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# PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING AS AN APPROACH TO ADVANCE LOCALISATION AND LOCALLY-LED HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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Cover photo: Trócaire.

64-year old Lashi Yaw and other residents of the Pa Kahtawng camp for internally displaced persons in Myanmar receive food supplies, essential non-food items, cash assistance and other forms of support as part of Trócaire and partner KMSS's humanitarian response activities in the region.



Disclaimer: The ideas, comments and recommendations contained herein are entirely the responsibility of the author and do not represent or reflect the policy of Irish Aid.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	TERM
AAD-SL	Action for Advocacy and Development Sierra Leone
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CICOD	Circle for Integrated Community Development
COOPAMOV	Orfilia Vasquez Multisectorial Agricultural Cooperative
E10%	Emergency 10%
EPP	Emergency Preparedness Plan
ERF	Emergency Response Facility
HH	Households
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KADDRO	Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation
KII	Key informant interview
KMSS	Karuna Mission Social Solidarity
L/NAs	Local and national actors
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
RNA	Rapid Needs Assessment
SCORE	'Strengthening the Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies' Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



# KEY DEFINITIONS

**Anticipatory/Early Action:** An activity taking place between an early warning trigger, or a high probability forecast, and the actual occurrence of the corresponding disaster in order to mitigate or prevent the humanitarian impact of the anticipated disaster (CERF 2018, CERF for the Future).

**Local and National Actors:** Organisations that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are part of and accountable to the places they serve, as demonstrated by 90% or more local board of directors or its equivalent, and which are not affiliated with an international NGO. (Note per IASC: “A local actor is not considered to be affiliated merely because it is part of a network, confederation or alliance wherein it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems.”) (IASC, 2018).

**Localisation:** Localisation is a collective process involving different stakeholders that aims to ensure local actors, whether communities, civil

society organisations, or local public institutions, are at the centre of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding systems. Localisation challenges the root causes of unequal global to local power dynamics, structures, and systems, including the legacies of racism and colonialism. In addition to shifting power to local actors, localisation aims to deliver effective, timely, accountable, relevant, and appropriate services and support to programme participants. Localisation can take several forms, including 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 for local actors in coordination and decision-making structures (Trócaire, 2021a).

**Partnership:** Relationship with another civil society organisation that Trócaire supports in some form to achieve mutually agreed objectives, with the aim of serving the basic needs and supporting the rights of poor and marginalised people.



CICOD staff (L to R) Maria Jingini, Thomas Nkhata and Bernadetta Chilumpha preparing for distribution of non-food items in GVH Frank, TA Maseya, Chikwawa district, Malawi.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Distribution of hand-washing facilities by AAD-SL staff in Sierra Leone as part of the COVID-19 response carried out during the initial pilot of the pre-positioned funding model.

Trócaire has worked in partnership with local organisations for fifty years. Committed to the ‘Localisation of Aid’ agenda, its country programmes support localisation in four key areas 1) increasing the voice and influence of local actors, 2) effective and needs-based capacity strengthening, 3) improved quality of partnerships, and 4) increased access to funding and resources.

In 2020, Trócaire developed a range of tailored capacity strengthening packages and approaches for their local partners to improve their organisational and technical preparedness for emergency response. In Sierra Leone, Trócaire used unrestricted funding to complement this approach by pre-positioning flexible funds with two local partners, which they could access to respond to emergencies when needed. In 2021, Trócaire’s pre-positioned funding initiative was extended as a pilot to four countries: Malawi, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Rwanda. This report is aimed at documenting the learning and experience from these five

countries by looking at (i) the model itself – the rationale and background and its development and roll-out across countries, (ii) its associated strengths and challenges, and finally (iii) its impact on advancing localisation.

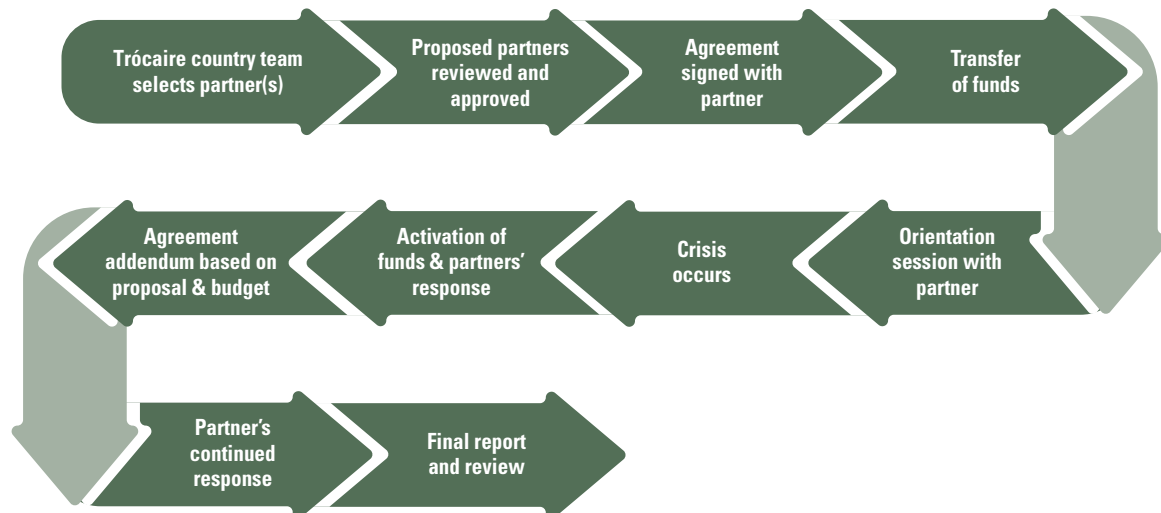
## METHODOLOGY

The research used a mixed-methods approach and included the following data collection instruments: 1) Desk review 2) Semi-structured key informant interviews with both internal and external key informants. A total of 11 internal and 15 external key informants (partners, local authorities, other local and national actors (L/NAs), donors) were consulted.

