

# STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY IN EMERGENCIES (SCORE) Lessons Learnt and Best Practice



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**COVER PHOTO:**

DUHAMIC ADRI distributing roof materials to the population affected by disasters in Gakenke District in June 2020. Photo by DUHAMIC ADRI





DUHAMIC ADRI staff attending Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) workshop from 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> June 2019

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ARCT</b>	ARCT RUHUKA
<b>C4C</b>	Charter for Change
<b>CORDAID</b>	Catholic Organisation for Relief, Development and Aid
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DEPP</b>	Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>INGOs</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
<b>MINAGRI</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
<b>MINEMA</b>	Ministry in charge of Emergency Management
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NEAR</b>	Network for Empowered Aid Response
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NINGO</b>	Network of International Non- Governmental Organizations
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WHS</b>	World Humanitarian Summit



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, issues related to localisation of aid, partnership, and capacity strengthening have become increasingly prominent within the humanitarian sector. During 2019/2020 Trócaire Rwanda, in partnership with two local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)- Duhamic Adri and ARCT RUHUKA implemented 'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies' (SCORE) Project, aimed at enhancing resilience in crisis-affected communities and promoting a leading role for local actors in humanitarian response by strengthening the capacity of local CSOs to prepare for and respond to crises. The specific objectives were:

1. To strengthen emergency preparedness and contingency planning in local CSOs.
2. To strengthen the capacity and readiness of local CSOs to deliver timely, high quality and needs-based humanitarian assistance.
3. To promote organisational learning – both within the consortium and with other relevant stakeholders in-country and at European level – by documenting and disseminating lessons learnt and examples of good practice from the project.

The aim of this report is to inform future project and programme design and management by capturing transferable lessons and best practice on how the SCORE project operated and what it achieved. The lessons learnt and best practice presented here are intended to provide a basis for reflection and consideration by Trócaire, their partners and by development partners. Some of these lessons are more internal to the SCORE project, but most have broader resonance. The methodology for the study was underpinned by a 'mixed method approach' including, classic qualitative (systematic literature review, and key informant interviews) and quantitative (survey) collection techniques. The conceptual framework for the study was guided by and took cognisance of the localisation framework developed by Network for Empowered Aid Response (which distinguishes six components of analysis-partnership, funding, capacity, co-ordination and complementarity, policy, influence and visibility and participation) to analyse lessons learnt and best practice for the SCORE project.

Overall, the SCORE project indicates a strong partnership between Trócaire, Duhamic-Adri and ARCT with high levels of trust and confidence regarding the design and implementation of the project.

## Lessons Learnt

1. Getting the SCORE project off the ground required a diagnostic discussion of the results with partners, and agreement on the capacity strengthening plan and expected results.
2. Developing and implementing an effective capacity strengthening project, that offered a range of learning opportunities required a complex range of project design considerations.
3. Coaching and follow-up were essential components of the SCORE project to ensure application of new systems and tools in the organisations.
4. Future capacity development initiatives should be designed to maximise learning.
5. Effective partnerships were built on mutual understanding, trust, and respect. Engagement of senior leadership in both organisations had a major impact on the success of capacity strengthening activities.

6. The SCORE project would have greater impact if it had been designed and implemented over a longer period than 18 months.
7. The SCORE project has greater sustainability because it considered the larger system in which the organisation operated.
8. Improved donor processes and systems – existing systems are not always appropriate for encouraging localisation (short timeframes, quantitatively-driven results reporting, risk aversion and an emphasis on technical rather than political and contextual skills and knowledge).
9. Shifting the Power- engendering Trust and having Confidence in local partners –Donors/INGOs.

## Best Practice

The SCORE project demonstrated that supporting the resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities by strengthening the capacity of two local CSOs to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises, can result in important outcomes from community to organisational level. Best Practice for the SCORE project included:

- **Partnership:** Supported a partnership approach that harnessed the experience of local partners, strengthened systems and capacities, while taking into account complex local level processes that can positively impact activity delivery in a timely and effective manner.
- **Funding:** The willingness of Trócaire and their local CSOs partners, Duhamic-Adri and ARCT, to promote mutual accountability resulted in a partnership that worked to create positive change that empowered local development actors and enhanced downward accountability to local stakeholders.
- **Capacity:** Ensuring that the project worked together to plan, design, develop, deliver, and evaluate SCORE activities.
- **Coordination and complementarity:** Supporting and promoting sustainable engagement by encouraging partners to get involved in all stages of humanitarian decision-making.
- **Policy, influence and visibility:** Where possible, the project aligned with global and national localisation agendas in order to give approaches context and buy-in.
- **Participation:** Recognised the need to involve communities in setting priorities, implementation processes and evaluation of humanitarian decision-making processes.

## Recommendations

The lessons learnt, best practice and recommendations of this report are relevant for both International and National NGOs already working, or planning to increase their work, through partnerships, as well as agencies funding humanitarian response – in particular signatories to the Grand Bargain, as well as those involved in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. The task that lies ahead is to learn from the lessons and best practices captured here and to use this knowledge and learning in the design, planning and implementation of future projects. Some of the recommendations include:

### Recommendations for Duhamic-Adri and ARCT

1. As the SCORE project comes to an end, **consider establishing a community of practice** amongst consortium partners in order to facilitate continued generation of evidence and learning, as well as to encourage sustained utilisation of approaches amongst individuals.

2. Continue to **strengthen the capacity of all staff** (and not just those targeted under the SCORE project) on the new approaches/practices, and involve Board members and senior management when applicable, in order to enhance organisational buy-in.
3. **Develop an exit strategy** that encourages continued adoption and integration of project approaches as early as possible, to prevent funding gaps at the end of a project.
4. **Encourage individuals involved** in the SCORE project to **become ‘champions’ of the approach** even after project closure (perhaps through the community of practice mentioned above).

### Recommendations for Trócaire and local partners

1. **Continue to build and sustain long-term relationships with local CSOs.** Strengthening local CSOs is a process that requires consistent effort.
2. For organisations with a large portfolio of projects like Trócaire, consider actively **pursuing opportunities for collaboration and synergies** (i.e. learning) across the different projects from the start.
3. Trócaire should **continue to focus on capacity strengthening**, to build emergency preparedness and resilience of local CSOs and to prioritise communities.
4. **Prioritise** continued funding in **pilot project** areas in order to generate sufficient evidence for outputs to be institutionalised.
5. Ensure that the **objectives of the project partnership are clear** (e.g. results produced, capacity strengthening). In all cases, clarify expected relationships from the beginning and ensure that the partnership is flexible enough to adjust its approach accordingly in order to play the appropriate role.
6. **Ownership takes time**, including operationalisation of projects and activities. While it may be challenging to complete all project activities within project timeframes, it is important to build in buffers for when activities take longer than expected.
7. Establish **clear communication protocols** and information sharing systems, **joint monitoring and evaluation** and **clear document processes** to formalise institutional memory as a way of buffering against losses due to any staff turnover.
8. Develop information and communication strategies for engaging local CSOs with development partners with specific attention to **resource mobilisation opportunities/sources**.
9. **Ensure that methods, tools and guidance documents are sufficiently developed** to facilitate replication/scale up to other local CSOs, programmes and regions.

### Recommendations for Development Partners

1. **Enhance local organisation relationships** where trust, respect, transparency, complementarity, mutual ownership, joint learning, and inclusion in decision-making are present.
2. **Consider scaling up of the SCORE project or continue to invest in other projects such as SCORE** harnessing the experience of local partners, strengthening systems and capacities enables local and national actors to take a greater leadership role in humanitarian action.
3. **Document, analyse and process existing and potential opportunities** for internal and external **resource mobilisation** locally, nationally, sub-regionally and regionally.



4. International actors should continue to demonstrate and **share best practices** on their experiences of working with local partners, to support shared learning and facilitate exchanges of experience.\*<sup>1</sup>

**Recommendation for Government of Rwanda\*<sup>2</sup>:**

1. **Localisation principles, commitments, and targets should be integrated into Rwanda's Aid Policy Framework** and External Development Finance Performance system. For instance, a good start could be the Aid Policy Manual of Procedures, which is in the process of being reviewed and/or adding localisation indicators to the External Development Finance Performance Monitoring Framework.
2. Continue to ensure that development partner **projects are consistent with and clearly fit into country development goals**. Encourage actors from local to national levels to engage in all project processes.



ARCT staff in EPP workshop reflecting on potential risks

<sup>1</sup>Recommendation is partly or fully taken from the following document: Trócaire, "Localization in Practice: The Humanitarian Response Programme from Caritas Rwanda", 2018. It is included here as it is also a finding from this report.

<sup>2</sup>Recommendation is taken verbatim from Trócaire (2020) Localisation of Aid Report. It is included here as it is also a finding from this report.

# INTRODUCTION

In recent years, issues related to localisation of aid, partnership, and capacity strengthening have become increasingly prominent within the humanitarian sector. Successive studies and evaluations have found that local capacities can make a critical difference to humanitarian responses (ICRC 2018, Trócaire 2019, 2020 and Christian Aid 2017<sup>1</sup>). The essential role of local and national actors in humanitarian response was further highlighted at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. The changes or transformations needed to enable local and national actors to take a greater leadership role in humanitarian action were outlined in all three major sets of commitments endorsed at the summit; Agenda for Humanity (2016), the Grand Bargain (2016), and the Charter for Change (2015). The movement towards more locally-led humanitarian responses – ‘localisation’ – has gained momentum globally and in countries with new or on-going humanitarian crises.

Over the years, Trócaire has accumulated more experience than its peers as a practitioner of partnership; even in emergency settings, Trócaire works in a partnership mode more often than not. Trócaire’s range of southern partners was (and still is) heterogeneous, in terms of size, capacity, expertise, autonomy, management systems, communications, etc. Trócaire signed up to the Charter for Change in 2015 and has since then conducted several projects and studies documenting their partnership and capacity strengthening experiences with local actors in humanitarian response programmes<sup>2</sup>. These reports have given insights into the progress that has been made and the changes needed to ensure the success of the localisation of aid agenda and to move towards more equitable partnerships between INGOs and local NGOs.

Building on this excellent body of work and experience, Trócaire implemented ‘Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies’ (SCORE), an 18-month project aimed at enhancing resilience in crisis-affected communities and

promoting a leading role for local actors in humanitarian response by strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations (CSOs) to prepare for and respond to crises. The project provided an opportunity for Trócaire to take concrete action towards its global policy commitments (such as the Charter for Change), while also identifying and strengthening the capacity of two of their local partners in Rwanda in emergency preparedness and response.

The overall objective for this project was to support the resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities by strengthening the capacity of 12 local civil society organisations to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. Led by Trócaire, it was a consortium response consisting of Trócaire and the Catholic Organisation for Relief, Development and Aid (Cordaid), both headquartered in EU member states, working alongside 12 local CSOs in 4 crisis-affected, or at-risk, countries, namely: Ethiopia (ACPA; APDA; RACIDA; Acord; Agri Service), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Maams; Action d’Espoir; Padebu), Rwanda (ARCT; Duhamic Adri) and Sierra Leone (AAD-SL; KADDRO). The SCORE Project was funded by the EU’s Education, Audio-Visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), as part of its EU Aid Volunteer Initiative.

The aim of this report is to inform future project and programme design and management by capturing transferable lessons and best practice on how the SCORE project operated and what it achieved. It is difficult to know what timescale should be used to determine whether a project has been successful, e.g. at the present time, within the project cycle, or at some, as yet undetermined, future date. When determining best practice and lessons learnt, it is therefore, important to also look at process issues, specifically whether the project helped establish processes that are likely to improve partnership and strengthen local organisations, not just during the project lifetime, but also over longer temporal scales, post project.

<sup>1</sup> See further references in literature review which include Rice 2019, L2GP2016, UTV2014, International Rescue Committee 2016, Trócaire 2017, 2018, USAID 2020, Action Aid 2019, STP 2019 among many other.

<sup>2</sup> See literature review

The lessons learnt and best practice presented here are intended to provide a basis for reflection and consideration by Trócaire, their partners and by development partners. Some of these lessons are more internal to the SCORE project, but most have broader resonance. The purpose of this report is to report exclusively on the lessons learnt and best practice from Rwanda, (Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and the DRC will be reported on separately). It is not an end line evaluation, but rather a critical reflection on the SCORE

Rwanda project's approach and to examine the learning it produced during its 18 months of implementation.

The information contained in this report will assist Trócaire and their local partners in drawing up more effective future strategies for engagement, both in policy dialogue and in the way in which they interact and engage with each other in partnership. In addition to contributing to learning about collaboration between humanitarian agencies, it is hoped that some of the tools and guidelines developed during the life of the project can be of use to others.

## BACKGROUND AND PROJECT SYNOPSIS

### ***Localisation of Aid***

Localisation of aid, partnership, and capacity strengthening are increasingly prominent issues within the humanitarian sector. The realisation that in any emergency the first people to respond and give lifesaving help are those affected by it has led to a significant change in the global discourse on relief and development over the past decade. With disasters increasing in scale and number, the international system is under ever-growing strain to mount effective and timely responses. In recent years, the role of national civil society and governments has become more important. The need for greater partnerships and local capacities is slowly moving to the centre of the humanitarian policy debate (Trócaire 2017, ICRC 2020 and Christian Aid 2019).

Trócaire has commissioned several studies on the concept and practice of localisation and the definition of localisation that has emerged is: ***Aid localisation is a collective process involving different stakeholders that aims to return local actors, whether civil society organisations or local public institutions, to the centre of the humanitarian system with a greater role in humanitarian response. It can take a number of forms: strengthened and more equal partnerships between international and local actors, increased and 'as direct as possible' funding for local organisations, and a more central role in aid coordination. The long-term aim of localisation is to build the resilience of crisis affected communities by establishing links with development activities (Trócaire 2017)***

The research findings of Trócaire (2020) report carried out in Rwanda highlight that the concept of localisation was not generally part of the aid discourse or aid performance system, neither a topic of advocacy in Rwanda. It was against this background that Trócaire Rwanda implemented the SCORE project with specific objectives to:

1. To strengthen emergency preparedness and contingency planning in local CSOs.
2. To strengthen the capacity and readiness of local CSOs to deliver timely, high quality and needs-based humanitarian assistance.
3. To promote organisational learning – both within the consortium and with other relevant stakeholders in-country and at European level – by documenting and disseminating lessons learnt and examples of good practice from the project.

Having analysed the debate on localisation (see Appendix 2 for literature review), this study sought to define a conceptual framework for approaching it and to guide the analysis of the project learning. The conceptual framework for the study was guided by and took cognisance of the localisation framework developed by Network for Empowered Aid Response (which distinguishes six components of analysis-partnership, funding, capacity, co-ordination and complementarity, policy, influence and visibility and participation) to analyse lessons learnt and best practice for the SCORE project (see Appendix 2 for more detail).



