



**Save the Children**

## **LEARNING REPORT**

# **LOCALISATION IN ACTION: The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Emergency Response**

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Knowledge Management and Learning Report Series  
#5

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**Localisation In Action: The Role Of Civil Society Organisations In Emergency Response**

Abuja Country Office

Save the Children International

**Acknowledgements**

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- Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN Project)
- Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre (GEPaDC)
- Life at Best Development Initiative (LABDI)
- Restoration of Hope Initiative (ROHI)

# Executive Summary

Save the Children believes that shifting power including resources, capacity and ownership to local actors will result in more timely, appropriate and effective outcomes for children most impacted by inequality and discrimination and will better fulfil the rights of children everywhere.

As part of its drive for localisation, SCI Nigeria committed flexible funding through its Humanitarian Fund, for the implementation of civil society organisation-led emergency preparedness and response to the humanitarian crisis in hard-to-reach areas in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states of Nigeria. Four civil society organisations (CSOs): Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN Project), Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre (GEPaDC), Life at Best Development Initiative (LABDI), and Restoration of Hope Initiative (ROHI) led the implementation of activities to demonstrate their capacity to locally lead the implementation of emergency responses in hard-to-reach communities while capitalising on SCI Nigeria's commitment to localisation of the humanitarian response.

## Key Takeaways

The lessons learned from the successes during implementation include:

- Connecting local actors to other organisations that can provide technical support as well as material contributions to aid the humanitarian response worked well in providing additional resources to improve the delivery of the emergency response.
- Quality funding, equal partnerships as well as building organisational capacity can empower local partners to lead and deliver emergency responses.

The lessons learned from challenges during implementation include:

- SCI's internal processes, particularly on awards management (partnership assessment and onboarding), need to be reviewed to facilitate easier partnerships with local actors in line with the organisation's Localisation Strategy.
- To fully achieve localisation, it is important to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building for local partners' staff, volunteers and community promoters to ensure the transfer of technical competencies in designing and implementing quality and effective MEAL systems and tools for emergencies among local and national actors.





## INTRODUCTION

The concept of localisation was first discussed in Paris in 2005, following high-level meetings and discussions on aid. The concept was then picked up in subsequent international meetings and was finally formalised at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, where United Nations agencies, international NGOs and donors came together to sign the Grand Bargain. Following this, Save the Children signed the Grand Bargain as an individual signatory in 2018. The idea of localisation considered that humanitarian preparedness and response capacity sit with those nearest to the crisis affected-populations as they are best placed to respond quickly and appropriately – and stay longest.

In Nigeria, Save the Children International has built over two decades of experience working with local and national actors on different development programmes, and in recent years, Save the Children increased this commitment in the Northeast region of the country; this included strengthening local partners' capacity, providing funding to local actors, and strengthening partnerships to integrate the voices of local actors. At the end of 2022, Save the Children built on the global localisation strategy to develop a country-specific strategy for the Nigeria Country Office.

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The development of the strategy included a baseline assessment, context analysis and inputs from CSOs, government partners and SCI staff (in-country, regional and global office). The objectives of the strategy focused primarily on increasing funding to local actors, strengthening equal partnerships, incorporating localisation into SCI's governance structure as well as gathering evidence and learning about localisation efforts in Nigeria.

Funded by Save the Children's Humanitarian Fund, the Civil Society Organisation-led emergency response demonstrated SCI's commitment to pilot a humanitarian response through the independent leadership of local actors to reach children and affected populations. These four civil society organisations (CSO): Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre (GEPaDC), Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN Project), Life at Best

Development Initiative (LABDI), and Restoration of Hope Initiative (ROHI) led the implementation of these activities to demonstrate their capacity to locally lead the implementation of emergency responses in deep locations while capitalising on SCI Nigeria’s commitment to ensuring a locally-led design, planning and implementation of activities, especially in the hard-to-reach areas in Northeast Nigeria. In addition, Save the Children Nigeria provided technical support (a contingency planning workshop for emergency preparedness and response, IEC materials and child-friendly resources for hygiene promotion) to these CSOs to aid the intervention.

## ACHIEVEMENTS BY LOCAL PARTNERS

EYN Project responded to the flood crisis in Pulka community of Borno State, to increase access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. Some of its achievements were:



### Hygiene promotion:

6,053 women and 5,044 men, including 60 women and 27 men with disability, were reached with hygiene messages



### Waste management:

640.5 cubic meters of latrine waste was dislodged



### WASH facilities:

25 household latrines (2x1x1) were constructed



### Water distribution:

119 trucks (10,000 litres) of safe chlorinated water were distributed



### Hygiene kits:

300 households received hygiene kits



### Community-based response systems:

51 Hygiene Promoters and WaSH Committee (WASHCOM) members (27 women and 24 men) received refresher training on good hygiene practices

Also in Borno state, GePADC implemented hygiene promotion campaigns while also strengthening community-based early warning and disaster risk reduction systems. Some of the achievements include:



### Community-based early warning and response:

55 health workers and 55 community stakeholders were trained on hygiene promotion, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction and management



### Hygiene kits:

850 hygiene kits were procured and distributed to flood-affected households (94 men and 756 women, including 24 persons with disability)



### Water distribution:

502,714 litres of safe chlorinated water were distributed to 425 vulnerable and cholera-affected households