## THE MODEL

Trócaire’s pre-positioned funding model is a simple and innovative funding mechanism that involves positioning a small (€10,000 to €25,000), flexible amount of money at the frontline – with local partner organisations – for them to





respond to emergencies in their geographies when they occur. The mechanism is built on the principle of local partners taking the lead in deciding when to use the fund, as well as in designing and leading the response. The pre-positioned funding model is a user-friendly mechanism centred on timeliness and efficiency with light processes and requirements at the proposal and reporting stages. Partners can use the funds for life-saving activities or services, needs assessment, protection of people affected by crisis, early or anticipatory action, and humanitarian response actions.

In 2019, the funding mechanism was created by Trócaire in Sierra Leone to better enable local partners to access rapid and flexible funding and put their recently strengthened humanitarian skills into practice, while addressing potential delays associated with normal ways of working. While the pre-positioned funding was designed particularly in anticipation of floods during the 2020 rainy season, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and the funding enabled partners to be first-responders in their operational areas. As a result, these partners were able to work closely with and complement governmental agencies' work, take on a leading role in the district-level coordination structures, and leverage additional funding. Building on the learning from that first experience, Trócaire took the opportunity to develop and scale up the pre-positioned funding model in subsequent years.

Since the first responses facilitated by the pre-positioned funding in 2020, seven local partners across five countries have benefited from pre-

positioned funding ranging from €10,000 to €20,000 each. Most of the partners responded to localised emergencies such as floods, a windstorm, and fire incidents. Two partners responded to larger-scale emergencies (cyclone, conflict-led displacements), and one partner engaged in early action for a slow-onset disaster (drought).

## STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

In most responses, pre-positioning funding to local partners boosted **the timeliness of service delivery to affected populations**; however, the full potential for timely response remains to be harnessed. By stripping back levels of bureaucracy and thanks to its decentralised decision-making at the country-level and at the level of the frontline respondent, the pre-positioned funding model enabled **adaptive programming** more closely **aligned with communities' needs**. Partners were able to implement agile responses in rapidly changing situations where other compliance-heavy funding mechanisms would have impacted the provision of assistance to communities and, in some instances, their own security.

Due to the limited nature of the funding, partners struggled to cover all needs, particularly for localised crises that failed to attract external funding or even governmental support. When responding to larger-scale crises, partners' ability to rapidly engage in needs assessments and the initial response resulted in the **leveraging of additional funding** to scale up or continue their responses. When responding to localised crises, the pre-positioned funding



enabled partners to **strengthen their social standing** with both communities and local and national authorities. Moreover, local partners were able to mobilise other resources thanks to their pre-existing networks and relationships with relevant L/NAs and communities, making the sum bigger than the parts. For one response, the pre-positioned funding meant that the partner was able to engage in early action and start responding before acute humanitarian impacts were felt by vulnerable communities affected by drought.

## ADVANCING LOCALISATION

Despite its relatively small scale, the pre-positioned funding had significant knock-on effects on Trócaire's four core areas of Partnership and Localisation. Having access to **predictable, timely, and flexible funding** meant that local partners were able to engage with, and in some cases, have a prominent role in local or regional coordination structures, which meant they could take part in and influence decision-making. While all local organisations involved in the pre-positioned funding model were Trócaire's pre-existing partners who had benefited from a range of formal and informal training, the pre-positioned funding model was accompanied by support and mentoring from Trócaire's in-country teams, particularly around emergency preparedness and monitoring. The model, therefore, worked with local partners working primarily on development with **embedded humanitarian capabilities**.

**Trust** between Trócaire and its partners enabled the model, and this trust was strengthened as a result of the model's roll-out while also helping to minimise risks along the way. Prior to the pre-positioned funding, none of the partners had benefitted from direct flexible funding to respond to or anticipate crises from any of their donors. The pre-positioned funding was regarded by the partners as **quality funding** due to its flexible and user-led nature and was found to play a strong role in fostering equitable partnerships.

Staff retention, as well as structural and resourcing barriers, were challenges highlighted by both Trócaire and its partners to maintain the humanitarian capacities, particularly for countries that do not have ongoing humanitarian programming.



Programme Participant, Eveline Whited Thasikani in TA Maseya, Chikwawa district, Malawi received a range of WASH items as part of CICOD's response to Cyclone Ana.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO TRÓCAIRE:

1. Expand the roll-out of the pre-positioned funding model across other country offices  
The pilot proved that the model's in-built flexibility has significant potential to advance Trócaire's journey towards supporting efficient, locally-led humanitarian action.
2. Maximise the potential for timely response
  - Agree on benchmarks regarding what constitutes a timely response and introduce a Key Performance Indicator to capture this effectively across the different responses carried out using pre-positioned funding.
  - Develop a guidance document for the pre-positioned Funding approach tailored to partners, in addition to the existing guidance catering to Trócaire's country offices.
3. Fostering a culture of anticipation
  - Emergency Preparedness Plans and Contingency Plans should be developed with partners to harness the potential for timely response and anticipatory action.