# A PROFILE OF LOCAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



**DUHAMIC ADRI**

**DUHAMIC-ADRI** is a Non-Governmental Organisation legally founded in 1979 with the objective of assisting farmers to organise themselves to fight against the constraints of the marginalisation of rural areas.

Duhamic-Adri specifically works in various development areas, including: nutrition and WASH, education, climate change, gender, HIV prevention and entrepreneurship. The organisation works in 12 districts in Rwanda with the vision of having rural communities responsible for self-social economic development.



**THE RWANDAN ORGANISATION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAUMA COUNSELLORS (ARCT RUHUKA)** is a National Organisation formed in 1998 and officially registered as

non-governmental organisation in 2004. ARCT Ruhuka evolved from a trauma counselling programme implemented by Trócaire, an Irish Charity Organisation.

ARCT-Ruhuka's vision is to envisage Rwanda as a country where all people have

access to integrated mental health services. Their primary focus is to offer psychological support to victims of trauma through integrated services for trauma prevention, care, and healing to facilitate peace building and development.

Both DUHAMIC-ADRI and ARCT have long term partnerships with Trócaire. The SCORE project directly targeted 24 staff members across both organisations, and 56 staff indirectly. As neither organisation were experienced in the field of humanitarian work, the project focused on improving institutional capacity at various levels (governance, management and operational), through preparing for and responding to humanitarian crises in order to attract sufficient institutional funding when required, to appropriately managing staff in the event of a scale up or shift in activities and to take a leading role in emergency response.

These partners currently serve approximately 165,000 individuals in their ongoing work with communities. In the event of a sudden onset emergency, these indirect beneficiaries are likely to benefit from timely, high quality and needs-based humanitarian assistance and, more broadly, from improved institutional and technical capacity in the programmes in which they are currently participating and benefiting from (Trócaire 2018).

**The Chronology of the SCORE Project to date is important – as well as interesting. It provides evidence of what is needed to initiate activities; what it takes to maintain them, and the importance of assuring continued involvement.**



## #01: PLANNING & START UP

### APRIL 2019

SCORE Project technical meeting is held to develop action plan

MoU signed with both parties

Fund transfer is effected

### MARCH 2019

MEAL, financial, reporting and coordination systems and structures established across each consortium member

SCORE Project start up meeting with partners held

### MAY 2019

Regional inception workshop and the 1<sup>st</sup> ToT on E-Prep/CP held in Ethiopia with key Trócaire and Cordaid focal points

Activity plan aligned with other processes ( internal, and at partner level)

Partner capacity assessments are conducted with DUHAMIC ADRI and ARCT

### JUNE 2019

Country level inception workshop is held together with DUHAMIC ADRI and ARCT



## #02: ROLL OUT OF CS INITIATIVES

### JUNE 2019 - JULY 2020

Ongoing accompaniment and capacity support to local consortium members on E-Prep/CP and monitoring of Organisational Improvement

### FEBRUARY 2020

Training on Cash Transfer is conducted

### JULY 2020

Training on Protection Mainstreaming

### SEPT.- OCT. 2020

Ongoing coordination, monitoring and documentation of learning in the form of case studies, learning briefs/reports, publications, web articles, etc. to be shared across the consortium and with external actors

01

### JUNE 2019

Trócaire/ Cordaid in-country teams conduct series of E-Prep/CP workshops with local partners

02

### OCT. 2019

2<sup>nd</sup> ToT on response capacity and mid-term learning/reflection workshops are held in Ethiopia with key Trócaire and Cordaid Focal Points

03

04

### JUNE 2020

Training on Rapid Need Assessment and Digital data (Commcare)

05

06

### OCTOBER 2020

Emergency simulation exercises (2-3 day workshops) conducted at the national level

07

08

Project post Assessment conducted



## #03: LEARNING, CLOSE OUT AND EXIT

### SEPT.- OCT. 2020

A series of events are held to share project learning, e.g. Endline Reports, launch events for publications; panel/round table discussions; presentations at networking events.





# LESSONS LEARNT

*DUHAMIC ADRI providing assistance to disaster affected population in  
Gakenke District in June 2020*



# INTRODUCTION

Whether it concerns innovative approaches, or more generally successes and difficulties encountered by organisations during implementation of their humanitarian responses, lesson learning and experience sharing is very often overlooked, but, certain interesting and promising initiatives that formed parts of the SCORE project deserve to be analysed in depth. This best practice and lessons learnt report is based on the assumption that capacity strengthening of organisations is an endogenous, non-linear and complex process, influenced by internal and external factors. Overall, the SCORE project indicates a strong partnership between Trócaire, Duhamic-Adri and ARCT with high levels of trust and confidence regarding the design and implementation of the project.

## SPECIFIC LESSONS

### LESSON 1

**Getting the SCORE project off the ground required a diagnostic discussion of the results with partners, and agreement on the capacity strengthening plan and expected results.**

As is true for all projects, good programme design and clear management are critical for successful implementation and to increase the potential for longer-term impacts. As Trócaire have conducted a number of learning studies<sup>1</sup> since 2016 on the localisation of aid, partnership and capacity strengthening, this learning was central to the design of the SCORE project and ensured inclusion of the following; that the capacity strengthening approach would be locally-led; that the project design would be informed by an assessment of CSO need and preferences; that the project would be flexible enough to allow individual, tailored capacity strengthening support for each CSO, and include multiple capacity strengthening techniques, with a focus on experiential learning grounded in local contextual realities (Trócaire 2018).

### Conceptualisation

The premise of the SCORE project design is that the experiences and priorities of local CSOs are essential in helping to identify areas on which the project should

focus support and on how approaches should be tailored to be responsive to the needs of local CSOs. Pre-proposal assessments were, therefore, conducted with Duhamic-Adri and ARCT, leading to improved project design. Humanitarian capacity strengths and needs at country and partner level were also reviewed, as were the different approaches to this across the consortium (Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, DRC and Rwanda). Global learning relating to localisation was incorporated, as were the outcomes of locally led humanitarian responses implemented since the World Humanitarian Summit, the Charter4Change and the Grand Bargain. This also included drawing on recommendations from Trócaire's own research findings on how to drive localisation forward (Trócaire 2017; 2018 and 2019).

KIIs with Duhamic-Adri and ARCT staff highlighted that they did not feel engaged enough at this stage, and that their input was too rushed and not thought through. They would, for example, have liked for other

<sup>1</sup> Trócaire Groupe U.R.D (2017) *More than the Money – Localisation in Practice*, [https://www.Trócaire.org/resources/policy and advocacy/more-than-the-money-localisation-practice](https://www.Trócaire.org/resources/policy%20and%20advocacy/more-than-the-money-localisation-practice)

Trócaire (2018) *Localization in Practice: The Humanitarian Response Programme of Caritas Rwanda*. [https://www.Trócaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/rwanda\\_caritas.pdf](https://www.Trócaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/rwanda_caritas.pdf)

Trócaire, *Partnership in practice (2018) Fostering local agency and sustainable solutions*.

components to have been included in the capacity strengthening design, such as fundraising and advocacy modules. This finding is in agreement with Trócaire's recently commissioned Keystone Survey (2020), where it was emphasised that 'Partners want us to support them to access other funds.... Partners want us to support them to make them more financially viable'. Future projects should consider engaging local partners more comprehensively before developing proposals

in order to develop and to allow for greater ownership and sustainability. The KII with Cordaid suggested that their priority was to include new skills areas designed to facilitate more effective capacity strengthening, including use of digital technology and cash-transfers. The KIIs with the local organisations revealed, however, that as they had little experience with either of these areas, they were unable to provide feedback on the potential or actual benefits of these with regard to their specific context and organisations.

## Key learning 1.1

Pre-grant consultation is critical to ensuring successful project implementation, and; future projects need to be more comprehensive in the inclusion of local CSOs at the pre-grant stage in order that their concerns, desires and requirements are incorporated in project design.

## Inception/Planning

Following the signing of the grant agreement, the SCORE project held inception meetings with Duhamic-Adri and ARCT. The meetings provided an opportunity for both organisations to give feedback on project design and to plan for more in-depth analysis of organisational gaps and capacities through a self-assessment exercise.

Results from the survey<sup>2</sup> with local organisation<sup>3</sup> staff showed the Inception workshops were a positive experience for the staff of both organisations with 94% stating that they were provided with project documentation and 89% stating that they provided feedback on the design of the project.

Partner capacity assessments (PCAs) took place during the first phase of implementation in order to ensure that project activities and monitoring, evaluation, assessment and learning (MEAL) frameworks were fully informed by, and tailored to, the individual needs of each organisation. PCAs were carried out through workshops and facilitated by discussions, where

members of senior management, programme teams, logistics, finance, and other relevant departments staff in each organisation, were engaged as appropriate. The findings informed design of the project's capacity strengthening tools, modules, and activities, and formed the basis for developing Organisational Improvement Plans (OIPs); they also functioned as its baseline. The results from the survey with local organisations show that this approach was met with a positive response.

67% of targeted staff were involved in PCAs and, of those participated, 100% found them either good or very good. These results resonate with Trócaire's Keystone Survey (2020) of its global partners where respondents indicated that '*Trócaire's Partner Capacity Assessment Support Framework (PCAS) is a useful tool to identify capacity strengths and weaknesses*'. It should be noted here that, according to (Barbelet 2019), well-executed capacity assessments, that involve staff meaningfully, are indispensable in any

<sup>2</sup>An online survey was sent to a total of 24 staff members in Duhamic-Adri and ARCT directly involved in the SCORE project and resulted in a 75% response rate. The interventions implemented, and the implementation/organisational arrangements for these, were the main areas of interest and it was from these that lessons learnt, and best practice were extracted and explained. Appendix 2 provides further details on questions and graphical presentations of the responses.

<sup>3</sup> Local organisations refers to Duhamic Adri and ARCT



capacity strengthening activity. The partner capacity assessments were also conducted for activities that were technical in nature to establish a baseline and the capacity strengthening strategy and plan was developed at the outset of the SCORE project.

The partner capacity assessment is based on a scoring system based from **Initial** (where the activity is a new focus for the organisation), **Emerging** (where the organisation has limited experience and staff need further training), **Consolidating** (where the activity is to a large extent already integrated into an organisations practices and staff are sufficiently trained) and Established (where the activity is fully integrated into the organisations practices and staff are trained). The results of PCAS undertaken for the SCORE project revealed that Duhamic Adri scored **Initial** for EPP and Cash Transfer Programming and **Emerging** for Digital Data Collection, Rapid Needs

Assessment and Protection Mainstreaming. ARCT scored **Initial** for EPP, Digital Data Collection and Cash Transfer Programming and **Emerging** for Rapid Needs Assessments and Protection Mainstreaming.

83% of Duhamic-Adri's and ARCT's targeted staff participated in the development of the Organisational Improvement Plan and 100% found the process either good or very good. KIs with the local organisations revealed that they would have liked for more staff and community representatives to have been included in this process and that this would have allowed their organisations, not only to gained community perspectives, but also for community members to have benefitted from capacity strengthening. These results are far better than those from Trócaire's global study, where only 41% of partner organisations had developed an OIP based on PCAS (Trócaire Keystone Survey 2020).

### Key learning 1.2

Involving organisations extensively at the planning and diagnostic phases and processes increases awareness of issues, compels analysis and problem-solving, engenders ownership, and instigates timely decisions on actionable issues.

### Key learning 1.3

Well-executed partner capacity assessments, that involve staff meaningfully, are indispensable in any capacity strengthening activity. As the assessments were also conducted for activities that were technical in nature, they were used to establish a baseline and develop a capacity strengthening strategy and plan at the outset of the intervention.



*Trocaire's partner organisations staff in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) workshop, February 2020*

## LESSON 2

### **Developing and implementing an effective capacity strengthening project, that offered a range of learning opportunities required a complex range of project design considerations.**

One of the key aims of the project was to strengthen EPP and CP in local partner organisations. The SCORE project's approach to EPP was to support general organisational preparedness through shared analysis and joint planning. A facilitation guide, developed by Trócaire, functioned as a step-by-step manual for the Rwanda office to conduct a 3-day EPP workshop with Duhamic-Adri and ARCT. It contained detailed workshop session plans and was accompanied by an EPP facilitation pack that included PowerPoint presentations and handouts.

Through these participatory workshops, Duhamic-Adri and ARCT were supported to identify likely threats or hazards in a given context; to bring clarity to roles and responsibilities across programmes, finance, logistics and management teams in the event of an emergency; and to take measures to strengthen readiness to respond, based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Roles, responsibilities, and timelines were attached to all actions so that relevant staff knew what to do, both in preparation for an emergency and when a response was being mobilised.

Workshops focused first on development of organisational preparedness (including staff/volunteer roles/responsibilities, emergency finance/logistics systems, etc.) before progressing to contingency planning (including analysing localised risk scenarios, protection considerations and mitigation/response options). Preparedness plans and/or contingency plans were drafted in order to map out next steps

and develop strategy for strengthening institutional and staff capacity (Trócaire 2019). The process encouraged Duhamic-Adri and ARCT staff to, in, identify community needs, recognise threats faced, and prepare risk reduction measures. Once complete, each organisation produced an EPP plan that was finalised and approved by senior management, and this was then disseminated to all relevant staff. Senior management then conducted ongoing monitoring of progress and updated the EPP Plan on a periodic basis, with ongoing accompaniment and support from Trócaire where appropriate. An analysis of approaches used, led to further training and field testing on how to implement the best and most appropriate in each organisational context. Different tools and approaches were reviewed to identify best practice, innovation and practical obstacles and opportunities, allowing organisations to pilot these in their own programmes.

Staff in both organisations were very positive about the approach and the process. Survey results show that 72% of staff felt that they were 'better prepared than before' and 28% of staff 'a little more prepared' than before. KIIs with staff, however, revealed that some of the concepts and processes were difficult to grasp and that participants felt they needed more time than the allotted three days. KIIs also revealed they felt the process would have benefitted from external stakeholders, such as community members and government officials, being part of the process in order for them to gain greater perspective and learning.

## Key learning 2.1

Having an EPP plan in place provided a blueprint to guide Duhamic-Adri and ARCT's development efforts to identify, network, and form alliances with partners who can help advance their missions. Including external stakeholders should be considered in future EPPs.

## Key learning 2.2

Understanding institutional and organisational structures, as well as how they work, is critical to identifying ways to influence processes of change within them.

## Key learning 2.3

The dynamic nature of capacity strengthening should be tailored, flexible and demand-driven. Flexibility is necessary in project design and implementation, where an organisational framework allows for learning and adjustment to changing circumstances.

## Capacity strengthening trainings

The Emergency Response training programme was designed by Trócaire and local partner staff, with the aim to strengthen capacities of staff to effectively respond to both natural and man-made disasters wherever they occurred in Rwanda. The training content focused on programme quality aspects of emergency response.

