the modest ways of achieving the 8 commitments on the Charter for Change is through empowering local NGOs and engaging them in the humanitarian actions. She reemphasized the need to focus on localisation in the development space as well and gave examples of initiatives that USAID has had to promote the subject matter. They include:

- **USAID forward²**

The USAID Forward reform initiative ran from 2010-2016. USAID Forward improved the way that the Agency delivers foreign assistance by embracing new partnerships, investing in the catalytic role of innovation, and demanding a renewed focus on results. In 2017, the Agency determined that the work advanced under USAID Forward had largely been institutionalized. Its focus areas were:

- Deliver results on a meaningful scale through a strengthened USAID.
- Promote sustainable development through high-impact partnerships and local solutions.
- Identify and scale up innovative, breakthrough solutions to intractable development challenges.

- **Office of Local Sustainability³**

USAID's Office of Local Sustainability (E3/LS) leads the Agency's work on locally led development. Its innovative and flexible programs strengthen the capacity of USAID missions to better serve and partner with local communities. As a result, USAID is able to help reduce dependence on foreign aid.

- **New Partnership Initiative⁴**

Under this initiative, USAID is tapping the ingenuity and knowledge of organisations that are deeply connected to the people and the communities it serve. In doing so, USAID ensure that its partner countries become agents of their own growth and prosperity for generations to come.

- **Journey to self-reliance⁵**

USAID is reorienting its strategies, partnership models, and program practices to achieve greater development outcomes and work towards a time when foreign assistance is no longer necessary. It is called the Journey to Self-Reliance. As partners on this journey, USAID is working with host country governments and partners to achieve locally sustained results, helping countries mobilize public and private revenues, strengthening local capacities, and accelerating enterprise-driven development. This approach fosters stable, resilient, and prosperous countries that are more self-reliant, and prioritizes enduring partnerships.

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain#:~:text=The%20Grand%20Bargain%2C%20launched%20during,efficiency%20of%20the%20humanitarian%20action>

² <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1869/USAID%20Forward%20Fact%20Sheet%20April%202016.pdf>

³ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/Office_of_Local_Sustainability_Fact_Sheet.pdf

⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/npj>

⁵ <https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>

As she concluded, Alpha requested international and local NGOs to register their organisations in the partner directory on the website www.workwithusaid.org, which was recently launched by USAID Administrator Ms. Samantha Power. The website will enable the registered organisations to connect with others in the development space, easily forge partnership in contracts and grants and increase visibility and capabilities.

Kobi Bentley, Development Director, FCDO

In her preamble statement, Ms. Kobi stated that localisation has been implicitly integrated in UK approach to humanitarian and disaster risk management for a long time and most recently reaffirmed in its commitment to the Grand Bargain. At organisation level, FCDO, formerly DFID, has taken a programmatic approach to localisation using different program modalities. It provides significant core-funding to institutions like the Red Cross and UN and attaches localisation targets. Localisation is also a key feature to a number of programs managed from FCDO headquarters and an example that is relevant in this context is Start Fund⁶, which was created with UK central funding. UK still remains the largest donor of the Start Fund and is supporting set-up and development of country level hubs to support local actions.

She further stated that the FCDO Sierra Leone team is considering localisation in the design and management of program portfolios. She reemphasised the need to integrate localisation in the development context and gave examples of two programs FCDO is funding which are promoting localisation i.e. Strengthening Accountability and Building Inclusion (SABI) Program⁷ (SABI is a citizen-led accountability programme working in every district of the country to increase awareness of, and demand for, the delivery of basic services – including health, education, social protection, water and energy) and Partnership with Purposeful in Support to Adolescent Girls Empowerment in Sierra Leone (SAGE-SL)⁸ program. She described how working with and through local partners and at community level has stronger more compelling evidence of the challenges faced by vulnerable Sierra Leoneans. This has also generated more informed, better-targeted solutions including ways to address the sensitive socioeconomic and cultural barriers to change that are highly context specific.



Kobi, explained that as they are looking at the next three years' planning cycle, they are thinking of how development partnership in SL will evolve. It must put Sierra Leoneans in the driving seat and this presents an opportunity to think about what localisation means in its broadest sense, including how FCDO helps to create space for civil society to put in place checks and balances and support private sector not just being an engine of growth but a

contributor to broader social and economic development.