- Raise further awareness or organise trainings for both Trócaire and partner staff on anticipatory action. Provide guidance on what early action covers for imminent crisis, sudden-onset disaster, and slow-onset disaster.
4. **Resourcing capacity strengthening**  
Trócaire should ensure adequate resourcing for capacity strengthening to accompany the pre-positioned funding model. This could be done by requiring country offices to allocate funds from their unrestricted budgets to partners' humanitarian capacity strengthening, or by including an emergency preparedness line in institutional funding budgets where possible.
5. **Dissemination and ongoing learning**  
Build on this report and further evidence from the ongoing roll-out of the pre-positioned funding model to advocate for more direct and flexible funding to L/NAs. Additionally, follow-up learning questions over time around whether the gains highlighted in this report are sustained in a subsequent crisis when pre-positioned funding may not be available could be worth exploring.

#### TO THE LOCAL PARTNERS:

- **Ensure that the organisation's humanitarian capacity is maintained.** Some avenues for sustaining humanitarian capacities could be:
  - Document the impact and learning of the pre-positioned funding and use it for external visibility and dissemination to other potential donors or partners.
  - Diversify the funding for the further development or maintenance of humanitarian capacities within the organisation by advocating to include a dedicated budget line for this in other programmes.
  - Prioritise investing in operational readiness and preparedness to be able to respond in a timely manner to crises as they occur.
  - 'Strategise' capacity strengthening by prioritising investments in core staff members who are less likely to have short-term contracts and build systems for knowledge transfer within the organisation.

#### TO DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS:

- **Walk the talk on renewed global commitments to provide more funding opportunities fit for L/NAs and give them the opportunity to lead and shape humanitarian responses** by supporting innovations such as Trócaire's pre-positioned funding model. Risks associated with this model are minimal as local partners have been pre-vetted and pre-qualified due to their ongoing funding relationships. While the model is light touch and simple, it enables upward accountability and supports locally-led humanitarian action.
- **INGOs working in partnership are encouraged to adopt a similar model with their local and national partners** to (i) enable more locally-led responses, (ii) mitigate risks associated with timeliness due to mobility issues or the lack of immediate funding to respond to localised and under-the-radar crises; and (iii) invest in a simple, relatively easy-to-implement approach that has significant knock-on effects on advancing localisation.
- **Within long-term development funding streams, increase the possibility for INGOs and local partners to access contingency funds or include crisis modifier elements.** Funding models for these need to properly calibrate compliance and accountability requirements to facilitate early, timely, and locally-led responses to crises when they occur. Funding for L/NAs for capacity strengthening on preparedness should be included to ensure they are equipped to anticipate and respond.
- **Be a champion in piloting or scaling up funding models designed for and with L/NAs.** Access to funding is a top constraint for L/NAs to lead and shape humanitarian responses (ICVA, 2020; David Ainsworth, 2022), as well as their ability to contribute to thought leadership on the localisation of the humanitarian and development system. Donors should ensure L/NAs have the means like their INGO counterparts to have voice and influence on the future of the humanitarian and development system.



# 1. INTRODUCTION



AAD-SL director Ibrahim Fatu Kamara addressing flood-affected communities in Mabanta, Sierra Leone before the distribution of non-food items.

While local and national actors (L/NAs) have been critical in providing humanitarian and development aid across crises, historically they have received a marginal share of the total funding available within the humanitarian and development sectors. When it comes to the quality of funding, again L/NAs mostly access short-term, project-based, and inflexible funding, stifling their capacity to grow, to build financial sustainability, and to invest in organisational development. In an effort to counter these enduring barriers, the Grand Bargain 2.0 centres on two priority areas: greater support to local leadership and participation of affected communities, and **longer-term, more flexible funding, including to local actors** (ICVA, 2022). While L/NAs are the best positioned to effectively address humanitarian crises through their in-depth knowledge of the context, access to affected communities, and their pre-existing relationships and networks, their opportunities to lead humanitarian responses continue to be constrained by the lack of access to timely and flexible funding.

Trócaire has worked in partnership with local organisations for fifty years and is committed

to the 'Localisation of Aid' agenda. To deliver on this commitment, Trócaire established a Global Hub on Partnership & Localisation that works across the organisation and supports the evolution of its partnership approach in line with localisation commitments. Trócaire's Country Programmes around the world support localisation in four key areas: 1) increasing voice and influence of local actors, 2) effective and needs-based capacity strengthening, 3) improved quality of partnerships, and 4) increased access to funding and resources.

In 2020, Trócaire developed a range of tailored capacity strengthening packages and approaches for their local partners and for improving organisational and technical preparedness. These packages included specific resources for preparedness, needs assessment, digital data, cash, and protection mainstreaming. In Sierra Leone, Trócaire pre-positioned flexible funding with two local partners (KADDRO, AAD-SL) to complement this humanitarian capacity strengthening with the resources to be able to respond to emergencies when needed and put their newly developed skills into practice.



This meant Trócaire’s local partners were some of the first agencies to respond to COVID-19, and this rapid response enabled them to access additional European Union and Irish Aid funding. In 2021, Trócaire’s pre-positioning initiative in Sierra Leone was extended as a pilot to four countries: Malawi, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Rwanda. A total of €60,000 was allocated across six partners in four countries. Funds of €10,000 to €20,000 per partner were pre-positioned with local organisations so they could anticipate or respond early to acute humanitarian needs. Within six months, the funds had been activated by Trócaire’s partners to respond to flooding in Rwanda, Cyclone Ana in Malawi, displacement as a result of conflict in Myanmar, and drought in Nicaragua.