Due to budget amendments<sup>4</sup>, it took eight months before training associated with the capacity strengthening began, but despite this, four capacity strengthening trainings were completed between February and June 2020, including:

- A. Humanitarian needs assessment/rapid needs assessment
- B. Digital technologies to collect and analyse data
- C. Cash-based interventions
- D. Protection and accountability mainstreaming principles, including conflict analysis; community participation; identification and prioritisation of vulnerable or at-risk groups; and communication with communities.

KIIs with staff of both Duhamic-Adri and ARCT revealed that they were very positive about the training offered. They specifically mentioned selection of course facilitators, stating that they struck a balance between being professional trainers and experienced field practitioners in topical areas. KIIs also revealed that the

curriculum content was made relevant to the Rwandan setting and, therefore, considered beneficial, for example through use of geographically representative case studies. These findings are consistent with other research indicating that training is preferred when it is participatory, supported by skilled facilitators, includes positive group dynamics, and where trainees can provide direct input to curriculum content, as well as where a course has activities, tests and case studies that do not fall into the "lecture style" presentation form (INTRAC 2017).

### A. Humanitarian needs assessments/rapid needs assessments

Humanitarian needs assessments are time-bound, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder processes of collecting, analysing and interpreting data to assess needs and inform decisions on humanitarian and early recovery responses (Trócaire 2017). Recent years have seen a growing emphasis on the importance of coordinated approaches to assessment immediately following a disaster. Survey results with local organisation staff revealed that participants felt their organisation was either 'better prepared than before' (72%) or 'a little more prepared' (28%) than before the project was implemented, this with regard to their ability to conduct rapid/real time needs assessments.

The SCORE project focused on initial consultations and the importance of taking different approaches was explored.

*Any major budget amendment or re-allocation (any change >10%) in the SCORE project needed prior approval from the donor by submitting a formal budget amendment request. COVID19 required budget amendment but there were also others, and these caused delays to implementation.*

Participant KIIs revealed that the training approach taken here enabled the organisations to develop a common language and consultative approach in developing shared risk assessment concepts. One participant stated: *'The training we had actually gave us confidence. At the beginning we were not even daring to talk about rapid assessments. We didn't know much about it. Now we feel like we are fluent. I can fill my mouth with the words of assessments and data collection and feel confident.'*

Reviewing and piloting different tools highlighted the importance of getting organisations to consider

different perspectives on, as well as buy-in to, the idea of adapting their own risk assessment approaches. Similarly, the SCORE project emphasised the importance of high-level engagement and involvement of appropriate government agencies to ensure success and sustainability of a humanitarian response with local communities. As detailed in the case studies, both organisations were able to use these skills in their day to day work. For Duhamic-Adri they carried out a rapid needs assessments of the communities with whom they worked during the 2019 floods and ARCT were able to use their new skills in assessing the needs of refugees in the camps within which they work.

## Key learning 2.4

The SCORE project highlighted the importance of conducting rapid needs assessment to inform response efforts.

## Key learning 2.5

Such needs assessments should occur in partnership with stakeholders to guarantee coordination and minimise duplication, as well as with community members in order to ensure their engagement and involvement in response activities.

## Key learning 2.6

Training allowed Duhamic-Adri and ARCT to gain insights about, and improve their understanding of a range of factors that affect behaviours related to the emergencies, as well as how to best support populations to reduce their risk to a range of factors. Equipped with this knowledge, both organisations were able to develop planned interventions to support the success of their response efforts.

## B. Digital technologies to collect and analyse data

Policymakers, humanitarian professionals, and scholars have increasingly acknowledged the 'game changing' potential of humanitarian technology (ICRC 2020, Relief Web 2019). Humanitarian organisations use mobile technology first and foremost as a communication tool. Organisations have taken advantage of the popular communication applications, more commonly known as 'apps' (e.g. CommCare and Kobo) and have developed innovative ways to optimise their field work and outreach to communities. It is clear that there are significant opportunities for mobile technology to continue to enhance humanitarian service delivery.

The survey of participants revealed that training on Digital Technology was the least effective in the eyes of participants. Although the majority felt they were either 'better prepared than before' (61 %) or 'a little more prepared' (28%) than before to use digital technology

for data collection, a notable 11% felt there was no change, i.e. that they were neither or less well prepared to use it. KIIs revealed that the reason for this was that for many of them, this was a completely new area of learning, that the organisations were only given one smart device for data collection, and that most staff had no idea what to do with them.

The specific app used, i.e. CommCare, was reported to be cumbersome and difficult to grasp, indicating that alternative apps, such as Kobo, and despite being less secure, should be considered.

Further training in the use of such technology was highlighted as essential and this was provided just before the project end, with positive feedback from participants reported. It was apparent from KIIs that it is still early days in the use of digital technology for both organisations, who also have little, to no, knowledge on data protection, security, mapping, open source products available etc.



### Key learning 2.7

Budgets for mobile technology development need to be sufficient to include adequate testing. Technology duplication should be avoided by providing organisations with an incentive to share technology and by mandating them to use off-the-shelf or open-source products.

### Key learning 2.8

There is a need to provide training on information security and it was clear that staff of both organisations did not properly appreciate the risks posed by a lack of knowledge and understanding in this area.

### Key learning 2.9

There are benefits of using mobile technology with a robust level of information security, such as CommCare, in combination with more user friendly, but less secure, apps, such as Kobo.

### Key learning 2.10

There is a need to conduct further analysis. Evaluation of case studies about digital technology use would help to inform future planning and mobile technology investments. Impact evaluations of projects and initiatives funded for humanitarian programming should be undertaken.

## C. Cash-based interventions

The recent increase in humanitarian crises, has seen the use of cash transfers, as opposed to more ‘traditional’ approaches, becoming more popular as they are seen as a reliable and responsive modality in humanitarian response. Cash transfers have evolved from the purchase of food and support of livelihoods, to a broader use to help in the development of shelter, as well as in the implementation of WASH, health, and nutrition. Trócaire has committed (Agenda for Humanity 2017<sup>5</sup>) to increasing its utilisation of cash transfers as an effective humanitarian tool and to using or facilitating use of cash transfer wherever feasible and appropriate in humanitarian response. For these reasons, training on the use cash transfer by partners was seen as central to the capacity strengthening for the SCORE project.

Very few cash transfer programmes have been implemented in Rwanda, and yet this approach is considered an extremely effective way of providing vulnerable people with assistance, while at the same time supporting local solidarity mechanisms through community based social safety nets (Care 2017, Christian Aid 2019) and building community resilience. The objective of the SCORE project training was to strengthen the skills of Duhamic-Adri and ARCT staff

in planning and implementation of cash transfer-based interventions. The aim of the training on this subject was to raise awareness of the issues associated with cash transfer programmes and in building knowledge of staff who will be responsible for running their organisation’s emergency cash transfer programmes.

Survey results shown in Figure 8 indicate that 67% of participants felt ‘better prepared than before’ and 33% ‘a little more prepared’ than before with regard to their understanding of how, and ability to, implement cash transfers after the training. KIIs revealed that participants were mostly positive about the training, especially highlighting that it covered a wide range of different and important aspects that their organisations needed to consider. They also reported that the training facilitated them in the planning and design of humanitarian responses. Both organisations have, subsequently, implemented cash-based projects; ARCT in the refugee camps they service and Duhamic-ADRI during the STARTFUND flooding project 2019/2020 a further grant from a foundation for €70,000. KIIs reported that there was not enough time to pilot what was learned as the training came late in the project cycle and that they would also have liked to see the inclusion of more case studies from different emergency contexts and different countries on how cash transfers were implemented (KIIs with Duhamic-Adri and ARCT).

<sup>5</sup><https://agendaforhumanity.org/stakeholders/commitments/272.html#2989>

## Key learning 2.11

Working through local partners with existing contacts and relationships almost certainly speeds up the delivery of the cash transfers.

## Key learning 2.12

Training alone will not build sufficient confidence and expertise to design and implement cash transfer programmes, and investment in EPP and cash transfer programme capacity building requires more focused resources and consistent technical support.

### **D. Protection and accountability mainstreaming principles, including conflict analysis; community participation; identification and prioritisation of vulnerable or at-risk groups; and communication with communities.**

For Trócaire (2016<sup>6</sup>), protection mainstreaming is the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid. There are four key protection principles that must be considered in all humanitarian activities:

1. Prioritise safety and dignity and avoid causing harm: Prevent and minimise as much as possible any unintended negative effects of any intervention that can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
2. Meaningful access: Arrange for people's access to assistance and services in proportion to need and without any barriers (e.g. discrimination). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services.
3. Accountability: Set up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions and address concerns and complaints.

4. Participation and empowerment: Support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights including, but not exclusively, the right to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

SCORE training was the starting point for Duhamic-Adri and ARCT to understand the concept and principles of "protection mainstreaming". The training was designed to practically assist staff of the organisations to mainstream protection at the individual programme or project level, as well as at the collective, strategic and coordination level.

The survey with local organisations staff revealed that 72% felt their organisation was 'better prepared than before' with 28% feeling 'a little more prepared' (28%) than before to participate/understand protection mainstreaming after the SCORE training. KIIs with staff, again pointed out that they felt the training would have benefitted from a wider audience, e.g. to include community members and government representatives. They also felt that some subject areas, such as gender and disability, were barely touched upon and much more training in these areas was needed.

## Key learning 2.13

There is a need to increase investment and support to national and local partners to ensure that longer-term programming incorporates gender equality analysis and concrete steps to empower women and girls.

## Key learning 2.14

Due to COVID19 several trainings had to move online. This was unfortunate as training was felt to be much preferred and more effective face-to-face than online by all participants.

<sup>6</sup>Trócaire (2016) Joint Protection Mainstreaming Framework- Caritas, CRS, Trócaire and CAFOD.

## LESSON 3

### Coaching and follow-up were essential components of the SCORE project to ensure application of new systems and tools in the organisations.

Developing organisational capacity strengthening required more than the development of systems and procedures and training in new skills. It also required coaching and follow-up as organisations and individuals implemented new systems and ways of operating. Too often such coaching and follow-up is not planned and budgeted for and, as a result, the gains are not sustained over time. This was not the case with the SCORE project as they explicitly planned several coaching interventions with positive results for both local CSOs. These included: on-the-job mentoring/coaching; exchange visits and job shadowing; use of online learning models, such as e-modules, additional training or workshops as needed; seminars and learning events with other practitioners in working in this field. Coaching was valued by both Duhamic and ARCT as a way by which to discuss strategies, to identify ways of overcoming challenges, and to apply new skills.

Experiential and joint learning opportunities also gave partner staff a chance to understand the reality of their partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders. For example, accompanying partners to development partner or government meetings not only presented functional training, but also created an individualised and tailored approach to capacity strengthening. KIIs with both organisations revealed the benefits of having on-going support post training. It was through coaching that Duhamic-Adri was able to submit their section of the grant application to STARTFUND, and it was through coaching that ARCT started the process of expanding

their activities in the refugee camps. Coaching was seen so positively that senior members of these organisations have taken on mentoring junior members; a low cost, high value activity. KIIs revealed, however, that the organisations would have also benefitted from other areas of coaching, such as life coaching, professional coaching, advocacy and stress management although, on the whole, coaching and follow-up were seen as invaluable to organisational progress. One manager stated:

‘There has been a tremendous improvement at the level of individual capacity. We can see it in the reports, the quality of planning and execution, not only in our humanitarian work, but also in our long-term development work. When the capacity of the individual improves it has an effect on the organisation. Because we have all been trained in the same approach – we speak the same language’

The capacity assessment process, training course and coaching all included a strong focus on the communities Duhamic and ARCT serve. In many instances, participants identified where there were other actors who would benefit from strengthened capacity, including community leaders and community groups. Although the training courses and coaching was not designed as a ‘training of trainers’, the step-by-step approach, and use of simple, analytical tools, made it possible for participants to share it with colleagues and others working within the humanitarian context.

#### Key learning 3.1

Continuously following individual and organisational progress over and beyond the lifetime of the SCORE projects ensured that new skills, tools and resources were successfully adapted and became standard operating procedures both within Duhamic-Adri and ARCT.

#### Key learning 3.2

Capacity strengthening should also look beyond training and explore coaching to sustainably improve attitudes and behaviours of organisational staff such as stress management in emergency situations etc.

## LESSON 4

### Future capacity development initiatives should be designed to maximise learning.

What is known about the localisation of aid, partnership and capacity development efforts in the past is derived from a series of useful evaluation studies. But the learning and dissemination of lessons, both positive and negative, has been needlessly slow. It was for this reason that the SCORE project gave high priority to extracting further lessons about what worked and what didn't, rather than in terms of capacity strengthening and partnership. Where there was the possibility of significant learning, this was recognised, not only in the design of the SCORE project with a set of outcome objectives clearly defined, but also in its monitoring arrangements. This enabled internal learning in the project, so that any necessary adjustments could be made, and for the dissemination of any wider lessons more broadly.

The following were some of the methods used for the dissemination of project lessons:

- Internal dissemination in the organisation through Box and Yammer
- Developing, printing and distributing project briefs
- Publication of learning briefs both on Trócaire website, through reference in Trócaire newsletters
- Dissemination through Network of International CSOs

The survey of local organisations showed that staff generally feel better prepared (67%) to participate in learning and dissemination of findings that they did prior to the project. While very positive of the learning and process, the survey and KIIs revealed that some mechanisms did not work as well as was hoped, with, for example, some participants unable to access Box and Yammer and these difficulties continuing throughout the project lifetime. They also felt that, on occasion, reporting seemed excessive and other methods should be considered for local organisations beyond the written form, including social media, videos etc.

#### Key learning 4.1

Consider the benefits of adopting smaller, more dynamic, evaluations throughout the partnership cycle, rather than large summative evaluation. Smaller, more dynamic learning exercises are likely to be of greater benefit to all involved.

#### Key learning 4.2

Monitoring should extend to whether development partner support is being delivered in a way that assists country ownership of capacity development efforts.

#### Key learning 4.3

An independent form of monitoring, capable of generating objective judgements, should be considered as part of project management. Monitoring missions with independent consultants who have no association with development partners or Trócaire's partners can help in establishing objective benchmarks and tracking progress by both parties.

#### Key learning 4.4

Local partners should continue to deepen a common understanding on the philosophy behind localisation, its long-term goals and indicators of success, both in the local context and globally.