⁶ <https://startnetwork.org/start-fund>

⁷ <http://sabi-sl.org/>

⁸ <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300183/summary>

She expounded the need to work with SL Government systems at all levels i.e. national, district and community and supporting delivery of roles and responsibilities in line with decentralisation. She urged implementing partners to build and forge strong delivery partnership with Government rather than delivering on Government's behalf.

She also highlighted some positive results of partnering with civil society, particularly the recent role played by civil society in calling for and shaping National Policy of on radical inclusion in schools.⁹ FCDO is currently designing its health and education programming. In both they foresee strong components of community engagement to help ensure policies, plans and systems.

Her closing words were ***"Localisation is about recognising there is power in partnership. I would like to recognise that partnership takes work and often requires some creativity and compromise.*** As the Development Director, I have to ensure that our roles and procedures are respected. Ensuring accountability to UK taxpayers and helping to defend the case for using UK resources overseas. I fully admit that for a small organisation, this can be too cumbersome; however, I strongly believe this does not mean that they cannot be brought into our program policy partnership in various ways. I look forward to the event report. I am keen to hear all your creative ideas to advance localisation in Sierra Leone and thinking around how these can also be applied to FCDO's work in Sierra Leone."

Claire Buckley, Ambassador of Ireland, Irish Embassy

Claire thanked the organisers of the event and took cognisance of the role these organisations are playing in not just talking the talk but also walking the walk in localisation discourse. She termed the meeting as a great opportunity to discuss approaches and experiences of understanding the challenges of localisation in the Sierra Leonean local context and suggesting ways to strengthen it. Whilst localisation has become an important theme in development discourse since the WHS, it has also been part of high-level exchanges on effectiveness and how development actors, Governments and Civil Society combine efforts on improving development in fragile countries. In her speech, she was clear how important the dialogue was in reaffirming the relevance of local actors in responding to humanitarian actions.

She reminded participants on the important role that both International, national and local civil



society played in responding to Sierra Leone's humanitarian emergencies, peace and development in previous years and called for increased support and engagement with local organisations. She recognised the additional capacity challenges local actors face, particularly in the administrative and financial fields and strengthening those capacities as being at the very core of what Ireland's does. Ireland prides itself on

⁹ <https://mbsse.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Radical-Inclusion-Policy.pdf>

assessing those capacities and going the extra mile to help them improve on their service delivery, especially for women and girls here in Sierra Leone. She reiterated Ireland's global development policy, which is in line with the language of the sustainable development goals, which focus on effective accountable and inclusive institutions. This is fundamentally important to a country's capacity to drive itself sufficiently and to sustainably reduce poverty and support economic growth, that is inclusive, to manage shocks over the long term and to reach the furthest behind.

Ireland is also a signatory to the Grand Bargain, which through its work streams, prominently features localisation. During the Covid-19 outbreak, Ireland supported the government of Sierra Leone's preparedness and response plan by investing in the institutional capacities of local organisations to respond to the pandemic as part of the Team Europe approach. Ireland also provided flexible funding to local organisations through Irish INGOs to strengthen resilience in preventing and reducing the spread and impact of the pandemic.

In the Ambassador's closing remarks, she stated: "So to conclude before me today, I see on the list of participants on screen an inspiring mix of expertise brought together to do justice on this topic and I've no doubt that the outcome of the dialogue will be so useful for our shared commitment to building, local capacity, and ensuring aid effectiveness."

Manuel Müller, EU Ambassador, European Union

Mr. Manuel started by lauding the role of civil society and their cooperation with the Government of Sierra Leone. He shared that European Union is also actively contributing to the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments and making humanitarian assistance more efficient, effective and impactful together with its partners within Team Europe and with other international partners. Together with other signatories of the Grand Bargain, the European Union is supporting Jan Egeland's¹⁰ priorities, first and foremost localisation and the enhanced participation of local actors in development and quality funding. He stated: "It is quite clear those who are near on the ground near to the people are the best one to know what is needed and how it should be implemented." He highlighted one of the two important principles that the signatories of the Grand Bargain have agreed on i.e. to strengthen the Nexus between humanitarian aid and the long-term development cooperation, but also stepping up cooperation with local partners. The European Union is committed to increase financial support to local partners worldwide and developing their competencies because it fully recognizes that aid and development are most effective when decisions and actions are taken closest to the people.