While a third round of pre-positioned funding was launched, Trócaire assigned an independent consultant to capture the overall experience and the lessons learned from these five initial partner-led responses (Rwanda, Malawi, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone). This exercise will further support Trócaire and its partners to adjust and improve the pre-positioned funding model and to provide an evidence base to demonstrate how flexible and partner-led funding can have a ripple effect on the broader localisation agenda.

## 1.1 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

### Objective and Scope

Trócaire recruited a consultant to document the learning and experience from the pilots across five countries to support collective learning within



Hand-washing facilities set up by KADDRO in Kambia district, Sierra Leone as part of the COVID-19 response carried out during the initial pilot of the pre-positioned funding model.

Trócaire and externally to advocate for changes in donors’ practices towards greater flexibility through pre-positioned funding models.

### Methodology Framework

The research used a mixed-methods approach and included the following data collection instruments: 1) Desk review 2) Semi-structured key informant interviews with both internal and external key informants.

The internal desk review consisted mainly of:

- Project documents directly related to the pre-positioned funding responses by Trócaire’s local partners (needs assessments, concept notes, final reports, budgets, post-distribution monitoring (PDM), etc.)
- Tools and templates developed for the implementation of the pre-positioned funding model.
- Internal learning documentation.
- Internal policies, surveys, country strategic plans.

Eleven internal key informants were interviewed, including staff from Trócaire’s headquarters, Global Hub on Partnership & Localisation, and country offices. Fifteen external key informants were interviewed, including staff from local partner organisations who received funds under the pre-positioned funding model, other local and national actors (local authorities, other NGOs), and donors. Preliminary findings were discussed and refined through a validation meeting.

### Limitations

The research included the following limitations:

- The timeline of emergency responses facilitated by the pre-positioned funding was difficult to establish due to gaps in data that could not be triangulated with key informant interviews due to staff turnover.
- The comparison of responses through pre-positioned funding with other emergency responses conducted by Trócaire and its partners was limited by the lack of verifiable information or documentation.

# 2. THE PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING MODEL



Caritas Nyundo team responding to localised flooding in Rubavu district, Rwanda in collaboration with the district disaster management committee.

## 2.1 BACKGROUND

### 2.1.1 The rationale behind the creation of the funding mechanism

The pre-positioned funding model was designed in Sierra Leone by the then Country Director, after critically assessing past responses for recurring disaster-related emergencies. In particular, in August 2019, floods affected the Mabanta community in Bombali district. The emergency was geographically restricted, affected only one community (183 people), and was unlikely to attract international attention or institutional funding. Trócaire's long-standing partner, Action for Advocacy and Development Sierra Leone (AAD-SL), was alerted about the disaster by the Community Disaster Risk Management Committee. AAD-SL then reached out to Trócaire to request funding to support the Mabanta community, which was completely stranded by water and unable to attend to their basic needs. Trócaire Sierra Leone agreed to use unrestricted funding available at the country

office level<sup>1</sup> to support this emergency response, but it took more than three weeks for AAD-SL to receive the money in their bank account and be able to start responding<sup>2</sup>, which called into question the relevance of the response at that stage. During this period, AAD-SL was also not able to commit or respond positively to local authorities' pressing requests for support, which created considerable frustration. This experience pushed Trócaire in-country to reflect on what mechanisms could be set up to pre-empt and anticipate procedural, banking, and other issues impeding a timely response.

In addition, AAD-SL and another partner, Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO), were involved in a two-year programme called Strengthening the

<sup>1</sup> Termed internally within Trócaire as DEVPRO, this is unrestricted funding allocated each year to Trócaire's country offices. The use of that fund is at the discretion of the Country Office.

<sup>2</sup> Among other reasons because of the bank mishandling the transfer of funds to AAD-SL.



Capacity of Local Organisations to Respond Effectively in Emergencies (SCORE) that focused on enhancing local partners' humanitarian capacity for them to play a leading role in responding effectively to crises<sup>3</sup>. SCORE had three specific objectives (Trócaire, 2020):

- i. To strengthen emergency preparedness and contingency planning in local civil society organisations.
- ii. To strengthen capacity and readiness of local civil society organisations to deliver timely, high quality, and needs-based humanitarian assistance.
- iii. To promote organisational learning within the consortium and with other relevant stakeholders by documenting and disseminating lessons learned and examples of good practice.

In an attempt to address the slow pace associated with normal ways of working when it comes to signing grant agreements and transferring funds, and considering Trócaire's partners' willingness to access rapid and flexible funding to put their newly-strengthened skills into practice, Trócaire Sierra Leone's Country Director set up the first version of the pre-positioned funding model, which was then called 'Emergency Response Grant', henceforth referred to as 'pre-positioned funding'. Trócaire Sierra Leone decided to use their unrestricted DEVPRO funding to pre-position a small amount of funding – €10,000 per partner transferred to a dedicated bank account – to two long-standing partners (AAD-SL, KADDRO) who had been through the SCORE programme and demonstrated their ability to manage and lead on the use of such funds.

The pre-positioned funding, although limited, was seen as enabling partners to conduct needs assessments immediately, and to respond to either very localised and limited emergencies identified in the partners' Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPP) or as seed funding to start responding to larger-scale emergencies immediately, before other

<sup>3</sup> The SCORE programme was funded by the EACEA under the European Union Aid Volunteers initiative. It was implemented by Trócaire and Cordaid, in consortium with twelve local partner organisations in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and DRC.