## LESSON 5

**Effective partnerships were built on mutual understanding, trust, and respect. Engagement of senior leadership in both organisations had a major impact on the success of capacity strengthening activities.**

Over the years, and as stated in the introduction, Trócaire has accumulated more experience than its peers as a practitioner of partnership, and, even in emergency settings, Trócaire works in a partnership mode more often than not. A 2020 study commissioned by a number of development and humanitarian actors in Rwanda<sup>7</sup>, aimed at documenting the contributions different actors had made toward the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Rwanda, stated that: *“while many international actors in Rwanda have started to move towards working in partnership in Rwanda....for organisations such as Trócaire, partnership is strategic and is going beyond project-based activities to provide tangible support to build systems and processes reflecting the ambition and goals of the partner”* (Trócaire 2020)

Effective international partners monitor and support local partners. To an outsider, the SCORE partnership might simply look like an alliance between three organisations, but to the partners, it means seeing the faces of Trócaire staff even when times are tough. This resilient and open partnership is what makes the SCORE partnership so successful. Local partners want regular discussions, visits, and ongoing support from their international counterparts. As a staff member in ARCT put it: *“We get ongoing visits from Trócaire. Even when projects are going well, they still visit to offer support. ... they are interested to see the real situation, not just read about it in our reports or other sources”*

Regular visits helps Trócaire to better understand the local circumstances and their local partners, and to be more accountable for how their assistance is utilised. Trócaire approaches their relationships with partners with a longer horizon and more consistency.

Negotiation and agreement of the Memorandum of Understanding between Trócaire and Duhamic-Adri and

ARCT set the foundation for a respectful partnership, and provided clarity on mutual accountability. As a result, the organisations worked strongly together in a partnership, rather than independently. Despite this, KIIs with staff did highlight that sometimes partnerships are boxed in by ‘formal’ arrangements, and don’t sufficiently explore opportunities for looser forms of engagement, or for longer than project related agreements, that take into account more fundamental issues such as governance, ethics etc.

According to Duhamic and ARCT, the success of capacity strengthening activities was attributable in large part to having the same senior leadership team intact during the 18-month period of SCORE project performance. This leadership team showed a keen interest and commitment to SCORE’s activity, including through the team’s active presence during an entire E-Prep and through their full engagement during implementation. Investing in capacity strengthening at the most senior organisational tier, such as the Board and CEO level and where the resources and positional authority to either institutionalise or derail change efforts reside, increased the chances for long term success.

Trócaire has sought to understand and appreciate their local funders context and perspectives and in return local partners have also striven to understand the importance of the processes and accountability that the SCORE project needed to comply with. KIIs noted that the way funds flow through the aid system can stimulate competition and stifle coordination and innovation.

They acknowledged the role local organisations play in increasing competition and suggested that more partnerships and alliances are needed among local CSOs. A staff member stated

<sup>7</sup>Caritas Rwanda, Concern Worldwide, Norwegian People’s Aid, Oxfam, Red Cross Rwanda, Save the Children, and Trócaire



*'I offer self-criticism of us as CSOs: we must be more creative. We are too isolated – sometimes being a short distance from an NGO, we don't know each other nor cooperate with each other, perhaps due to fear of competition and our working style regarding ideas, work areas, etc*

Two-way due diligence is important for Trócaire, who recently opened their financial books for scrutiny by their partner Caritas when they took the lead for a project with UNHCR. Trócaire was also transparent with the SCORE project, with partners fully involved in the budgeting processes. Opening their work and organisations to mutual interrogation and exploration engenders trust.

### Key learning 5.1

The SCORE project adopted transparent, inclusive decision-making procedures rooted in collective leadership. Other projects should also consider using 360-degree feedback surveys to allow both international and local partners to evaluate their relationship and suggest ways to improve.

### Key learning 5.2

Self-reflexivity about organisational cultures is a must. Reflection is needed upon each organisation's culture, processes, policies, principles, practices, and politics.

### Key learning 5.3

Trócaire should continue to use approaches of deep, generative listening to build understanding and empathy for partners. This approach can help, not just to understand and build trust with the other organisation, but to also give some of the analysis needed to adopt a more redistributive approach to power within the partnership in the future.



DUHAMIC ADRI and ARCT staff in Emergency Preparedness Plan ( EPP ) workshop from 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> June 2019

## LESSON 6

**The SCORE project would have greater impact if it had been designed and implemented over a longer period than 18 months.**

Meaningful organisational change takes time and dedicated effort. Capacity strengthening by definition, is a long-term change process. Capacity strengthening interventions typically take far longer to implement and are more contested than envisioned, and they rarely respond to detailed design or linear execution. This is especially the case when capacity strengthening is associated with complex reform processes. Processes of change need to be managed iteratively, strategically and with a healthy dose of patience.

Whether capacity strengthening is aimed at modifying individual behaviour or re-engineering systems within an organisation, people and systems can be resistant to change, at any scale. The change process inherent in capacity strengthening can be complex within a

single institution, requiring, in general, three to five years (Karl 2020, ICRC 2019). Donors and implementers are under constant pressure to produce concrete results in a relatively short period of time. The dynamic tension between producing results and building capacity is ever present. Survey results and KIIs with staff from Duhamic-Adri and ARCT consistently said 'the lack of time' was the single biggest obstacle to the SCORE capacity strengthening. For example, most said training was too short and required extra days; mentoring was very effective, but again more time was needed, and; change processes in the organisations as a result of the EPP processes needed more time to be implemented. None of these were possible to fully achieve in 18-month project, rushed to meet development partner deadlines.

### Key learning 6.1

Donors need to recognise explicitly the need for a longer timeframe, realising that strengthening capacity of local-level organisations will take much longer than 1-2 years.

## LESSON 7

**The SCORE project has greater sustainability because it considered the larger system in which the organisation operated.**

Sustainability can be analysed on two levels: how likely is the process itself to be sustained; and how sustainable are the changes which have been experienced.

The SCORE project worked in a politically smart and flexible manner. The project considered the capacity of individuals and the maturity of the organisations involved to engage with project activities, when developing solutions and implementing changes. Combined with the inherent flexibility of an adaptive project, this allowed SCORE to progress capacity strengthening tools that most likely would sustain and achieve long term impacts.

Organisations like DUHAMIC and ARCT are living systems, with multiple interacting components. They also are in a continuous interchange with a dynamic, external environment. The SCORE project viewed capacity strengthening from a systems perspective

which meant looking internally at all the components of an organisation, how each component functions, and how they interacted with each other. A systems perspective also includes an external view of the organisations and the processes that may have a key impact on the functions of the organisations. In many instances, it also included an understanding of the institutional arrangements and mandates that govern the interactions of both organisations. The survey and KIIs revealed that it is imperative to address the importance and definition of sustainability from the beginning and introduce key concepts early on in order to work on opening mindsets that will allow new skills to be introduced over time. The staff of both organisations reported that while they now feel more confident in dealing with humanitarian crisis, they still require additional support and training. The clear desire for support is linked to longer term sustainability of the

partner organisations. This is in cognisance with the Trócaire Keystone Survey report (2020) that identifies sustainability beyond the project delivery and timeline as the single biggest risk their partners identified.

KIIs further revealed that there is still work that needs to be done to better connect Duhamic-Adri and ARCT with local actors at national and district government levels, as well as to other INGOs, in order to increase and consolidate knowledge sharing, risk analysis and implementation of humanitarian programmes. KIIs showed some very positive sustainability, with both organisations independently forging partnerships with other INGOs and donors, such as StartFund, GIZ and UNHCR. Both organisations now also sit on national platforms that allow them a voice in decision-making at the highest levels in Rwanda.

Again, this finding is consistent with the Trócaire Keystone Survey (2020) of global partners, which stated: “86% of respondents strongly agree that Trócaire should play a more prominent role in encouraging collaboration between partners. Respondents indicated that this collaboration increased the impact of their

*work and that Trócaire has been crucial in helping partners collaborate more with other organisations. This is a strong endorsement of the convening role that Trócaire can play with partners of different sizes and with differing expertise”*

When asked whether the project achieved its objectives, the overwhelming response was ‘Yes’. One respondent stated: “SCORE introduced our organization to support communities affected by disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. Cash transfers uses, RNA done, humanitarian assistance goes to the right people/community. This has never done before SCORE project’.

Another stated: ‘The Emergency Preparedness Plan document will continue to be a guiding document for our organisation, the skills gained from Cash and Voucher Assistance training that is under process to be finalised are always useful for organisations. The skills gained from CommCare training for data collection will also be useful as this application can be used not only in emergency but in other programmes for data collection and analysis’.

### Key learning 7.1

Although the project had a strong focus on sustainability from the start, there was a need to integrate this theme into all capacity strengthening activities to build skills over time. There remains a need for further training and capacity strengthening to further increase the capacity of local organisations to fully engage in the localisation process.

### Key learning 7.2

In the context of capacity strengthening of local organisations, the SCORE project took a systems perspective, with a particular focus on the roles and relationships between the different levels. When planning for capacity strengthening, it is vital to consider a systems perspective, allowing for a broad reach among multiple stakeholders, including the multiple parts of an institution, and its relationships with external partners. A comprehensive diagnostic process to inform project planning should involve a wide range of stakeholders to facilitate the identification of solutions.

### Key learning 7.3

Improving sustainability through organisations being better able to plan strategically for humanitarian crises, including with EPPs and DRR, has not only provided them with a roadmap for their growth, but has also built organisational skills instrumental to their longevity. Duhamic-Adri and ARCT can now think more strategically about their service offerings, the human and financial resources that may be required to perform them. They are also better able to engage stakeholders and create an inclusive process. One of SCORE’s most notable capacity strengthening achievements is having both organisations produce and revise their EPP plans.



## LESSON 8

**Improved donor processes and systems – existing systems are not always appropriate for encouraging localisation (short timeframes, quantitatively-driven results reporting, risk aversion and an emphasis on technical rather than political and contextual skills and knowledge).**

INGOs frequently focus on development partner compliance, i.e. conforming to all the relevant standards and policies, over actual impact. Compliance is important, of course, but not more important than the positive intended impact of the work in the first place. Development partners and implementers are under constant pressure to produce concrete results in relatively short periods of time creating an inherent and dynamic tension between producing results and building capacity. All too often, labyrinthine compliance procedures imposed on local organisations stymie their potential for equity, often even before collaboration has even officially started. Capacity strengthening is actively sustained by the political economy of the aid industry, i.e. short timeframes, quantitatively-driven results reporting, risk aversion and an emphasis on technical, rather than political and contextual, skills and knowledge. (Denney et al., 2017).

An example of this in the SCORE project was where any major budget amendment, or re-allocation (any

change >10%), needed prior approval from the donor by submitting a formal budget amendment request. This required the time of an accountant in Trócaire HQ despite the fact that with such a small project budget, no time had been allocated to them for such an exercise. Delays at Trócaire HQ led to even further delays at the EU level and during these times, the project activities were put on hold. Delays in the implementation of a project that was already noticeably short -18 months- gave little time for any training activities to be consolidated with field level practice or experience.

The danger is that local organisations end up becoming a 'version' of the INGO with which they partner, whereby governance structures and procedures are imposed on them due to rigorous and time demanding donor requirement, whereas they may originally have had entirely different internal arrangements that worked well for them in the past.

### Key learning 8.1

Donors should ensure that the timelines are realistic and their compliance procedures achievable. There should also be an increased effort to support more local civil society organisations directly.

### Key learning 8.2

Donors need to avoid simplistic, short-term and easily quantifiable forms of assistance, recognise the centrality of politics, start with an understanding of how people actually access services, and be more systems-focused.



*Trocaire's partner organisations staff in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) workshop, February 2020*



## LESSON 9 Shifting the Power- engendering Trust and having Confidence in local partners –Donors/INGOs.

Trócaire has long history of centering those at the margins, making the redistribution of power an objective of their partnerships with local organisations. They have transformed power imbalances by giving the less dominant partner, like Duhamic-Adri and ARCT, a platform and access to influencers, different types of resources, as well as by publicly validating their capabilities. Trócaire tries to cede control where possible. One Trócaire staff member stated: *“They [partners] oversee the work, and we support them. We want the responsibility of projects to be in the partners’ hands. This is at the heart of our humanitarian project.... Eighty percent of work is done by implementing partners, we are here to facilitate the process”*

In Trócaire Keystone Survey (2020) of all global partners, partners were asked to rank the elements of localisation

that they felt were most important to ‘shifting power’ and enabling localisation:

1. The element that ranked highest (57%) was the need for: local actors to play a greater role in influencing and coordinating humanitarian/development programmes.
2. The second highest ranked element (47%) was: the need for increased and more direct funding for local organisations.
3. The last and third highest ranked element (35%) was: the need for greater and more equitable partnerships between international and local actors.

The lessons from this study are in agreement and include:

### Key learning 9.1

Trócaire and their partners should continue with a deep interrogation of mutual principles and values — this is about more than just exploring how the partnership will embody values, like empowerment or accountability.

### Key learning 9.2

Partnerships serve the purpose of transformation of power inequalities — and this doesn’t come without risk. Trócaire and partners need to explore each other’s appetite for risk, backlash and how the partnership will manage this from the earliest stages. Further research on this area would provide more evidence for the localisation agenda.

### Key learning 9.3

Trócaire has consistently shown that they value the knowledge and expertise of all partners and this helps to disrupt unequal power relations. They have focused less on gender and other forms of inequality that are so often reproduced by dominant ways of ‘knowing’. Not all forms of knowledge are considered equal. Trócaire should incorporate feminist partnership approaches so as to regularly assess whether there is a meaningful circulation of knowledge between partners.

### Key learning 9.4

Local organisations such as Duhamic-Adri and ARCT should try to stand firm to their mission and principles and avoid being confused by those allocating funding. Consider moving away from over-dependence on development partner funding, which is not sustainable and can distort their mission





- Change at house
- Items purchased
- Whether HH gaps/r
- Whether program
- Improved access

Mrs Jane Abatoni, the Executive Secretary of ARCT and Vestine, The Project Coordinator in DUHAMIC ADRI reflecting on key considerations of emergency response



# SCORE IMPACT CASE STUDIES

## SCORE IMPACT CASE STUDY - ARCT'S WORK IN KIGEME AND MUGOMBWA REFUGEE CAMPS



*Kigeme Refugee camp. Photo: The New Times (2014)*

Since 1996, Rwanda has been hosting refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The refugee response in Rwanda is led and coordinated by the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and UNHCR at the capital and field levels, and includes a range of UN and NGO partners, and local civil society organisations. ARCT has worked at Kigeme and Mugombwa for over 3 years and are deeply knowledgeable on the changing needs inside the camps, the context, and any shifting conflicts. Their deep connection to the refugee people and understanding of how 'business' gets done inside the camp, as well as their ability to reach those in desperate need and often at significant risk, makes them an ideal partner for donors wanting to support the camps as they can enhance the relevance and appropriateness of any humanitarian response. ARCT needs more than just an understanding of context and internal dynamics within the camps to allow them to shape humanitarian responses, programmes, and policies. It was for this very reason that ARCT welcomed the capacity strengthening activities that the SCORE project afforded them, and it was through their long-term partnership with Trócaire that made this possible.