He further stated that EU has consistently advocated for a greater space for civil society engagement in development and contributed to preparedness and response to multiple crises that have affected Sierra Leone, as well as longer-term development. The EU, together with Team Europe partners, have stepped up their commitment to both decentralization and civil society organisation-led humanitarian response and development cooperation and have increased financial and technical support in that regard to also pilots new approaches. A new pilot approach by the EU delegation, which prioritises action grants to local civil society organisations applying as lead applicants of NGO coalitions since 2019, was introduced. Two calls for proposal valued all at 11 million euros were launched to support prevention of sexual, and gender-based violence and to enhance civil society contribution to the implementation of local development plans. This aligned with the objectives and priorities identified by the European Union and its member states in consultation with civil society under the EU civil society and gender action plan for Sierra Leone. He lauded the establishment of the Sierra Leone CSO

¹⁰ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/jan-egeland-appointed-eminent-person-grand-bargain>

working group on which the event builds upon and thanked the international and local organisations for having this.

Experience has shown that National CSOs encounter prevalent and acute capacity constraints and challenges in the implementation of donor grants and development strategies, which might expose

them and donors to avoidable risks and financial and reputation damage that may compromise localised development and ambition to operate.

Very recent experience shows relevance to continue promoting opportunities for National NGOs to partner with and benefit from International NGOs both in terms of institutional, capacity and financial backing. It also shows the importance to keep fostering partnerships not just among Civil Society organisations or between CSOs and donors but even more



than ever, to build key stakeholder partnerships with all critical actors for development such as local authorities, the private sector and democratic institutions.

In his final remarks, he raised a number of issues for participants to consider:

- How to address civil society organisations' recurrent internal capacity constraints and related challenges, such as the lack of representation to the weak internal governance structure audit and control systems and weak evidence based planning capacity.
- Could civil society lead the workstream uncoordinated needs assessment and ensure research, knowledge and shared needs assessment in the process is coordinated.
- How can CSO engage meaningful and effectively with representative government and the donor community for example, through the Civil Society Organisation working group.
- How to actively engage with local authorities for effective service delivery and locally driven development.
- How to further strengthen engagement with faith-based organisations, notably in the implementation of humanitarian aid, but also longer-term peacebuilding, public awareness, education and behavioural change campaigns.
- How to strengthen partnership between CSOs and private sector organisations in view to maximize the efficiency, impact and also job opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen collaborations between CSOs and parliament, not only on evidence based advocacy and oversight of Public Service delivery and debate.
- How to engage with the youth, nowadays development's greatest asset and challenge.

PANEL SESSIONS

Session 1: Why are networks like the Charter for Change, NEAR, and WACSI important, and what are their priorities within the localisation discourse?

The session speakers were Juliet Donna, Policy Dialogue Expert and Chair Charter for Change Working Group in Uganda, Shahida Arif, regional Representative at Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) and Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director, West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). It was moderated by Kayode Akintola, Country Director, CAFOD.

The moderator began by introducing the respective speakers. Juliet Donna is a policy dialogue expert and the Chair, Uganda Charter for Change Working Group. She is also a member of the steering committee of the Ugandan National humanitarian platform. She challenges NGOs, donors, and UN agencies to live up to their commitment to local humanitarian leadership. Shahida Arif works with local, and national organisations of the global south through NEAR to reinvent aid through innovative ideas, knowledge sharing and influencing. She has previously worked with INGOs, Government authorities, networks and forums on resilience and humanitarian programming. Nana Afadzinu is the Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). She has worked with and within the civil society sector for the past 24 years and is a passionate advocate for sustainable development in Africa with the full participation of an effective, efficient, influential and sustainable civil society. She is a lawyer by profession and has worked on areas of governance, human rights, philanthropy and capacity development with national, international, continental and regional organisations in Africa.

The speakers had the opportunity to share about their respective networks and organisations. Donna presented that the C4C working group in Uganda was established in November 2019, convening an alliance of 72 local and national NGOs and 17 international NGOs, with the objective to support the Grand Bargain work stream 2 and the Charter4Change efforts on localization of humanitarian aid. The membership comprises signatories, endorsers and allies who are championing localisation but are yet to commit to the charter of accountability. Some are however signatories of the grand bargain commitments.