Caritas Nyundo worked with local authorities at village, sector and district level, including the district disaster management committee, while responding to floods in Rubavu district, Rwanda.

funding came through. Having a pre-positioned fund was also thought to help partners to make commitments at early meetings with the district-level authorities, providing them with greater influence during emergencies compared to past crises, such as the West African Ebola crisis (2014-2016) or the 2017 mudslide. The pre-positioned funding model was designed at the end of 2019, particularly in anticipation of the floods for the next year, with money transferred in early 2020 to both AAD-SL and KADDRO.

As it was the first time Trócaire set-up such a mechanism, the Sierra Leone country team had to develop their own templates from existing Trócaire resources, such as a grant agreement, proposal, budget, and final reporting templates. From the onset, this model was designed as a flexible, user-friendly mechanism centred on timeliness and efficiency with light processes and requirements at the proposal and reporting stages. The mechanism was also built around the local partners taking the lead in deciding when to use the fund and in designing the response.





Communities supported by CICOD in Chikwawa district needed to be evacuated in the aftermath of Cyclone Ana, which hit Malawi in January 2022.

### 2.1.2 An unexpected emergency: the COVID-19 Pandemic

By March 2020, the World Health Organisation had declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Therefore, instead of waiting to use the funds for potential flood responses, both AAD-SL and KADDRO used their pre-positioned funding to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in their respective districts. They did not face limitations that international actors struggled with around movement restrictions, as they were already present and able to get special passes to work within communities and to attend relevant meetings at the district level.

Starting to respond by mid-March, both partners were the first responders in their respective districts supporting the district authorities' efforts. As a result of their early response and with advocacy support from Trócaire<sup>4</sup>, both partners were not only included in but co-led (along with an INGO) the district coordination structures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Exposure through a more prominent role in coordination structures not only built the confidence of the partners and enabled them to apply what they had learned during the SCORE programme, but it also increased their visibility and recognition, particularly towards local authorities. It helped change the narrative around the role that local and national actors play in an emergency response.

<sup>4</sup> Originally, the Government wanted only one INGO per district to support the district-level coordination.

*"The model itself proved what I had hoped it would be: that it would be a model that allows local partners to engage in the immediate days of a crisis and enables them to be at the decision-making table, to be a partner that doesn't have to wait and rely on an INGO or a donor to approve some idea that takes days or several weeks, that they can move into swifter action."*

(Michael Solis, Global Director - Partnership & Localisation Trócaire, former Country Director for Trócaire Sierra Leone)

In addition, because AAD-SL and KADDRO were able to respond so quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic and were present in relevant meetings, Trócaire and the partners were able to position themselves for other funding opportunities, in particular a combined European Union-Irish Aid funding mechanism (Team Europe Approach).

### 2.1.3 Scaling up

In Sierra Leone, Trócaire developed a [report](#) on the learnings and best practices from the implementation of the SCORE programme. The study captured the experience of both partners using the pre-positioned funding for the COVID-19 response and the positive outcomes beyond access to funding. While the study highlights many positive outcomes, it also highlighted that the SCORE programme was limited by the lack of resources for partners to put into practice their newly acquired skills: *"They had the capacity, but not the resources to put that capacity into practice"* (Trócaire, 2020).

Building on this first experience and listening to partners' feedback, Trócaire's Humanitarian Manager-Operations at headquarters took the opportunity to further develop and scale up the pre-positioned funding model. A review was organised with AAD-SL and KADDRO to capture the learnings from Sierra Leone and potential recommendations for adaptations. The Humanitarian team reviewed and further refined Sierra Leone's tools and templates and developed a guidance document that explained the pre-positioned funding model in detail.

In 2021, Trócaire's pre-positioning initiative in Sierra Leone was extended as a pilot to four countries: Malawi, Myanmar, Nicaragua,



Distribution of food and non-food items by KMSS Pekhoh to communities affected by conflict-related displacements in Pekhoh and Pin Laung townships, Shan state, Myanmar.

and Rwanda. A total of roughly €100,000 was earmarked for the pilot, with approximately €60,000 finally allocated across five partners in four countries, with each partner receiving between €10,000 and €20,000 to anticipate or respond early to acute humanitarian needs.

## 2.2 WHAT IS THE PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING MODEL?

Since its inception in 2019-2020 in Sierra Leone, Trócaire's pre-positioned funding model has evolved and continues to be adjusted to reflect the feedback and needs expressed by local partners benefitting from the model.

While the source of funds is still Trócaire's unrestricted funding, the four pilot countries are not using DEVPRO funds but are provided with a share of what Trócaire calls Emergency 10% (E10%)<sup>5</sup>. For 2021, €60,000 from E10% was allocated to the pre-positioned funding model.

<sup>5</sup>. At the global level, part of the unrestricted funding received by Trócaire is allocated to E10%, and this funding is used to respond to emergencies globally, particularly smaller emergencies where institutional funding may not be available.

Clear yet flexible criteria have been developed for the selection of partners:

- Ongoing funding partnership and/ or whether Trócaire has funded the partner in the last fifteen to eighteen months.
- Partner meets Trócaire's 18 minimum requirements.<sup>6</sup>
- Partner has experience in responding to emergencies, including consideration of whether the partner has responded to a crisis in the last fifteen to eighteen months.
- Partner has an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) in place.
- Trócaire has conducted a humanitarian capacity assessment through its Partner Capacity Assessment and Support<sup>7</sup> framework in the last fifteen to eighteen months.
- Partner is a Women-Centred Organisation.