ARCT's programme inside the camps has primarily focused on psychosocial support to vulnerable groups, most especially single and lactating mothers, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic illnesses, the elderly, those suffering from anaemia and new arrivals,

particularly those who have been traumatised. It was through their psychosocial support that they identified other needs at the camp, including a lack of nutrition and income support. With the development of their EPP plan under the SCORE project, which identified the need to network and co-ordinate with other local and international actors, ARCT became a member of the coordination mechanism in place at the camp. ARCT now has a strong working relationship with other actors in the camp and coordinate on targeting, psychosocial support and medical needs. ARCT also collaborates closely with protection clusters and other working groups in the camp including, health and nutrition, WASH and livelihood sectors. In 2019, ARCT began a programme of nutrition support and cash transfer targeting the most vulnerable within the camps.

With SCORE's carefully crafted package of capacity support tools, which included training in the areas of needs assessment, digital technology, cash transfer and protection mainstreaming, as well as direct capacity strengthening support from Trócaire staff in the form of mentoring, ARCT is now better placed to attract the interest of a wider range of humanitarian donors to service the needs of refugees in Rwanda. Their position and impact has been recognised at Government level, with ARCT signing an MoU with MINEMA in January 2020 allowing them direct access to funding. They were also asked to sit on the Rwandan Refugee Council allowing ARCT to continuously engage with local and international donors and actors. Following the partnership MoU with MINEMA, ARCT was also able to secure direct funding for their work in Kigeme and Mugombwa Refugee Camps from UNICEF and GIZ. As a ARCT staff member stated 'Today ARCT is a stronger organisation with the means to better make positive impacts in Rwanda because of the SCORE project.'



# SCORE IMPACT CASE STUDY: DUHAGIC-ADRI - THE RWANDAN FLOODING OF 2019

*“Sometimes different issues came up when we are implementing development projects and as a development focus organisation, we did not have the knowledge to address such issues. Hence, when the call to take part in the SCORE project came, we found an opportunity for us to build our capacity in the humanitarian field” (Duhamic Interview 2)*

In November 2019, floods and landslides from heavy rains affected Rwanda’s northern, western and southern provinces. As of early May 2020, floods caused 72 fatalities across the country, around 91 houses were destroyed, and various crops were washed away. Areas affected within DUHAGIC-ADRI’s programme included Gakenke and Rulindo in the North; and Muhanga in the South.

Trócaire has long recognised that, while they have strengths at national level engagement, partners such as DUHAGIC-ADRI have the knowledge and skills for engaging communities at local level. During the

2019/2020 flood response, Duhamic-Adri was able to offer creative ideas around grassroots organisation, especially with logistics of purchase and supply of building materials. DUHAGIC-ADRI was further able to ‘be the voice’ of those affected by the disaster and served as facilitators for civil participation in humanitarian response. The process of capacity strengthening, therefore, became mutually enhancing both for Trócaire and DUHAGIC-ADRI.

Using the skills gained through the SCORE project, and in close collaboration with Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), a rapid needs assessment showed that approximately 5,000 households had been affected by floods. Supported by the Start Network<sup>1</sup>, DUHAGIC-ADRI, in collaboration with Trócaire, Oxfam and Caritas, launched a 45 day project in May 2020 to support households severely affected by floods. The project has thus far supported a total of 7,430 households in the affected districts.



Community members of Gakenke District receiving assistance of roof materials from DUHAGIC ADRI

<sup>1</sup>The Start Network has a basket fund called the “Start Fund” which enables member NGOs and their partners to respond quickly to underfunded small to medium-scale crises. Through this fund, the project targets 7,927 households in Rwanda to be reached with non-food items as immediate lifesaving support.

As DUHAMIC-ADRI were already on the ground, they were able to engage with the communities ahead of, and during, the flooding emergency. Affected households received lifesaving support in response to the disasters, such as construction materials in the form of 6,475 iron sheets, 2,610 kg of nails and 653 kg of galvanized wires; these were used to support families whose homes were completely destroyed. The project further donated emergency kits, such as hygienic, bedding kits, kitchen utensils; and delivered messages to raise awareness on Covid-19 and to curb the spread of the deadly pandemic. Samuel Kamamu, in charge of disaster management in Muhanga district, stated 'We appreciate the emergency intervention by Start Network and DUHAMIC-ADRI. Their support is timely. It will complement our plans as a district for different disaster management interventions and help families to get the basics while looking for sustainable solutions.'

Trócaire's approach to working with an existing, long-term partner exhibited how good partnership principles had been put into practice where DUHAMIC-ADRI was able to gather evidence of the crisis by capturing the voice of people, including other civil society actors on the ground, as well as district government officials. They brought these cumulative voices as a form of

'meta feedback' to Trócaire, government at national level and to the donor Start Network.

DUHAMIC-ADRI benefited from the SCORE training in EPP and DRR, which enhanced the effectiveness of their approach to, and implementation of, the project activities. Capacity strengthening in the areas of digital technology and cash transfer allowed DUHAMIC-ADRI to introduce, for the first-time, additional support mechanisms to their communities.

Through implementation of the Start Fund, DUHAMIC-ADRI has been able to create and strengthen their ability to engage with MINEMA and, as a result, they were invited by MINEMA to sit on the National Platform for Disaster Management in equal standing with other NGOs/INGOs.

Networking skills, further developed through the SCORE mentorship programmes, allowed DUHAMIC-ADRI to strengthen local linkages and to pool funding to extend humanitarian support during a pandemic. The capacity strengthening of DUHAMIC-ADRI, both as an organisation and of its individual staff, allowed for a power shift from INGOs representing their voice to having their own seat at the table to influence humanitarian programmes and policy.

Further case studies can be found in Appendix 5.



Iron sheets provided by Duhamic-Adri to flood victims

“

*Partners have the knowledge and skills for engaging communities*





*DUHAMIC ADRI and ARCT staff in Protection Mainstreaming workshop*

# BEST PRACTICE FROM THE SCORE PROJECT



The SCORE project demonstrated that supporting the resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities by strengthening the capacity of two local NGOs to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises, can result in important outcomes from community to organisational level. As is true for all projects, positive partnerships, good programme design and clear management are critical for successful implementation and to increase the potential for longer-term impacts. Framing the SCORE project best practice learning within the NEAT structure (as outlined in the Conceptual Framework) will not only show what distinguished the project for best practice experiences for future strategies in engagement in humanitarian aid, but also demonstrate the progress the project made towards the desired changes globally.

## 1. Partnership

**Desired change:** More genuine and equitable partnerships, and less sub-contracting.

### Score Project:

- Supported a partnership approach that harnessed the experience of local partners, strengthened systems and capacities, while taking into account complex local level processes that can positively impact activity delivery in a timely and effective manner. Enablers for this included:
  - Recognising that building relationships, trust, commitment, leadership, and capacity across partners needed time.
  - Partnership management policies and tools were jointly agreed upon, clarifying desired ways of working, partnership objectives, roles and responsibilities, risks, and accountabilities.
  - Involving partners in all phases of the project cycle.
  - Starting engagement early enough to shape the proposed initiative/activities.
  - Evaluating capacity strengthening activities to capture all relevant outcomes.

- Recognising partners added value and complementarity.

## 2. Funding

**Desired change:** Improvements in the quantity and quality of funding for local and national actors.

### Score Project:

- Trócaire commitment to achieving a Key Performance Indicator of 70% of funding to Grants to Partners is achieved.
- The willingness of Trócaire and their local CSO partners, Duhamic-Adri and ARCT, to promote mutual accountability resulted in a partnership that worked to create positive change that empowered local development actors and enhanced downward accountability to local stakeholders. Enablers for this included:
  - Open communication with transparent decision-making, including on budget and finances.
  - Coaching and mentoring on grant applications and management of budgets.

## 3. Capacity

**Desired change:** More effective support for strong and sustainable institutional capacities for local and national actors, and less undermining of those capacities by INGOs.

### SCORE Project:

- Ensuring that the project worked together to plan, design, develop, deliver, and evaluate SCORE activities. Enablers for this included:
  - Recognising, valuing, and sharing the knowledge, skills and experiences of all partners
  - Demonstrating the importance of high quality, careful engagement that is flexible, iterative, and sensitive to context.
  - Being clear about which decisions local CSOs could influence and how this would happen.

## 4. Coordination and complementarity

**Desired change:** Greater leadership, presence, and influence of local and national actors in humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms.

### SCORE project:

- Supporting and promoting sustainable engagement by encouraging partners to get involved in all stages of humanitarian decision-making. Enablers for this included:
  - Establishing and promoting social networks and the exchange of information and ideas.
  - Providing training that helped partners identify their role and responsibilities in humanitarian/emergency processes, understanding the policy cycle and applying tools for communication with local and district officials.
  - Training partners in advocacy strategies that allowed them to be part of national dialogue platforms for disasters and refugees.

## 5. Policy, influence and visibility

**Desired change:** Increased presence of local and national actors in international policy discussions and greater public recognition and visibility for their contribution to humanitarian response.

### SCORE project:

- Where possible, the project aligned with global localisation agendas in order to help give approaches context and buy-in. Enablers for this included:



- The framing of the project within the wider localisation agenda.
- The presentation of resilience approaches with a humanitarian language, thereby making it more accessible to humanitarian staff and organisations.
- The development of a clear guide for approaching preparedness, response, and resilience in this way.

## 6. Participation

**Desired change:** Fuller and more influential involvement of crisis-affected people in what relief is provided to them, and how.

### SCORE Project:

- Recognised the need to involve communities in setting priorities, implementation processes and evaluation of humanitarian decision-making processes. Enablers for this included:
  - Duhamic-Adri and ARCT created consultative platforms for regular and open discussions at the community/beneficiary level.
  - Capacity strengthening of Local partners allowed for the collection, distillation, and dissemination of data that is vital for an effective response at community level when emergencies happen.



*Duhamic adri providing assistance to disaster affected population in Rulindo District in June 2020*

# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The discourses of localisation commonly have the goal of shifting the power, a goal intrinsically linked to local organisation empowerment and capacity strengthening. As this report testifies, attainment of this goal, although difficult, is achievable.

Often neglected in the analysis of power, is the influence of complex micro-politics of development interventions. It is often the case that partnership and capacity strengthening initiatives facilitate uniformity, impose specific ‘language’ and envision highly prescribed outcomes. It suggests that INGOs frame the actions of local NGOs and produce and deploy highly prescribed and increasingly globalised formats for localisation and partnerships. Organisations such as Trócaire, and local CSOs such as Duhamic-Adri and ARCT, can, however, provide an alternative and empowering vision of partnership and capacity strengthening. Their relationship in the SCORE project, and those of Trócaire and her partners more widely, show that these discourses are not monolithic nor fixed, but rather remain critical sites of encounters where INGOs, development partners and local actors struggle and manoeuvre for political, social and economic advantage. This report has drawn attention to the way local actors are open to new ways of doing things, strengthening capacities, and forging links with development partners, INGOs and external actors.

Trócaire has long been a champion of the localisation agenda, open to harnessing the experience of local partners, strengthening systems and capacities, while taking into account the complex local level processes in which development actors frame, interpret and negotiate the localisation agenda.

The lessons learnt, best practice and recommendations of this report are relevant for both International and National NGOs already working, or planning to increase their work, through partnerships, as well as agencies funding humanitarian response – in particular signatories to the Grand Bargain, as well as those involved in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. The task that lies ahead is to learn from the lessons and best practices captured here and to use this knowledge and learning in the design, planning and implementation of future projects.

## Recommendations for Duhamic-Adri and ARCT

1. As the SCORE project comes to an end, **consider establishing a community of practice** amongst consortium partners in order to facilitate continued generation of evidence and learning, as well as to encourage sustained utilisation of approaches amongst individuals.
2. Continue to **strengthen the capacity of all staff** (and not just those targeted under the SCORE project) on the new approaches/practices, and involve Board members and senior management when applicable, in order to enhance organisational buy-in.
3. **Develop an exit strategy** that encourages continued adoption and integration of project approaches as early as possible, to prevent funding gaps at the end of a project.
4. **Encourage individuals involved** in the SCORE project **to become 'champions' of the approach** even after project closure (perhaps through the community of practice mentioned above).

## Recommendations for Trócaire and local partners

1. **Continue to build and sustain long-term relationships with local CSOs.** Strengthening local CSOs is a process that requires consistent effort. While results may not come immediately, building and maintaining relationships over an extended period enables local CSOs to develop trust and understanding with their larger, local partners and for them to seize opportunities for collaboration and partnership when the time is right.
2. For organisations with a large portfolio of projects like Trócaire, consider actively **pursuing opportunities for collaboration and synergies** (i.e. learning) across the different projects from the start.
3. The relatively **short duration of the project may have compromised the impact** of the outputs and collaboration, and since time is critical in developing and sustaining partnerships, this is something to be taken into account for future similar projects.
4. Trócaire should **continue to focus on capacity strengthening**, to build emergency preparedness and resilience of local CSOs and to prioritise communities. Local CSOs need to be encouraged to identify, prioritise, articulate, and communicate their needs. Greater and more meaningful engagement would instil a greater sense of ownership in the Local NGOs for their own capacity development and for their participation in decision-making processes.
5. **Prioritise** continued funding in **pilot project** areas in order to generate sufficient evidence for outputs to be institutionalised.
6. Ensure that the **objectives of the project partnership are clear** (e.g. results produced, capacity strengthening). In all cases, clarify expected relationships from the beginning and ensure that the partnership is flexible enough to adjust its approach accordingly in order to play the appropriate role.
7. Ownership takes time, including operationalisation of projects and activities. While it may be challenging to complete all project activities within project timeframes, it is important to build in buffers for when activities take longer than expected.
8. Establish **clear communication protocols** and information sharing systems, **joint monitoring and evaluation** and **clear document processes** to formalise institutional memory as a way of buffering against losses due to any staff turnover.



9. The SCORE project **supported positive learning platforms**, platforms of exchange are an important part of capacity strengthening of local NGOs, they raise their profile in front of potential partners, facilitate cross-pollination of ideas and create exchanges of best practices, resources and information.
10. Develop information and communication strategies for engaging local CSOs with development partners with specific attention to **resource mobilisation opportunities/sources**.
11. **Advocate and lobby** for development partners to offer **enabling grants directly to local NGOs and with longer timeframes**.
12. **Ensure that methods, tolls and guidance documents are sufficiently developed** to facilitate replication/scale up to other local NGOs, programmes and regions.

## Recommendations for Development Partners

1. **Enhance local organisation relationships** where trust, respect, transparency, complementarity, mutual ownership, joint learning, and inclusion in decision-making are present.
2. **Consider scaling up of the SCORE project or continue to invest in other projects such as SCORE** harnessing the experience of local partners, strengthening systems and capacities enables local and national actors to take a greater leadership role in humanitarian action.
3. **Document, analyse and process existing and potential opportunities** for internal and external **resource mobilisation** locally, nationally, sub-regionally and regionally.
4. International actors should continue to demonstrate and **share best practices** on their experiences of working with local partners, to support shared learning and facilitate exchanges of experience.\*<sup>1</sup>

## Recommendation for Government of Rwanda\*<sup>2</sup> :

1. **Localisation principles, commitments, and targets should be integrated into Rwanda's Aid Policy Framework** and External Development Finance Performance system. For instance, a good start could be the Aid Policy Manual of Procedures, which is in the process of being reviewed and/ or adding localisation indicators to the External Development Finance Performance Monitoring Framework.
2. Continue to ensure that development partner **projects are consistent with and clearly fit into country development goals**. Encourage actors from local to national levels to engage in all project processes.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation is partly or fully taken from the following document: Trócaire, "Localization in Practice: The Humanitarian Response Programme from Caritas Rwanda", 2018. It is included here as it is also a finding from this report.