The WG exists as a coordination, collaboration and advocacy platform. It serves to remind signatories to fulfill the commitments which they signed to, and conduct advocacy targeting donors and UN agencies on resourcing and having local and national NGOs participating in coordination and decision-making spaces in the humanitarian space. It also supports local actors to have a collective voice and representation at national and international level. During its existence, the working group has signed and sent advocacy letters to the UN Resident Coordinator, the leadership of UN agencies, the C4C signatories and the leaders of the INGOs. Organized Inter-ministerial localization Dialogue, localization campaigns, webinars, press conference and radio talk shows in commemoration of World Humanitarian Day, Annual Reflection meeting, Bi-monthly meetings, Awareness on Charter for Change and Grand Bargain and representation in global fora like IASC group 3, Local humanitarian Leadership Group, C4C global group and GB Work stream 3 Local Partnership group among others. Below are some of the achievements of C4C Uganda.

- Increased membership of endorsers from 40 to 72 and still looking forward to attracting more endorsers, signatories and allies.
- Successfully influenced endorsers, signatories and other allies from the INGO fraternity to attend the bi-monthly meetings conducted by C4C WG.
- Advocacy activities to create awareness, promote local humanitarian leadership, and urge country offices to engage with national and local NGOs on the COVID-19 response and the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) revision process.

- Facilitated High level Inter-ministerial dialogue that was graced by the then Speaker of parliament.
- The C4C Chairperson recognized as a Real-Life Heroes in the Southern and East Africa.
- Published the *prioritizing local solutions for global problems* article, with the Inter Press Services in New York, as the world was celebrating the WHD.
- Promoted visibly the events and communication products on websites and social media platforms.
- Participated in global and regional level conversations, panel discussions, representations etc.

Nana shared about WACSI¹¹. The organisation was set up in 2005 and focuses on capacity strengthening the Civil Society West Africa. It is headquartered in Ghana and has a geographical mandate in all the 15 ECOWAS countries plus Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon. WACSI strengthens civil society in West Africa to be Influential, effective, efficient, sustainable and resilient. WACSI also facilitates building solidarity, networking and partnership across the region. Its thematic areas are civil society sustainability, creating an enabling environment for civil society working in youth and women leadership and technology for development. WACSI currently runs a database for civil society in the region and Nana requested organisations to visit the website to validate the details of their respective organisations.

Nana stated that WACSI is an active member of the shiftthepower¹² a movement that engages anyone interested in a serious conversation about the need and the ways to shift from top-heavy and top-down systems of international development and philanthropy towards a flat and more equitable paradigm of people-based development. WACSI believes that the global south civil society have agency, and that knowledge and power resides in its people. Capacity strengthening should therefore enable and facilitate agency and partnership should enable a shift in power. The environment that local organisations operate should enable them to contribute effectively and efficiently. Their relationship with International partners and with each other should be interdependence and not dependence. It should enable learning from each other rather than patronizing and disempowering. She described the need to look at resourcing differently, alternative funding models, reducing the dependency from the global south, local resource mobilization, and strengthening local infrastructure for philanthropy.

Shahida presented the history of NEAR¹³, its mission and programming work. NEAR started as a movement of global south leaders at the World Humanitarian Summit articulating their challenges within the aid sector. It quickly ballooned to a network of ninety-six founding leaders across the global south committed to advocate for systemic change in the international humanitarian and development aid system. Its vision is a world where local communities have the resources and agency to address the challenges that impact them and its mission is to reinvent aid through innovative ideas, knowledge sharing, and influencing. Amid an ever-changing environment, NEAR has embraced its role as both a representative of global south actors, and as a convener of ideas and solutions, grounded in the knowledge, experience and culture of its members. NEAR is the first global south actor in the grand bargain facilitation group. Nana expressed however that the network does not have members from Sierra Leone and urged organisations to join them in championing localisation.

Below are ways in which local and national actors can engage in the advocacy space on localisation in the grand bargain based on Shahida presentation;

¹¹ <https://wacsi.org/>

¹² <https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/what-we-stand-for/shiftthepower/>

¹³ <https://www.near.ngo/>

- Local and national organisations can join NEAR membership and be part of the global south organisations championing for localisation at a global level.
- NEAR is delighted to partner with any national network or any organized platform and develop MoUs for collaboration in expanding their outreaches. In doing so, NEAR will extend invitation to the platform on regional and global representation when need arises.

Key take away from the session

- There is need to have a platform in Sierra Leone for championing localisation. C4C WG is one of the ways in which this can be achieved. Local, national and INGOs can consider setting up this platform to collaborate in putting localisation into practise.
- Local and national NGOs to engage with WACSI in registering their organisation profiles in the online directory for visibility.
- Local and National organisations to consider joining NEAR.
- How do we hold localisation agenda accountable for the donor funds?