Flexibility and trust in the country offices' ability to select the appropriate partner have been features of the pilot, as few partners comply with all six of these criteria. The first three criteria are compulsory and met by all partners, while the remaining three are flexible and used to prioritise between applications if needed. Aside from these criteria, the choice of the partner is also driven by the geographic focus and scope aligning with Trócaire's risk analysis at the country level and its own EPP.

The application process is straightforward and light. Country teams identify and propose suitable partners based on the partner selection criteria. These are reviewed by the head office team and once approved, country teams can send a simple request for E10% funds to the head office. Country teams then sign an agreement with the partner, which triggers the transfer of funds from Trócaire to the partners' dedicated bank account.

<sup>6</sup>. This refers to a set of Minimum Requirements for Partnership Funding, which are benchmarks that Trócaire considers essential practices in any partner agency. The requirements address organisational structure and governance, finance and procurement, security, safeguarding, and gender equality.

<sup>7</sup>. This is a process through which partners assess their institutional capacities across a variety of areas (financial, managerial, leadership, safeguarding, etc.). A capacity strengthening action plan is then developed by the partner for which support and funding is provided by Trócaire and other donors.



When partners want to use the pre-positioned funding, they develop a short proposal and budget. Trócaire’s Country Director validates the use of the pre-positioned funding for the partner, and the agreement is amended to include, as annexes, the proposal and budget. The pre-positioned funding is meant to be flexible until it is committed. Once the proposal and attached budget is approved by Trócaire, partners cannot reprogramme funds without (verbal) approval. Two months after the completion of the project, a final report is to be submitted to Trócaire (narrative and budget). Along with the financial report, a ledger of expenses with originals, copies, or scans of invoices are sent to Trócaire for review. As per the pre-positioned funding agreement, if an expense is not supported by the adequate documentation, it will be deemed ineligible. To date, no issue related to documentation has been reported.



KADDRO distributed construction materials including roofing zinc and nails as well as rice to residents of Yealiboya village in Sierra Leone, whose houses were destroyed by a fire in 2022.

Regarding the actual use of the pre-positioned funds, the guidance document provides the following<sup>8</sup>:

WHAT IS THE PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING USED FOR?	WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THE PRE-POSITIONED FUNDS?
<b>Life-saving</b> activities or services to the most vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises.	Activities that are <b>not immediately life-saving</b> , such as disaster risk reduction, economic recovery, poverty reduction.
<b>Need assessments</b> including joint needs assessments that avoid duplication.	<b>Recurrent costs</b> (regular staff salaries, running office and maintenance costs, etc).
<b>Protection</b> of people affected by humanitarian crises, with a focus on the most vulnerable.	<b>Funding gaps</b> in on-going programmes.
<b>Early action</b> to prevent or mitigate the humanitarian impact of a crisis that is clearly imminent.	Capacity strengthening and training ( <i>funded only if related to direct implementation of emergency response</i> ).
<b>Humanitarian support services</b> that are necessary to enable life-saving activities (e.g. emergency telecommunications, airtime/top up and logistics, fuel, etc).	Proposals that contain life-saving elements in the project narrative, but the <b>budgets focus on non-life-saving</b> elements that are not suitable for the pre-positioned funds.

Source: Trócaire ‘Pre-positioning Trócaire Funds with Partners for Emergency Response’, Oct. 2021.

<sup>8</sup> In Sierra Leone, the objective of the pre-positioned funding model was to support locally-led humanitarian response to emergencies and to improve the timeliness of such responses. For the pilot, the pre-positioned funding model’s objectives were broadened to include early action through anticipatory finance and innovative solutions.



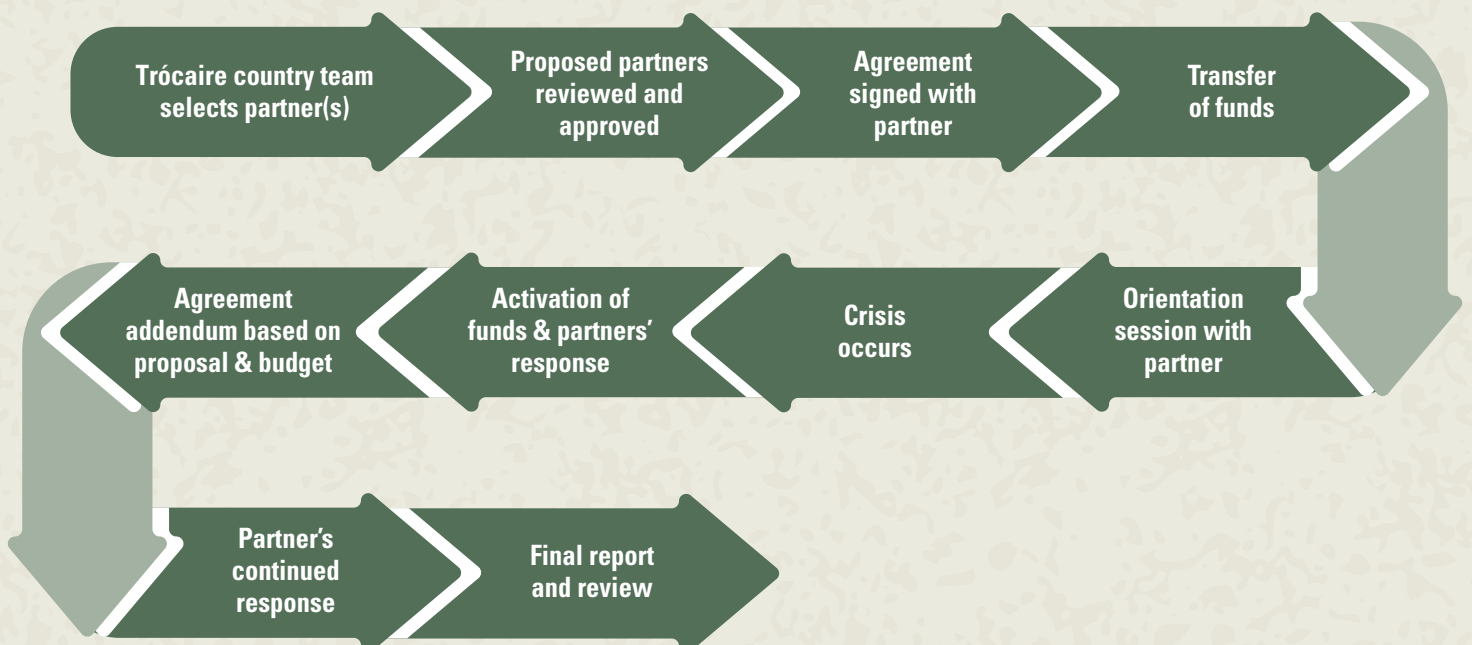
Due to the nature and small size of the pre-positioned funding, the fund does not cover staff salaries and other support costs. All partners have an ongoing funding partnership with Trócaire, so when a disaster/crisis strikes or is closely anticipated, some partners' staff pause their ongoing activities and re-prioritise to respond to the emergency.