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation is taken verbatim from Trócaire (2020) Localisation of Aid Report. It is included here as it is also a finding from this report.

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# APPENDICES

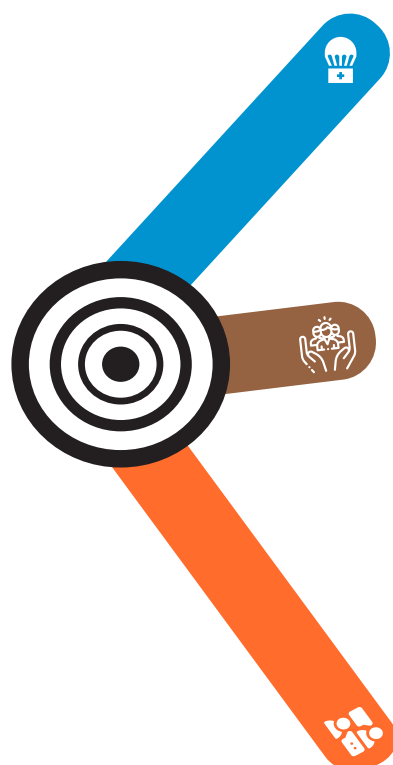
## APPENDIX 1: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SCORE PROJECT

The overall objective for the SCORE project in Rwanda was “to support the resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities by strengthening the capacity of two local civil society organisations to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises.





The expected results were:



### FOR OBJECTIVE 1

- ✓ Partners supported to develop and maintain up-to-date Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPPs) and Contingency Plans (CPs), and to improve institutional preparedness by implementing Organisational Improvement Plans (OIPs)
- ✓ Partners supported to conduct ongoing analysis of localised risks, track trends and prepare early preparedness and response plan.

### FOR OBJECTIVE 2

that local CSOs have enhanced capacity in the following areas:

- ✓ Conducting rapid/real-time needs assessments/analysis, incl. protection mainstreaming dimensions
- ✓ Using digital technologies for data collection/analysis
- ✓ Using cash-based interventions
- ✓ Staff/volunteer management; participation in coordination mechanisms; staff/volunteer care/management and safeguarding.

### FOR OBJECTIVE 3

- ✓ Learning briefs/reports and/or case studies developed to document good practice and lessons learned, including learnings relating to capacity strengthening models, impact measurement tools and local CSO experiences Updated E-Prep/CP and response capacity guidelines, tools and training/learning materials in place
- ✓ Learning and dissemination events (e.g. panel discussions, learning sessions) held with various humanitarian stakeholders.

Building on Trócaire's extensive experience of working in partnership with CSOs, SCORE prioritised effectiveness by ensuring that Capacity Strengthening activities were locally-led; informed by CSO needs and preferences; flexible to allow individual tailored Capacity Strengthening support for each CSO; and included multiple Capacity Strengthening techniques, with a focus on experiential learning grounded in local contextual realities.

SCORE entailed the rollout of Capacity Strengthening initiatives with the consortium's two local partners (ARCT and Duhamic-Adri), focusing on strengthening humanitarian capacity in the following key areas: E-Prep and CP; rapid response capacity, including needs assessments and use of new modalities, such as digital data collection and cash-based programming, and; incorporation of Core Humanitarian Standards, with a focus on protection and accountability mainstreaming principles, and on staff/volunteering conduct, care and management.

# APPENDIX 2: BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## Localisation of Aid

Localisation of aid, partnership, and capacity strengthening are increasingly prominent issues within the humanitarian sector. The realisation that in any emergency the first people to respond and give lifesaving help are those affected by it has led to a significant change in the global discourse on relief and development over the past decade.

**With disasters increasing in scale and number, the international system is under ever-growing strain to mount effective and timely responses.**

In recent years, the role of national civil society and governments has become more important. The need for greater partnerships and local capacities is slowly moving to the centre of the humanitarian policy debate (Trócaire 2017, ICRC 2020 and Christian Aid 2019).

The broader aid sector has struggled to define what a shift to localisation means in practice, and how to balance the roles of local organisations<sup>1</sup> with international donors and humanitarian groups. Critics of the localisation agenda question whether local aid organisations can always adhere to the humanitarian principles of independence and neutrality, particularly in conflict zones. Many development partners have also been reluctant to directly fund local NGOs, instead opting to work through intermediaries like the major international aid groups. As Obrecht (2014) noted, **the questions of localisation are underpinned by two main themes: effectiveness and power.**

The question of whether local organisations can be as effective or more so than internationals has largely been in the affirmative. The question of power, however, is much more complex with the topic receiving more attention in recent years with the 'Missed Opportunities' series of reports (2012-2015) documenting partnership experience

with local actors in several humanitarian response programmes. The series provided insightful positions in support of the localisation of aid and humanitarian partnership. More recently, commitments to increase direct funding to, and **improve partnerships with, local and national actors were predominant themes in discussions at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, and in the Agenda for Humanity (2016), the Grand Bargain (2016), and the Charter for Change (2015).**

The Grand Bargain agreement was signed by some of the largest actors in the international humanitarian community, committing themselves to devolving funding and decision-making power to national and local actors. The localisation dimensions of the Grand Bargain included four key elements: partnership (removing barriers to quality partnership and incorporating capacity strengthening into partnership agreements), capacity strengthening, coordination (enhanced participation of local actors in international humanitarian mechanisms), and allocating more funding directly to local actors (Grand Bargain 2016: Trócaire 2016).

This commitment emerged as a response to ongoing and protracted criticisms raised about the humanitarian architecture. Action Aid (2019) among many INGOs<sup>2</sup> in the aid industry, noted that power was concentrated in the hands of a few International NGOs (INGOs) based in western countries, while local NGOs based in southern countries critically lacked funding and capacity-building. They felt that this power asymmetry entailed a lack of accountability to beneficiaries. In the past three years, significant efforts have been undertaken at international, regional, and local levels by Grand Bargain signatories, led by

<sup>1</sup>Local humanitarian aid includes a broad spectrum of potential on-the-ground responders to crises and disasters: local NGOs, civil society groups and community leaders, indigenous peoples, local governments, as well as people who are themselves affected by crises, including refugees, host communities, and everyday volunteers.

<sup>2</sup>There are a number of INGOs both alone and in consortiums that have been prominent in the drive for the localisation of aid including Trócaire, ICRC, Christian Aid, Action Aid, Tearfund, World Vision, Save the Children among many others.

a network working under the aegis of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream to realise these commitments. Particular attention has been paid to the themes of capacity strengthening, financing, partnership, coordination, as well as gender issues (ICRC 2019).

The trend towards greater localisation has led many international stakeholders to reflect on their own organisational structure, and their approach to partnerships and capacity strengthening, and how these may need to adapt in response to structural changes in the humanitarian sector. **Many INGOs have pointed out that it is important to define NGOs based on their mission (local, national and international activities) rather than their administrative status (local, national or international organisation) to avoid a notion of localisation that is too binary and to not lose focus of global solidarity, based on collaboration between civil societies and on collective mobilisation (SUD 2019).** As a partnership organisation, and a signatory to the Charter for Change, the issue of localisation is an important one for Trócaire. The organisation is committed to strengthening its partnership approach and to moving towards 'greater localisation', as well as contributing to localisation processes at a global level (Trócaire 2019).

Trócaire has commissioned several studies on the concept and practice of localisation<sup>3</sup> and the definition of localisation that has emerged is:

*Aid localisation is a collective process involving different stakeholders that aims to return local actors, whether civil society organisations or local public institutions, to the centre of the humanitarian system with a greater role in humanitarian response. It can take a number of forms: strengthened and more equal partnerships between international and local actors, increased and 'as direct as possible' funding for local organisations,*

*and a more central role in aid coordination. The long-term aim of localisation is to build the resilience of crisis affected communities by establishing links with development activities (Trócaire 2017)*

The research findings of Trócaire (2020) report carried out in Rwanda highlight that the concept of localization was not generally part of the aid discourse or aid performance system, neither a topic of advocacy in Rwanda. There was also no common vision as to what localization means in the context of Rwanda or the pathways to achieve this.

## Partnership

Partnership is a core part of Trócaire's humanitarian response structures. **Trócaire believes that partnerships between international humanitarian agencies and local organisations, as part of a government-led response, are an important way to strengthen local leadership and deliver an effective response in line with humanitarian principles.** When emergency aid can be delivered in a collaborative, risk sharing and inclusive manner, bringing local knowledge and experience together with international expertise, humanitarian assistance can be more sustainable and resilient in the long term.

Trócaire in Rwanda is not a newcomer to the discourse on partnership having consciously adopted a strong partnership-based approach as a distinctive keynote of its profile as an organisation for the past 25 years, and having largely eschewed the direct implementation model which characterised most other INGOs for much of that time. Since 1995, Trócaire has established a field office presence in Rwanda in order to facilitate the cultivation of deeper and more effective partnerships, through which the organisation strives to be 'guided by the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and accountability. Trócaire is committed to building long-term relationships based upon trust and mutuality. Working in partnership stems from

<sup>3</sup>Trócaire has taken on a lead role both in the development of policy as well as implementation in the field of localisation. Since 2016, they have commissioned several reports to inform their work on the ground including Humanitarian Handbook Trócaire (2016). Joint protection mainstreaming framework Trócaire (2018). Accountability in Practice Trócaire Groupe U.R.D (2017). More than the Money – Localisation in Practice, Partnership in practice (2018)–Fostering local agency and sustainable solutions. Trócaire (2018). Localization in Practice: The Humanitarian Response Programme of Caritas Rwanda. Trócaire (2019). Partnership in Practice: Steps to Localisation, Trócaire (2020) The Contribution of various Actors towards Localization of Humanitarian and Development Action in Rwanda. Trócaire (2016). On the road to 2020 – Grand Bargain Commitment to support National and Local Responders. Trócaire (2020). Emergency preparedness planning.



the belief that a vibrant civil society is fundamental to a just world (Trócaire 2020)'. Trócaire uses an 'integrated programme approach to address potential multifaceted and often interrelated vulnerabilities faced by programme participants and communities'<sup>4</sup> (Trócaire 2018). Although there is much evidence to support the view their approach working in partnership leads to better, more creative solutions for complex humanitarian and development problems they have also experienced challenges. Challenges include how to make the partnership approach to emergency response help local organisations deliver to scale, proportionally balance risk and responsibility, and, how to overcome what has historically been a top-down operational working model. Trócaire is not alone in these challenges- the field of organisational development has been in existence for nearly half a century and yet, it is an ongoing challenge to cite any one process, method, or tool that will lead to a well-functioning, sustainable organisation – let alone one that is equipped to respond to human needs while remaining indefinitely sustainable (International Rescue Committee 2020).

## Capacity Strengthening<sup>5</sup>

The importance of strengthening local capacity and the role of local organisations in emergency response is becoming well recognised. Successive studies and evaluations have found that local

capacities can make a critical difference to humanitarian responses. Until recently, capacity strengthening was viewed mainly as a technical process, involving the simple transfer of knowledge or organisational models from North to South. Not enough thought was given to the broader political and social context within which capacity development efforts took place. This led to an overemphasis on what were seen as right answers, as opposed to approaches that best fit the local circumstances and the needs of the particular situation. For related reasons, there was insufficient appreciation of the importance of local ownership of capacity development initiatives.

Capacity strengthening was a major element of all three sets of global commitments endorsed at the WHS – Agenda for Humanity, Grand Bargain, Charter for Change – and recognised as a key component of the localisation agenda. For Trócaire (2020) '**Capacity strengthening forms an important part of existent partnerships and is highly appreciated by local actors.** Nevertheless, capacity strengthening processes could benefit from a stronger recognition of local needs; better coordination of capacity strengthening efforts; appropriate and effective capacity strengthening approaches based upon principles of capacity sharing; M&E systems and the creation of enabling environment to sustain built capital'. While



<sup>4</sup>It looks at engagement at multiple and complementary levels in order to achieve sustainable positive change at individual, community, civil society and institutional level with regard to food and resource rights, women's empowerment, and humanitarian response. Trócaire also facilitates spaces for coordination, collaboration and learning amongst local actors which jointly provide multiple complementary services within the same locality as well as generating lasting change at different interconnected levels (Trócaire 2020).

<sup>5</sup>Differentiation and definition of the following terms are made in some frameworks: capacity vs capability, capacity building vs development vs strengthening vs sharing, and organisational or institutional development or strengthening. This paper uses the term capacity strengthening as a catch-all for these terms.

there is no doubt that capacity development is a powerful and efficient approach for the delivery of humanitarian aid, a number of challenges arise at implementation level. The specificity of fragile contexts confronts practitioners with dilemmas of competing needs or objectives, such as the need for immediate service delivery (e.g. in post-conflict situations) that may easily oppose or undermine the need of medium- to mid-term capacity strengthening (GIZ 2018). Further challenges to capacity strengthening include the political context of the aid industry (i.e. short timeframes, quantitatively-driven results reporting, risk aversion and an emphasis on technical rather than political and contextual skills and knowledge). Denney et al (2017) argue that there is a fundamental need

## Conceptual Framework

It was against this background that Trócaire Rwanda implemented a project titled 'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies' (SCORE)- an 18-month project aimed at enhancing resilience in crisis-affected communities and promoting a leading role for local actors in humanitarian response by strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations (CSOs) to prepare for and respond to crises. Having analysed the debate on localisation, this study sought to define a conceptual framework for approaching it and to guide the analysis of the project learning.

A number of frameworks and indicators have emerged from the literature. They can be summarised as:

- Frameworks that focus on the project, which remains the main instrument of aid, and the prism through which individual and organisational roles are visible.
- Frameworks that focus on local actors, the question of their capacity to act, their autonomy and visibility.







for a re-politicisation of capacity strengthening, to acknowledge that it is ultimately about fostering social and political change. They conclude that capacity strengthening efforts need to: *'avoid simplistic, short-term and easily quantifiable forms of assistance, recognise the centrality of politics, start with an understanding of how people actually access services, and be more systems-focused'*.

This brief focus on the literature surrounding localisation, partnership and capacity strengthening identifies a need for further research to consider more rigorous and structured testing of what works, where, why and how, testing some of the common assumptions about what works in terms of partnership and capacity strengthening.

- Frameworks that focus on local demand, in other words, the expression of the local needs and priorities.