Session 2: Locally driven programmes and a new role for “intermediaries”: Learnings from Partner-led granting Models (supported by the EU) in Sierra Leone

Speakers for the session were Michael Solis, Global Director for Partnership & Localisation at Trócaire, Mansarico Mansaray, Executive Director for KADDRO, Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Program Director for AAD-SL and Zynab Binta Kamara, Executive Director for AdvocAid. This session was moderated by Ibrahim Njuguna Country Director for Trócaire Sierra Leone.

Michael Solis, presented a learning piece on the benefits, challenges, risks, lessons & good practice from Trócaire Sierra Leone’s approach at all phases of the 3 partner-led EU grants which have been implemented since 2019. The internal learning piece was conducted by an external consultant who supported a virtual process to review all documentation related to the projects. She conducted 22 online interviews. There were informants from staff across the CSOs, the donor from the European Union itself, from Trócaire staff. She referenced different types of documents including a policy brief that had been developed collectively for the European Union. The partners leading on EU grants are Action for Advocacy and Development – Sierra Leone (AAD-SL), AdvocAid and Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO). The program redefined roles and responsibilities as Trócaire was previously the lead applicant and was now a co-applicant while its partners were taking the driving seat. Trócaire’s main role was capacity strengthening and providing the required 10% EU matching funds. The table below shows what worked and what needs to be improved moving forward:

What has gone well	What has gone less well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium composition: complementarity as a foundation stone. • Strong collaboration on proposal development (Trócaire + local CSOs + consultants) to secure 3 grants (of 4 submitted) under the new model. • Consortium coordination during implementation • Joint working between finance and programme staff (e.g. monitoring). • Strong ethos of teamworking across the consortia; mutual respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging proposal development stage (Concept note + full proposal). • Variable quality of budgets submitted to EU and less perceived scrutiny. • Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delays & adaptations (eg virtual vs. in-person). • fewer project visits by Trócaire and EU.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead CSOs now comfortable communicating directly with EU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings on grant management not delivered by EU at outset. Year 1 reporting: a turning point. Staff turnover in some CSOs.
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From Michael's presentation, here are the strategic challenges and risks identified in the respective projects;

- ❖ Co-financing: Local CSOs do not have reserves and unrestricted income; current requirement relies on INGOs like Trócaire.
- ❖ Pre-financing: Local CSOs do not have the financial resources available; concern among lead agency directors about final 10% payment.
- ❖ Under-budgeted allocations of staff time:
- ❖ Under-budgeted staff salaries: Lead agencies may need to budget for higher salaries to attract and retain higher caliber of staff in key roles, in recognition of increased scope of responsibilities.
- ❖ Blurred accountabilities: Is Trócaire responsible for supporting local CSO partners to ensure compliance (as per proposal), or responsible for ensuring compliance (as per EU response to Year 1 reporting)?
 - Trócaire is no longer in the lead role, no direct control over partner systems.
 - A barrier to action being truly locally-led.
- ❖ Fear of ineligible costs keeping lead agency directors awake at night!
- ❖ Staffing: Not getting the right caliber in place (ref salaries); staff turnover.

Michael's conclusion and recommendations to the EU were:

- Achievements should be celebrated, and insights from experience used to inform future programming.
- The EU Grants represent a tangible step towards localization.
- There has been a shift in power from Trócaire as an INGO to local CSOs in the driving seat, but there is need to ensure the right balance of support is built-in going forward.
- The EU Delegation in Sierra Leone, Trócaire and local CSOs should continue to show leadership in the sector.

Recommendations to the EU

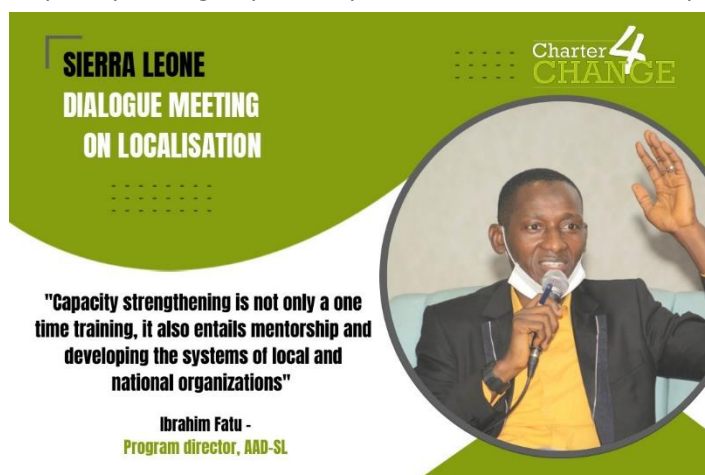
- ❖ Continue to promote the local leadership grant model but with adaptations to suit the context and reduce dependency on INGOs.
 - Elimination of co-financing requirement for local CSO leads.
 - Eliminate the withholding of the final 10% payment to local CSO leads.
- ❖ Adapt application process to adapt to and facilitate CSO capacities.
- ❖ Consider alternate approaches (e.g. focusing more on organisational development in year 1 and reduced ambition on project activities).
- ❖ Consider investing further in capacity strengthening & sharing.
- ❖ Provision of grant workshops on financial management (opportunity to share mutual expectations).
- ❖ Promote learning among CSO grantees in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ Share lessons learned with EU colleagues in Brussels and other delegations.