The initial guidance sets the pre-positioned funding response duration at **three months**, and a threshold of €15,000 per partner. For the pilot, however, one partner in Myanmar received €20,000<sup>9</sup> and the four others received €10,000. The guidance encourages pre-positioned funding to be used as catalytic funding to jumpstart the most urgent humanitarian activities.

It is noteworthy that for the pilot most of the partners responded to localised emergencies that were unlikely to receive international or even national attention and were therefore at risk of not being supported through other funding opportunities.

Finally, as E10% funds are allocated on an annual basis, they must be spent by the end of Trócaire's fiscal year. For this reason, the model includes a clause stipulating that if the pre-positioned funding is not used two months before the one-year anniversary date, they should be redirected to emergency preparedness or humanitarian capacity actions for the partner. When applying for the pre-positioned funding, country offices must identify potential activities in case the funds need to be reallocated before the end of the fiscal year.

The below chart summarises the main steps of the pre-positioned funding model:



<sup>9</sup> Due to the large-scale and protracted nature of the crisis and the fact that Myanmar was the only country applying to the fund from Trócaire's internal country classification of Fragile and Conflict Affected States.

## 2.3 OVERVIEW OF PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING RESPONSES ACROSS FIVE COUNTRIES

This table provides an overview of the seven partners' responses facilitated by the pre-positioned funding in the scale-up phase of pilot. Most of the pre-positioned funds have been used in response to emergencies and include needs assessments and life-saving activities or services. Only one out of seven partners used the pre-positioned funding for what can be qualified as early action.

	KADDRO (SIERRA LEONE) (€10,000)	AAD-SL (SIERRA LEONE) (€10,000)	DUHAMIC ADRI (RWANDA) (€10,000)	CARITAS NYUNDO (RWANDA) (€10,000)
<b>Details of the response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Fire incident</li> <li>* Yealiboya village</li> <li>* 98 HHs (512 people)</li> <li>* Multi-stakeholder RNA, distribution of food and construction materials, PDM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Windstorm incident</li> <li>* Makeni Township</li> <li>* 245 HHs</li> <li>* Multi-stakeholder RNA, (mobile)</li> <li>* Multi-purpose Cash assistance (MPCA), PDM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Floods</li> <li>* Rutsiro district</li> <li>* 95 HHs</li> <li>* MPCA, community sensitisation sessions on flood mitigating actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Floods</li> <li>* Rubavu district</li> <li>* 99 HHs</li> <li>* MPCA, erosion control and COVID-19 sensitisation session in collaboration with the district disaster management committee</li> </ul>
<b>Highlights of the response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Small-scale localised disasters</li> <li>* Immediate RNA</li> <li>* Close collaboration and coordination with local authorities and communities</li> <li>* Leveraged support from other L/NAs</li> <li>* Partners were the only respondents</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Small-scale localised disasters</li> <li>* Immediate RNA</li> <li>* Less than 7 days for assistance to reach affected people (Caritas Nyundo)</li> <li>* Close collaboration and coordination with local authorities and communities</li> <li>* Partners were the only respondents</li> </ul>	

	CICOD (MALAWI) (€10,000)	KMSS PEKHON (MYANMAR) (€20,000)	COOPAMOV (NICARAGUA) (10,000 EUR)
<b>Details of the response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cyclone Ana</li> <li>* Chikwawa district</li> <li>* 5,700 HHs</li> <li>* Multi-stakeholder RNA, WASH support to 13 camps, mobile latrines transportation and installation for evacuation camps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Conflict-related displacements</li> <li>* Pekhon Township</li> <li>* 1,816 IDPs</li> <li>* Food and non-food items distribution, COVID-19 prevention kits, shelter materials, complementary MPCA (85 HHs), water-supply support, PDM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Drought</li> <li>* Santa Maria (dry corridor)</li> <li>* 346 HHs (1,426 people)</li> <li>* Ongoing monitoring of communities' situation, operational readiness activities (pre-qualification of suppliers, activities' plan, etc.), food and COVID-19 protection kits distribution and sensitisation</li> </ul>
<b>Highlights of the response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Large-scale disaster</li> <li>* CICOD was the first responder</li> <li>* Immediate RNA</li> <li>* First assistance provided within 48 hours</li> <li>* Agile adaptation of the response</li> <li>* Pre-positioned funds enabled additional Start funding (through Trócaire)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Large-scale displacements (&gt;150,000 IDPs)</li> <li>* Dynamic situation with secondary displacements leading to agile adaptation of the response</li> <li>* Security issues and contextual limitations</li> <li>* Pre-positioned funds used as seed funding to leverage additional funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Slow-onset disaster</li> <li>* Monitoring mechanism and triggers</li> <li>* Anticipatory/early action</li> </ul>