No single framework can fully explain or evaluate the dynamic of localisation. Each criterion is largely determined by the others (links between civil society, the political context of the country, the partnerships with and between INGOs and local actors, capacities (and strengthening mechanisms) of the local partner, etc.) The use of these frameworks in the process of developing national localisation frameworks highlights their value and validity. In applying these models at national level, the global ambitions have been translated into a context relevant to national and local level impacts with concrete and specific aims. This study was guided by and took cognisance of the NEAR framework to analyse the lessons learnt and best practice of the SCORE project. The components, desired change and indicators are summarized below.

## The Localisation Performance Measurement Framework developed by Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR)

<p><b>PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE :</b> More genuine and equitable partnerships, and less sub-contracting</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR :</b> Equitable and complementary partnerships between local and national actors and INGOs to facilitate the delivery of timely, and effective humanitarian response</p> <p><b>KPIs :</b> (1.1) Quality in relationships, (1.2) Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships, (1.3) Engagement of partners throughout the project cycle</p>
<p><b>FUNDING</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE:</b> Improvements in the quantity and quality of funding for local and national actors</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR:</b> Increased number of local and national describing financial independence that allows them to respond more efficiently to humanitarian response</p> <p><b>KPIs:</b> (2.1) Quantity of funding, (2.2) Quality of funding, (2.3) Access to 'direct' funding (2.4) management of risk</p>
<p><b>CAPACITY</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE:</b> More effective support for strong and sustainable institutional capacities for local and national actors, and less undermining of those capacities by INGOs</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR:</b> L/NA are able to respond effectively and efficiently to humanitarian crises, and have targeted and relevant support from INGOs</p> <p><b>KPIs:</b> (3.1) Performance management, (3.2) Organisational development (3.3) Quality standards, (3.4) Recruitment and surge</p>
<p><b>COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE :</b> Greater leadership, presence and influence of local and national actors in humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR :</b> Impact indicator Strong national humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms exist but where they do not, that local and national actors participate in international coordination mechanisms as equal partners and in keeping with humanitarian principles</p> <p><b>KPIs :</b> (4.1) Humanitarian leadership, (4.2) Humanitarian coordination (4.3) Collaborative and complimentary response</p>
<p><b>POLICY, INFLUENCE AND VISIBILITY</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE:</b> Increased presence of local and national actors in international policy discussions and greater public recognition and visibility for their contribution to humanitarian response</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR:</b> L/NA shape humanitarian priorities and receive recognition for this in reporting</p> <p><b>KPIs:</b> (5.1) Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting, (5.2) Visibility in reporting and communications</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPATION</b></p> 	<p><b>DESIRED CHANGE:</b> Fuller and more influential involvement of crisis-affected people in what relief is provided to them, and how</p> <p><b>IMPACT INDICATOR:</b> Affected people fully shape and participate in humanitarian response</p> <p><b>KPIs:</b> (6.1) Participation of communities in humanitarian response, (6.2) Engagement of communities in humanitarian policy development and standard-setting</p>



## APPENDIX 3: METHODOLOGY

The study was underpinned by a 'mixed method approach' including, classic qualitative (systematic literature review, and key informant interviews) and quantitative (survey) collection techniques. This section consists of information on the study design, and an account of the methods used to generate and analyse data. Comments on the ethical approach are also presented.

### Study Design and Methods

The main objectives of this Lessons Learnt and Best Practice report were to:

1. Assess how the capacity strengthening supports provided (EPP & CP, rapid response capacity, capacity strengthening techniques, and accompaniment) contributed to the project's desired outcomes/change.
2. Document best/ good practices for strengthening the capacity of local humanitarian actors.
3. Detail 4 case studies of the organisational stories of DUHAMIC ADRI and ARCT-Ruhuka and how Trócaire has supported them in line with their localisation agenda.
4. Identify gaps and major challenges of the project that need to be addressed in future the design and implementation of similar, future projects.
5. Provide practical recommendations for overall programme strengthening and/or scale-up, to inform future similar projects and advocacy.
6. Prepare a summary brief for donors (2 pages) that includes an overview of Trócaire's capacity building approach through SCORE, as well as recommendations.

The focusses on terms that are often seen as emotive and contested, including concepts such as, 'localisation of aid', 'partnership' and 'capacity

strengthening'. These concepts are highly nuanced and often are defined differently by different people in different contexts, meaning that the process adopted here had to be iterative. To ensure that there was a fully nuanced picture of concepts and that lessons and best practices were identified, this study used a mixed method research. Due to COVID19 restrictions, all data collection was done through online survey and interviews.

### Defining 'Best Practice'

In order to strive towards continuity across Trócaire project learning, this study defined Best Practice and Lessons Learnt similarly to Trócaire (2020). 'Best practice' was defined as methods, norms, or interventions that consistently show results superior to those achieved by other means. They are practices that are often used as benchmarks for success. "Promising practice" are similar to best practice, save that they have not been scientifically validated. The "Best practice" identified here was only identified from the set of interventions undertaken under the SCORE Project itself, although corroboration of the characteristics that led them to be determined as "best practice" was also sought, the latter from expert knowledge and/or literature as evidenced in this and other parts of the world. Best practice was tested against the following four criteria:

1. Effectiveness in addressing a common problem
2. Potential for replication
3. Potential for scaling up
4. Identifiable conditions for success.

### Defining 'Lessons Learnt'

'Lessons learnt' describe what was learned from this project's work and that can now be used to inform planning of new strategies and actions, either here or elsewhere. Lessons learnt are general statements that describe good practice,

or innovative approaches, that are shared to provide continuous improvement. They may also be descriptions of challenges or areas for improvement. Lessons have to meet certain characteristics, such as relevant, programme experience-based, and scalable (ECRP 2017).

Lessons learnt can be positive or negative; negative in terms of identifying (an) element(s) that should not be repeated in future planning. They can also include identification of specific issues that need to be considered when engaging in planning, including contextual issues, such as economics, policy, socio-cultural aspects, and/or equity (Trócaire 2020).

## **Description of Instruments and Techniques of Data Collection**

Through a mixed method approach, the report aimed to capture how the project influenced local NGOs' perceptions and attitudes towards resilience and conflict-sensitive programming in humanitarian contexts, to explore the extent to which the project had influenced their thinking and ways of working throughout the project's timeframe, and to document how this was achieved.

The methodology will consist of:

- Review of key project documents
- Quantitative data collection using survey
- Qualitative data collection using semi-structured interviews

## **Literature review**

Data collection included project-related data and information (including project proposals, baseline reports, quarterly progress reports), as well as broader literature in the area of localisation, partnership and capacity strengthening, especially in relation to humanitarian aid.

## **Online Survey**

An online survey was sent to a total of 24 staff members in Duhamic-Adri and ARCT directly involved in the SCORE project and resulted in a 75% response rate. The preliminary findings of the survey were used to guide key informant

interviews. Data from the surveys were further synthesised and triangulated with findings from the desk review analysis, and key informant interviews.

## **Key informant interviews**

In order to supplement the information gathered during the survey, reflective, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key individuals from the SCORE project. The interview guide was developed with the intention of collecting information related to changes at both individual and organisational level, to highlight enabling and hindering factors for this, and capture reflections on partnership and capacity strengthening.

Individual interviews were considered the most appropriate method to gain feedback and understanding of responses to survey questions. Key informant interviews were held with the implementing staff of SCORE (Trócaire: Country Director, Programme Manager, Project Manager and MEL advisor, ARCT: Executive Secretary and Project Manager, Duhamic-Adri: Programme Manager and Project Manager). Interviews were also held with Trócaire partners CORDAID and Caritas.

## **Documentation of impact stories**

Impact stories from Duhamic-Adri and ARCT were captured to augment the best practice identified. Such stories helped elaborate actual and/or perceived capacity strengthening, and transformation associated with use of a best practice approach. Any measures now being taken were examined for their ability to sustain the gains so far realised.

## **Data analysis**

Information collected, including documentary evidence, survey, and interviews, was compiled, organised and collated according to the questions asked and by thematic analysis. The interventions implemented, and the implementation/organisational arrangements for these, were the main areas of interest and it was from these that lessons learnt, and best practice were extracted and explained.

## Research Validation

The results of the study were affirmed through a validation process and an online validation workshop was conducted that allowed stakeholders to discuss findings, check for accuracy, provide feedback, and confirm that findings and recommendations resonated with their realities.

## Limitations of the report<sup>3</sup>

1. There is a possibility of a positive response bias. In other words, there may have been little incentive for the respondents to speak critically of a project from which they may have benefitted in some capacity, or from which they still hope to benefit in the future. This may have been especially so as both organisations are long term partners of Trócaire. To anticipate this potential threat to validity, it was stressed to participants that the overall aim of this evaluation was simply to understand factors that shaped the project's effectiveness, with the goal of long-term sustainability. Informed consent, and confidentiality were stressed throughout data collection.
2. The limited timeframe and budget shaped the data collection strategy and limited ability to capture, analyse and include all relevant information. For example, the study would have benefited from direct observation at the local partner level and from data collection at field level, however COVID19 restrictions prevented this.
3. It is not possible to generalise and/or extrapolate findings from this study to all local Rwandan CSOs. By conducting in-depth work in two organisations, and by using a data collection plan that aimed to arrive at conceptual saturation of key themes, these study findings do, however, provide a good level of insight into the effectiveness of projects like SCORE to strengthen organisation capacity and, as a result, are still relevant to other projects designs/local CSOs.



ARCT, TROCAIRE and DUHAMIC ADRI in EPP workshop

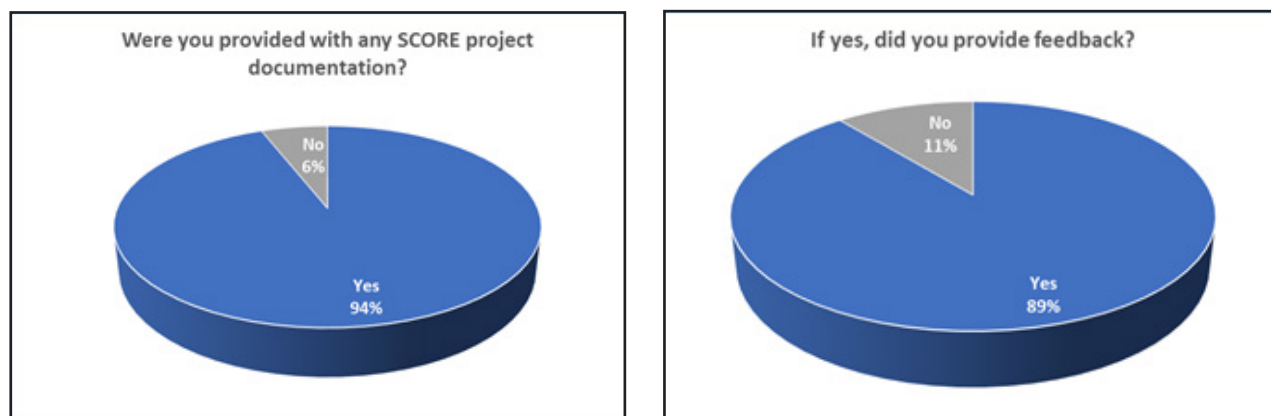
<sup>3</sup>After consulting with Trócaire, formal ethical clearance from the Rwanda National Ethics Committee (RNEC) was deemed to be not required. This was because the purpose of the proposed lessons learnt report was to assess activities, with consultation only with direct stakeholders and beneficiaries of the SCORE project.



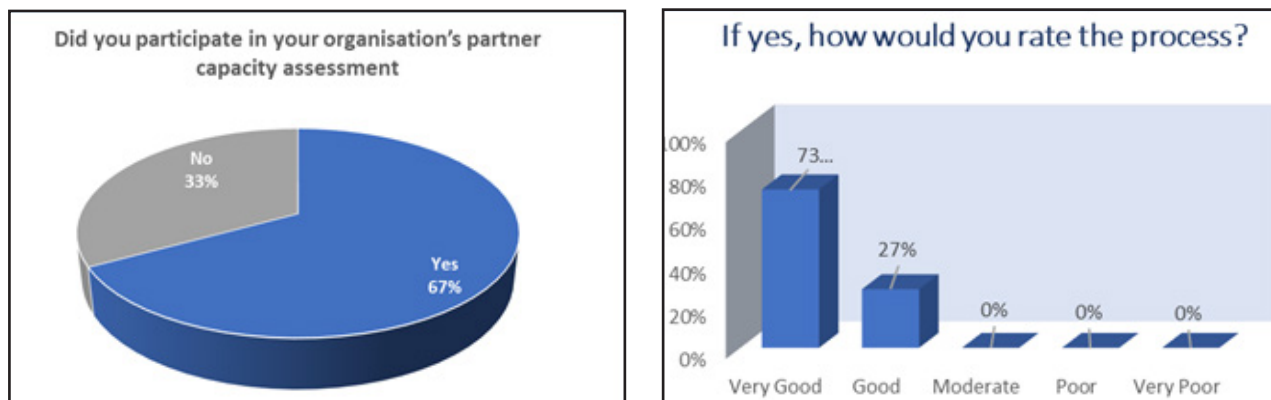
## APPENDIX 4: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

An online survey was sent to a total of 24 staff members in Duhamic-Adri and ARCT directly involved in the SCORE project and resulted in a 75% response rate. The preliminary findings of the survey were used to guide key informant interviews. Data from the surveys were further synthesised and triangulated with findings from the desk review analysis, and key informant interviews. The results of the survey are detailed in the figures below. The interventions implemented, and the implementation/organisational arrangements for these, were the main areas of interest and it was from these that lessons learnt, and best practice were extracted and explained.