Note: Other recommendations are included in the full report developed by the consultant.

From the three speakers' presentations, it was clear that they appreciated the partner-led grant model and even acknowledged that it shifted more power to them. This was the first EU grant that the three

partners were taking a lead, therefore they took it with a lot of caution. The projects challenged them to look at bigger and more sustainable grants. AAD–SL admitted that the project was a quantum leap since it reconfigured the relationship between partners and Trocaire. Previous, partners were receiving grants from Trocaire but this has changed and they are now giving funds to Trocaire, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in the community. Partners also have direct engagement with EU, which was not the case previously. This has provided an enabling environment for sustainability of the local organisations. It has also increased their visibility in the public space.

Some of the challenges the respective projects faced as shared by the speakers included the complexity and rigidity of EU system that is not user friendly to the local partners e.g. getting Potential



Applicant Data On-Line Registration (PADOR) number was very problematic. PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register themselves and update regularly their data. This data concerns the organisation itself, it is not linked to a particular project proposal, and is used by the European Commission for evaluating the operational and financial capacity criteria as well as for checking the eligibility of the organisations that participate in calls for proposals. In addition, submitting online an

application document with more than 60 pages was challenging as some of these organisations reside in rural areas. The 10% matching fund was also a problem and during implementation, power dynamics, especially in the first year was at play due to the reversed role between the partner and Trocaire. The local organisations still struggle to retain staff.

The speakers also emphasised the need to have conversation on risk. They recommended that capacity strengthening should be embedded in projects. During the initial months, partners' systems should be developed prior to commencement of activities. KADDRO for instance benefited from

Comments from participants and reflections

- ❖ INGOs need to reconsider the model of registering national chapters in global south countries as that is not promoting the spirit and the latter on localisation.
- ❖ There is need to place PWD and Youth serving local NGOs at the centre of localisation
- ❖ There is need for being more accountable to the people we serve. Feedback and complain mechanisms critical in ensuring that project participants are fully engaged
- ❖ There is need to institutionalise capacity strengthening initiatives rather than having it with specific partner staff
- ❖ How do we frame localisation language to local organisations and movements that are not interested in institutional funding?
- ❖ There is need to enhance communication in partnership. There are issues raised in the dialogue if there is enhanced communication between players, can be handled

another EU funded programme 'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies (SCORE¹⁴)' prior to taking lead in implementing the partner-led grant model.

Session 3: Localisation - Challenges from the NNGO and INGO Perspectives and ideas for overcoming them

The session was moderated by Foday Swaray, Country Director for Action Aid. The panellists were: Daniel Kettor, Executive Director for Rainbo Initiative, Joseph Ayamga, Country Director for SEND – SL, Pauline Kibe, Civil Society Strengthening Adviser for Solthis and Michael Alandu, Country Director for CARE.

In their preamble statements, each panellist shared what their organisation does in Sierra Leone. SEND – SL is a National NGO that is dedicated to creating a Sierra Leone where there is respect for human rights, accountable governance, food and nutrition security as well as equal opportunities for men and women to thrive. Rainbo Initiative is a national NGO that is passionate about ending Sexual Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone. Rainbo Initiative provides free medical treatment, psychosocial services and age appropriate treatments for survivors of Sexual Gender Based-Violence (SGBV) in Sierra Leone. Solthis and Care are International organisations working in partnership with local organisations.

From the different presentations and engagements with participants, below are the challenges and recommendations for overcoming them.

Funding

Local organisations do not have unrestricted funding to match donor funds whilst international organisations enjoy this privilege. Because of struggling with funds, local organisations end up implementing international organisations' strategic plans instead of pursuing their own plans.