### Hygiene promotion:

514 men and 748 women, including 54 persons with disability, were reached with hygiene promotion messages



# ACHIEVEMENTS BY LOCAL PARTNERS

LABDI implemented an emergency preparedness plan to mitigate risks caused by flooding in 18 communities across Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe State and the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council in Borno State. Its achievements include:



## Hygiene promotion:

20 hygiene promotion volunteers were identified and recruited for hygiene promotion in the communities



## Hygiene kits:

500 households received hygiene kits



## Organisational capacity development:

10 emergency response kits were procured for LABDI staff, along with emergency communication devices to enable the CSO to respond to emergencies



## Hygiene promotion:

441 households were reached with house-to-house hygiene promotion campaigns

ROHI provided emergency relief in the form of hygiene kits and hygiene promotion campaigns. ROHI also assisted in strengthening community-based early warning systems:



## Community-based early warning and response:

8 bi-monthly coordination meetings were organised by ROHI with government agencies and INGOs to prompt early warning and response in flood-prone or affected communities



## Hygiene kits:

392 flood-affected households received hygiene kits



## Hygiene promotion:

4 community hygiene clubs were established to drive hygiene promotion



## Organisational capacity development:

5 emergency response kits were procured for ROHI staff to enable the CSO to respond to emergencies



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## LEARNING FROM SUCCESSES

### Collaborations with other Actors

Leveraging existing partnerships with other humanitarian actors in Northeast Nigeria, EYN sought out collaborations with the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Malteser International. This collaboration, with NCA for instance, worked well in providing EYN with two water storage tanks and a water bladder for use during water trucking to distribute water to affected populations in Borno. Also, this collaboration was useful in providing technical guidance and lessons learned from NRC and Malteser's previous WASH interventions in Pulka community; these aided EYN to effectively deliver on its emergency response intervention in the community.

In the interest of localisation, it is useful to connect local actors to other organisations that can provide technical support as well as material contributions to aid the planned humanitarian response. This is particularly useful in situations where funding is limited but partnerships can be leveraged to provide the needed resources; in this instance, the provision of water tanks and bladder helped EYN save cost as the organisation no longer had to commit money to procure these resources.

### Organisational Support

The contingency planning workshop organised by SCI enabled the local partners to prepare a good emergency preparedness plan (EPP) and deploy emergency response in flood-affected communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states. Also, the provision of templates for child-friendly information, education and communication (IEC) materials for hygiene promotion by SCI Nigeria to the local partners facilitated the speedy deployment of hygiene promotion campaigns to cholera-affected communities in these states.

The funding of 20 million Nigerian Naira (about US \$26,802) provided to local partners by SCI Nigeria via a flexible mechanism, allowed the local partners to take leadership in conceptualising, designing and implementing the emergency

responses in these states. SCI was adaptable to the budgeting and financial requests from local partners during project implementation; for example, by approving expenses where situations required local partners to draw from other budget lines to complete a planned activity.

Lastly, the provision which allowed local partners to procure emergency response kits and communication devices (radios, satellite phones and subscriptions for the satellite phones) also worked well in strengthening local partners' organisational capacity to deploy and respond to emergencies effectively. Using these procured resources, these local partners will be well-provisioned to respond promptly and adequately to emergencies in the future.

The lesson learned here demonstrates that quality funding, equal partnerships as well as building local and national actors' organisational capacity can contribute immensely to the localisation of emergency preparedness and response interventions.

## LEARNING FROM FAILURES

### Delayed Implementation

The onboarding process to bring on these CSOs as implementing partners took some time at the inception phase of this project because of SCI's due diligence processes as a requirement to activate the awards to implementing partners in line with SCI's awards and partnership management guidelines. Some of the CSOs experienced challenges completing SCI's financial requirements for advance requests to enable early processing and disbursement of the funds as per the agreed tranches; this also contributed to a late start of the response interventions.

It is important that SCI's internal processes are strengthened to facilitate easier partnerships with local actors in line with its Localisation Strategy. Also, local partners need to be continuously supported to strengthen their governance and operations systems as this will position them to receive funds from other partners and donors.

### Gaps in Technical Capacity

Partners also identified a gap in their technical capacity to design and implement Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) for emergencies. To fully achieve localisation, it is important to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building for local partners' staff, volunteers and community promoters to ensure the transfer of technical competencies in designing and implementing quality and effective MEAL systems and tools for emergencies among local and national actors.





# OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED LOCALISATION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN NIGERIA

To successfully scale the implementation of SCI Nigeria's Localisation Strategy, it will be important to leverage some existing opportunities, such as:

- The eight pillars of localisation as outlined in the SCI Localisation Strategy (funding, partnership, capacity, participation revolution, coordination mechanisms, visibility, policy influence and governance & accountability) to ensure that more local partners are onboarded and supported to drive humanitarian interventions.
- Access and collaboration with other international NGOs, as well as funding opportunities, are provided to local and national actors to allow these partners to broaden their scope of intervention and achieve more impact from their response.
- Lastly, the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to the southern parts of the country presents an opportunity to scale the implementation of localisation with local and national actors taking the lead to respond to the humanitarian needs in IDP and refugee camps as well as host communities in southern Nigeria.