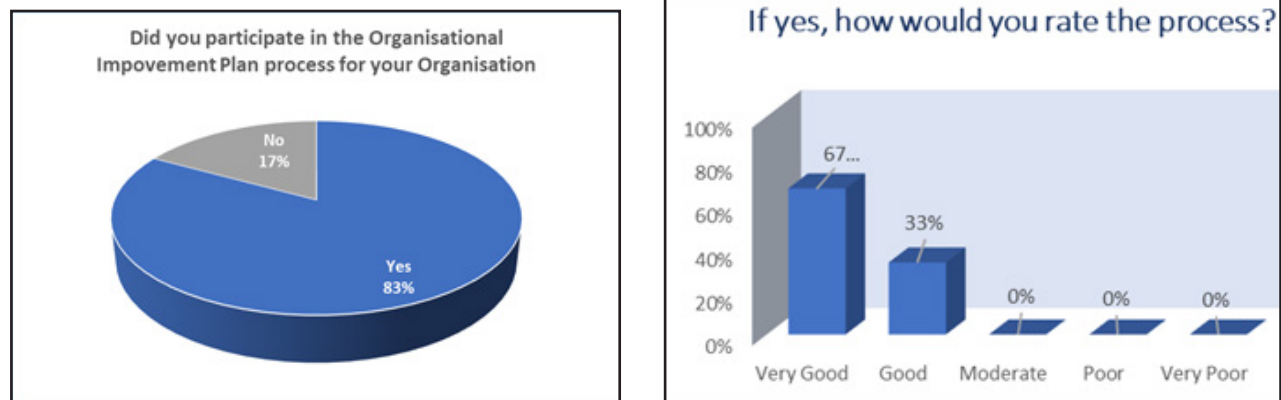
**Figure 1** *Were you provided with any documentation and if yes, did you provide feedback?*



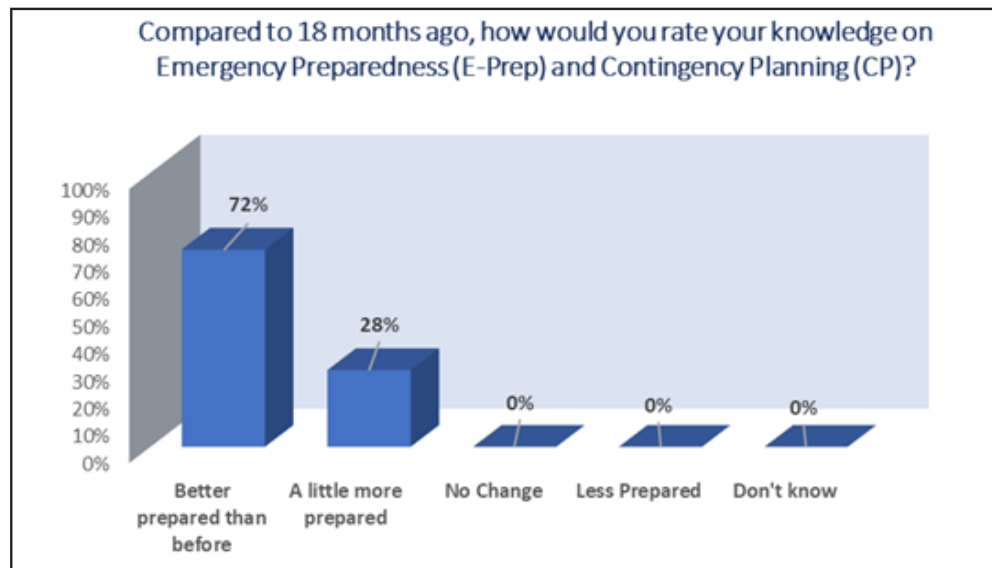
**Figure 2** *Did you participate in your organisation's partner capacity assessment and yes, how would you rate the process?*



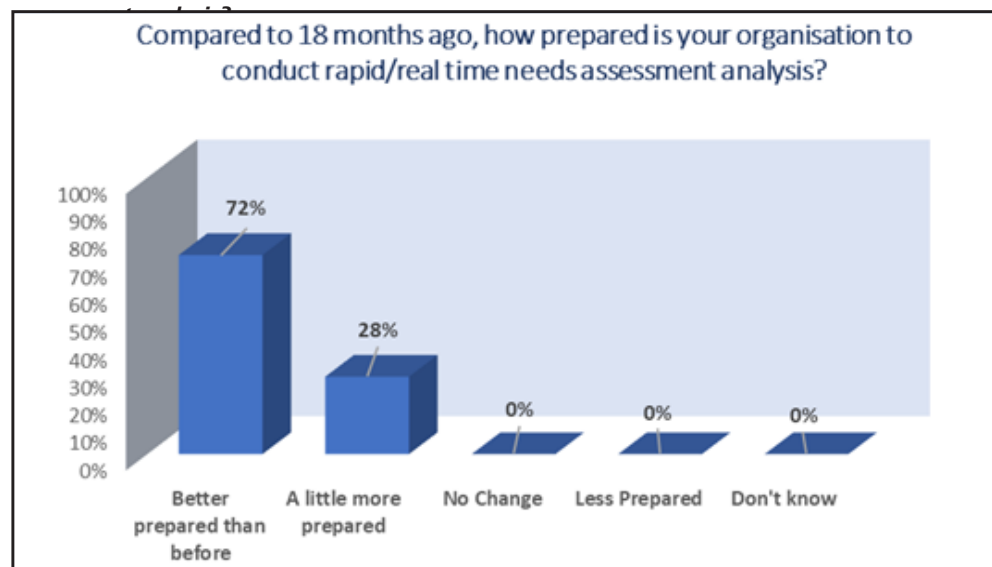
**Figure 3** Did you participate in the Organisational Improvement Plan process for your Organisation and if yes, how would you rate the process?



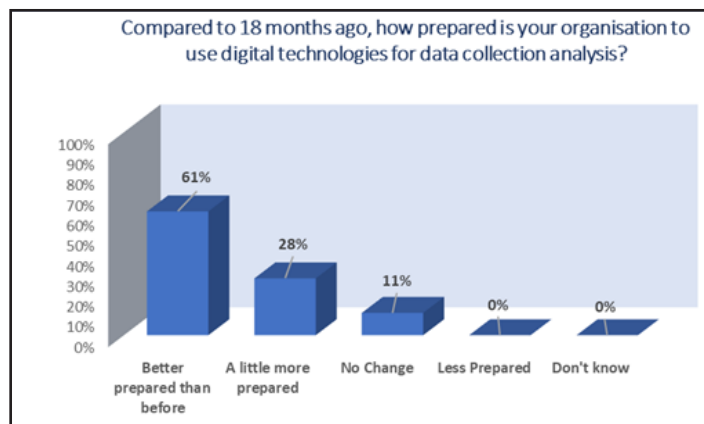
**Figure 4** Compared to 18 months ago, how would you rate your knowledge on E-Prep and CP?



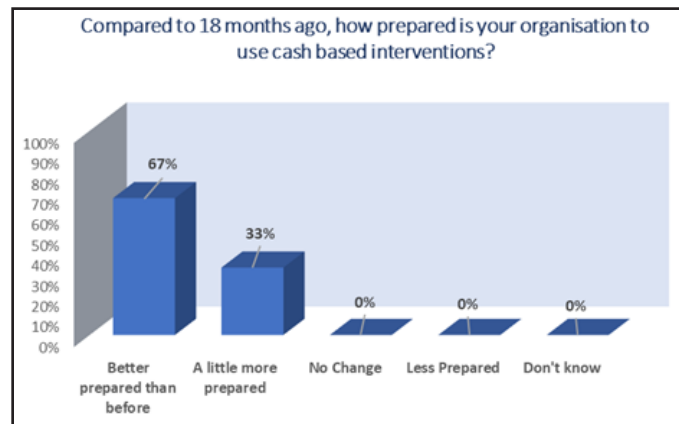
**Figure 5** Compared to 18 months ago, how prepared is your organisation to conduct rapid/real time needs assessment analysis?



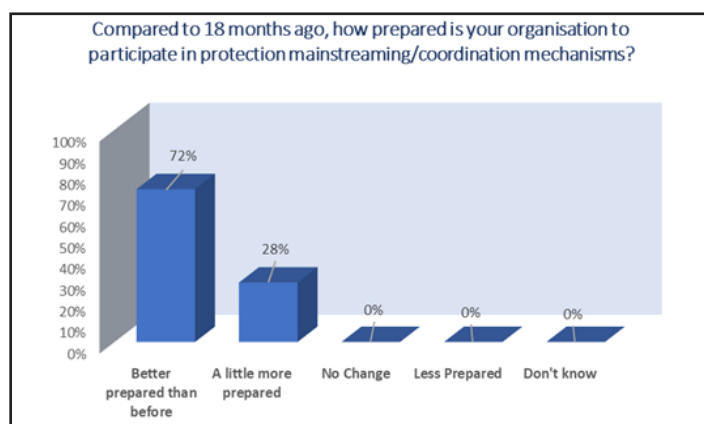
**Figure 6** Compared to 18 months ago, how prepared is your organisation to participate in protection mainstreaming/co-ordination mechanisms



**Figure 7** Compared to 18 months ago, how prepared is your organisation to participate in Learning and dissemination events?



**Figure 8** Compared to 18 months ago, how prepared is your organisation to use digital technologies for data collection analysis?



**Figure 9** Compared to 18 months ago, how prepared is your organisation to use cash-based interventions?



## APPENDIX 5: SCORE IMPACT CASE STUDIES

### SCORE IMPACT CASE STUDY-STRENGTHENING DUHAMIC-ADRI AND ARCT TO ENHANCE THEIR VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION: UTILISATION OF RADIO AS A TOOL TO SPREAD INFORMATION.



#### ARCT and COVID 19 Broadcasts

The SCORE project's visibility and communications activities highlighted the use of radio broadcasts as a useful means to share public information, especially to the most remote populations.

DUHAMIC-ADRI and ARCT used the radio as a tool to raise the awareness in communities in relation to disaster prevention and mitigation measures. The whole month of October 2019 was dedicated to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) commemoration in Rwanda. In close collaboration, DUHAMIC-ADRI and ARCT worked with Radio Muhanza and in collaboration with MINEMA to provide key message from the Government in relation to Disaster Risk Reduction measures (DRR) and also to discuss and debate best practices for reducing the risk of disaster from natural hazards affecting in their areas. The Musanze community radio covers 4 Districts in Rwanda with a population reach of 1,200,000.

The programme was further used as a means to inform listeners on the work of both organisations and the SCORE project. They used the opportunity to explain their role in Disaster Risk Reduction in partnership with Trócaire and how Disaster Risk Reduction is embedded in their programming.

With capacities strengthened for humanitarian emergencies, ARCT are now on the frontline to raise awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic. Dedicated staff of ARCT share current up-dates on COVID-19 via radio programmes, while advocating for prevention and protection measures. In a context where rural populations in Rwanda have an illiteracy rate of 32% (NISR2014), radio shows are an essential way to reach as many people as possible, especially during a health crisis where people should stay home.

ARCT have strived to ensure that information and advocacy messages are broadcasted in the most adapted and suitable way for local populations. Radio shows were organised collaboratively with the Rwandan Government with the aim to help listeners discover more about COVID-19 and its consequences, but also to promote ways to avoid its spread within communities. Radio broadcasts are also the most efficient means to raise awareness and fight stigma arising from the pandemic, especially in remote areas.

The success of the approach (among others) can be seen from the statistics that show that 74% of Rwanda are concerned about COVID19 and are strictly following advice compared to 40% in Zambia and 25% in Ghana (IPA 2020)

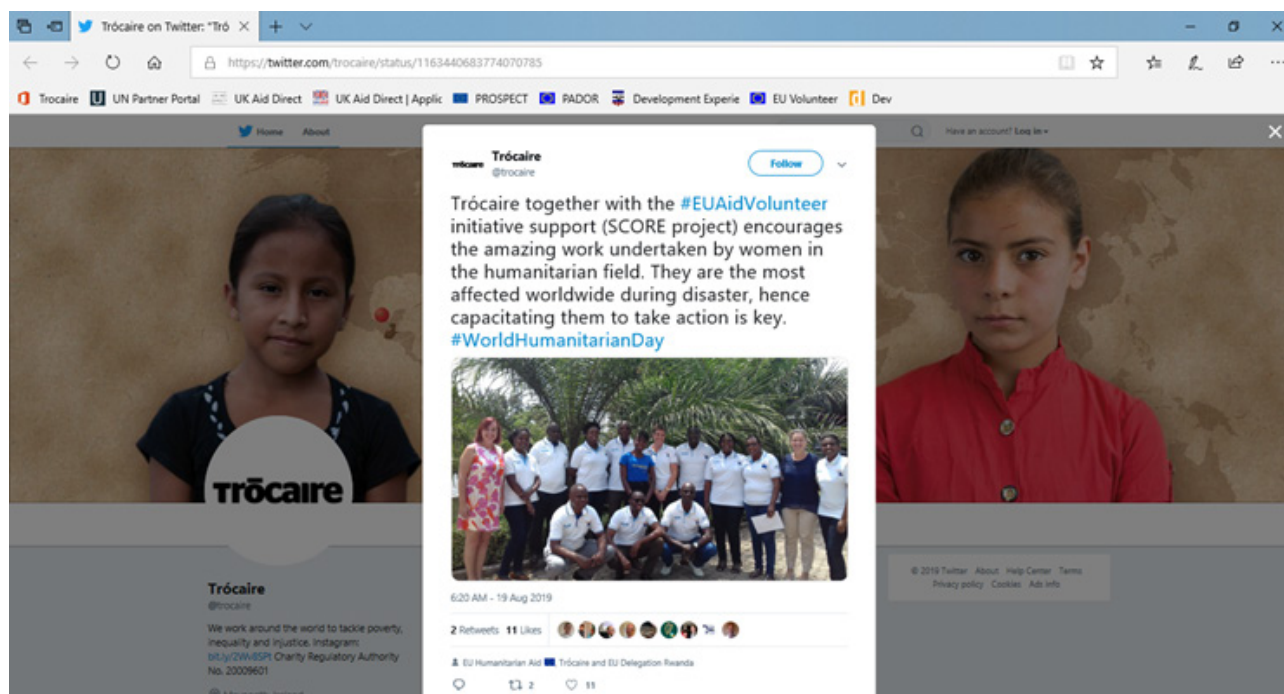


# SCORE CASE STUDY: CROSS CUTTING THEME- PROTECTION AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

One of the important cross-cutting themes of the SCORE project was gender mainstreaming and the need to embed gender into all humanitarian preparedness activities. Trócaire sees gender equality as a thematic priority to be mainstreamed throughout Trócaire funded humanitarian assistance. During an emergency, the vulnerability of women and girls is particularly exacerbated, with heightened risk of experiencing some form of abuse, including Gender Based Violence. The SCORE project recognised the particular needs of women and girls in such contexts, noting that attention to gender equality must be an essential part of every humanitarian operation with gender and protection mainstreamed and integrated throughout all Capacity Strengthening trainings. DUHAMIC-ADRI and ARCT, in partnership with Trócaire, ensures that issues of gender equality and protection are at the centre of planning, implementation, and evaluation in any humanitarian project that they are participating in.

In their work at the Refugee camps ARCT prioritises safe motherhood, including ante-natal care (ANC), delivery, post-natal care (PNC), family planning, and emergency referral for severely malnourished children and mothers. To be able to respond adequately to refugees' specific needs and protection concerns, ARCT collects information based on sex and age. Doing this allows them to deliver assistance more effectively and efficiently.

The DUHAMIC-ADRI / Trócaire Flooding 2019/2020 project reduced the vulnerability and suffering of mothers and children and improved the living conditions for men, women, and children. Involvement of key decision makers throughout the project's design and implementation strengthened local capacity to address gender issues (including the collection of gender disaggregated data) and reinforced the community's commitment to the protection of women and children.



<https://twitter.com/trocaire/status/1163440683774070785>



ARCT, TROCAIRE and DUHAMIC ADRI receiving  
certificate of completion of CVA workshop











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