From the presentations by different speakers, it was clear that as local and national partners advocate for the funding of at least 25% of humanitarian aid, there is need for them to strategize on domestic resource mobilisation such as was corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Staff retention

Staff retention in local and national organisations has been a persistent issue raised in both session 2 and 3. However, there was communication that donors and some INGOs are not prescriptive in how local and national organisations budget for their staffing and therefore they will need more creativity in developing and managing their institution talent.

Delay in fund disbursements

Delay in fund disbursements results to delay in responding to crisis and this has a negative impact in the population that stakeholders serve. All stakeholders were requested to review their internal systems and processes to ensure they deliver for the people in crisis seamlessly.

Limited space for local and national organisations to participate in coordination and decision making spaces

Local and national organisations in some areas are not fully participating in coordination and decision making spaces. There was recommendation to involve these organisations in decision making and coordination spaces including contact negotiation with donors.

Low investments in institutional strengthening

Whilst stakeholders appreciated the ongoing institutional capacity by different organisations, it was noted that these in most cases are geared towards delivering a specific project and not necessarily to

¹⁴ https://www.trocaire.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Trocaire.Sierra.Leone_SCORE_Lessons.Learned.v3.digital.pdf?type=policy

strengthen an organisation. There was recommendation to have organisations assess their capacities through **self-led capacity assessment process**. This will increase ownership and sustainability since they will be able to prescribe where they are strong at and where they need to develop their capacities. Another recommendation relates to the approach of strengthening local and national institution. There is need for more mentorship and shadowing and less one-time trainings, which in some cases do not result in the desired change.

Transactional and contractual Partnership

The transactional and contractual partnership are top-down models where local and national partners are only involved in the implementation phase of the project. They are not consulted in anyway and there already exist a blueprint for delivery of the project, which they have to align. The local knowledge is also not taken into consideration even during implementation phase. Participants agreed that there is need to move to a transformative partnership approach that acknowledges the principles of partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, which include equality, transparency, result-oriented, responsibility and complementarity.

Accountability

The panellists and participants had a deep engagement on accountability. There was consensus that for localisation to be actualised, accountability needs to be at the centre. Accountability to the people that the stakeholders serve is also important.

Founder syndrome

Founder syndrome leads to weak governance systems and processes.

Local and National NGOs were

requested to work towards institutionalising processes, systems and talent. This will ensure that the organisation is sustainable and not fully dependant on the founder.



GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON LOCALISATION AND PRIORITIES FOR SIERRA LEONE

During this portion of the workshop, Local and national NGOs met as a separate group and international NGOs met as a separate group to discuss localisation priorities in Sierra Leone and the way forward. Findings were shared by both groups in the plenary discussion that followed.

Local and national NGOs deliberations

The following are the deliberations made during the local and national NGOs' meeting:

- 1. Local and National NGOs need to be at the driving seat in the localisation agenda in Sierra Leone:** Participants agreed that they would set up the *C4C WG in Sierra Leone* and collaborate more with endorsers and allies championing localisation.
- 2. Continue sensitizing other stakeholders on the localisation agenda:** This will be done in already organized forums. The upcoming SALNGO forum will be one of the avenues local and national NGOs will use to reach more stakeholders.
- 3. Local and national NGO directors to set up a learning platform:** This will be through opening a WhatsApp group where they will start by sharing experiences and learnings from their respective organisations.
- 4. Local and national NGOs to collaborate with other regional and global bodies championing localisation.** These include WACSI, RINGO, NEAR, and C4C. Participants were encouraged to endorse Charter for Change.
- 5. Local and national NGOs to hold two meetings to discuss more on the subject matter.** First meeting will be conducted online in December 2021 and the second one will be on 27th January 2022. A planning committee was established to support in steering the meetings
 - ADVOCAID
 - SEND - SL
 - Community Initiative for Peace
 - RAINBO
 - AAD – SL
 - KADDRO

International NGOs key deliberations

The following areas were discussed as thematic areas to be prioritised by INGOs operating in Sierra Leone.

- 1. Localisation as a journey:** There is an understanding that some INGOs are farther along the journey of localisation than others, with some having incorporated this into their strategies. There is an understanding that this takes time and shared learning.
- 2. Risk:** INGOs expressed a need to ensure that risk is shared at all levels. INGOs felt that they often assume a disproportionate amount of risk when working with partners (including experienced challenges such as fraud and financial mismanagement issues, leadership challenges/founder syndrome). There is a recognition that fraud/financial mismanagement can happen in national or international organisations, though INGOs tend to have more established systems in place around accountability and organisational auditing. It was expressed that these systems can and should be strengthened within national organisations. It will be important to discuss risk sharing with donors under a localisation model.
- 3. Funding:** INGOs support the idea of increased funding opportunities being made available to national organisations in Sierra Leone and supporting the capacity of NNGOs to source more funding.
- 4. Power dynamics and co-sharing:** INGOs support a mindset shift across the sector that promotes more equitable sharing of power in project and programme design, implementation, and decision-

making, with the understanding that all actors have knowledge, experience, skills, and ideas to contribute.

5. **Flexibility:** INGOs support the idea of longer-term funding commitments based on mutuality and respect, but there is also a need to be clear about partnership duration and what phasing out looks like to avoid dependency and to promote organisational resilience. There is also an understanding that funding periods are typically defined by donors.
6. **Coordination:** INGOs expressed a need for a coordination platform on localisation that should involve continuous engagement and discussion at all levels. Such a platform may be new (linked to the Charter for Change) or embedded within existing structures, if feasible. There is need to follow up with organisations that have signed onto the Charter for Change to see how committed they are to its principles in Sierra Leone. Greater efforts can be taken to coordinate efforts around capacity strengthening (including assessments, trainings, and tools) and ensuring that there is co-ownership of these processes. There is also need to engage with government to ensure efforts are coordinated and complementary.
7. **Measuring Progress:** INGOs agreed that they should coordinate on how they are measuring progress on localisation, with the Charter for Change as a starting point for setting benchmarks.

CLOSING REMARKS

The closing remarks were given by Father Peter Konteh, Director, Caritas Sierra Leone. He thanked all participants who joined physically and online. He urged stakeholders to further the localisation agenda in Sierra Leone, which will result in effective and efficient aid system hence serving better the people with the most need.

ANNEX: Event Program

Time	Activity	Moderator, Speakers and Panellists
08.30	Sign in, register, breakfast & tea	All
09.00	Welcome and Opening Prayers	Joseph Alieu Kamara, Executive Director, Welfare Society for the Disabled (WESOFOD)
09.05	Purpose of the dialogue meeting	Ibrahim Njuguna, Country Director, Trócaire
09.10	Opening remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpha Luyoyo, Senior Advisor for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, USAID Kobi Bentley, Development Director, FCDO Claire Buckley, Ambassador of Ireland, Irish Embassy Manuel Müller, EU Ambassador, European Union Eric Massallay, Director NGOs, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
09.30	Session 1: Why are networks like the Charter for Change, NEAR, and WACSI important, and what are their priorities within the localisation discourse?	Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kayode Akintola, Country Director, CAFOD Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julliet Donna, Policy Dialogue Expert and Chair Charter for Change Working Group, Uganda Shahida Arif, Regional Representative at Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) Nana Afadzina, Executive Director, West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)
10.30	Session 2: Locally driven programmes and a new role for “intermediaries”: Learnings from Partner-led Granting Models (supported by the EU) in Sierra Leone	Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ibrahim Njuguna, Country Director, Trócaire Sierra Leone Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Solis, Global Director Partnership & Localisation, Trócaire Mansarico Mansaray, Executive Director, KADDRO Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Program Director, AAD-SL Zainab Binta Kamara, Executive Director, AdvocAid
11.30	Session 3: Localisation: Challenges from the NGO and INGO Perspectives and ideas for overcoming them	Moderator: Foday Swaray, Country Director, Action Aid Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daniel Kettor, Executive Director, Rainbo Initiative Joseph Ayamga, Country Director, SEND - SL Pauline Kibe, Civil Society Strengthening Adviser, Solthis Kelfa Kargbo, SL Country Director, Street Child
12.30	Localisation and the way forward in Sierra Leone Group Discussions on localisation and priorities for Sierra Leone (to inform the global Charter for Change Meeting in December)	Group Chairs/moderators to be designated
13.15	Plenary presentation of ideas & discussion	Group representatives Rapporteur
13.45	Joint Statement on deliberations of the meeting	Emilia Kamara, Director, Women Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WOFHRAD)
13.50	Closing remarks	Father Peter Konteh, Director, Caritas Sierra Leone
13.55	Vote of thanks	Volunteer
14.00	Lunch & Networking	