# 3. STRENGTHS OF THE PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES



KMSS Pekhon provided shelter materials to 30 households as part of their support to communities affected by conflict-related displacements in Pekhon and Pin Laung townships, Shan state, Myanmar.

## 3.1 STRENGTHS OF THE MODEL

### 3.1.1 Enabling timely needs assessment and responses

The pre-positioned funding model was initially designed as a mechanism to enable local partners to respond to a crisis quickly and effectively through rapid response or forecast-based early action. While Trócaire also benefits from pre-positioned funding from Irish Aid (through the Emergency Response Facility), Trócaire's use of its own E10% for the pre-positioned funding further decentralises the funds and puts the decision-making process closer to communities by pre-positioning funds directly with local partners. This reduces the number of intermediaries and time associated with procedures to agree and transfer funds. The first responses through the pre-positioned funds

in Sierra Leone during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that the pre-positioned funding model enabled AAD-SL and KADDRO to be the first responders in their district, even before COVID-19 cases were declared.

*"It was really very timely, to a point that today you go to the district authorities, and they will tell you that they really appreciated our organisation, because we were the very first, even before government support came, we were the first to provide that support."*

(Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Program Director, AAD-SL)

All key informants emphasised the timeliness associated with having the funds pre-positioned as a prominent feature of the mechanism. This was also echoed by external stakeholders, including local authorities who particularly

emphasised that the partners were the first – often the only actors – to support the assessment and to respond. This was particularly true for localised crises. Local partners often referred to being the first responders in their areas, including for the large-scale Cyclone Ana disaster in Malawi. **For Cyclone Ana’s response in Malawi, CICOD was able to conduct the needs assessment and to deliver their first assistance in evacuation camps, before Start Allocation was even decided**<sup>10</sup>. Having the pre-positioned funds also seemed to *‘push partners to be able to respond (in a) timely (way)’*, as mentioned by one partner. In addition, partners often compared their responses through the pre-positioned funding with previous experiences and ways of working where it would take them a minimum of two weeks or more for any actions to take place. One partner mentioned that prior delays in responding had at times brought into question the relevance of their intervention.

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*“Sometimes we used to take three or even four weeks to go down to respond, but this time around, at least within forty-eight hours, we had taken water treatment chemicals to some of the camps because we had the pre-positioned funds to know the needs and to immediately go into action.”*

(Edward Hole, Program Manager, CICOD)

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In an initial internal review conducted by Trócaire and covering the four pilot countries, two out of five partners declared that it took one to seven days for assistance to reach the affected people. Another two out of five said it took two to four weeks and one partner took more than a month. Partners were also asked whether having the pre-positioned funding facilitated a quicker response. Most responded positively, with two out of five partners saying the response was up to one week quicker and one partner said the response was up to twenty-four hours quicker (Trócaire, 2022).

The pre-positioned funding model, by design, clearly has the potential for extremely timely responses, not only because the funds are pre-positioned with partners but also because

partners are embedded within communities and therefore are alerted faster. They also usually have unimpeded access to communities, and with the pre-positioned funding, the opportunity to be among the first teams to assess the situation and collect data with or from the relevant local authorities. Finally, the administrative burden and time associated with approvals can be curtailed significantly due to the flexible and light-touch nature of the model.

### 3.1.2 Flexibility for greater impact

**Flexibility was the most cited strength of the pre-positioned funding model by key informants.** The flexibility of the funds allowed for different types of impacts on partners’ ability to efficiently deliver a needs-based and timely response.

- Community-driven and agile responses

The flexibility of the model enabled **highly agile responses that were closer to the communities’ expressed needs**. Multiple key informants mentioned that the pre-positioned funding gave partners more flexibility and autonomy to design a response relevant to communities’ needs without pressure from the priorities or requirements that donors often impose. A closer look at the pre-positioned funding responses reveals them to be more holistic, and not siloed by sector, often a challenge in responses led by large international actors. Partners’ responses through the pre-positioned funding supported gap-filling to complement and, in some cases, facilitate local authorities’ work. With the pre-positioned funding, partners had sufficient scope to adapt, adjust, or even redesign their responses according to the needs of the communities or to contextual changes.

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*“Flexibility, adaptability, agility are underlying the processes and tools that we use. And, again, it also fits with the whole aspect of localisation and empowering local partners. They have more flexibility and more power to decide based on the information that they are getting from the communities.”*

(Modeste Sibomana, Programme Manager, Trócaire Rwanda)

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<sup>10</sup> For Start fund’s Cyclone Ana timeline please refer to: <https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/alerts/575-malawi-cyclone>



For example, in Myanmar, while initially KMSS-Pekhon had planned to conduct a two-month food distribution along with non-food items and COVID-19 protection items, their actual response differed significantly from this initial plan due to contextual changes. First, there were continued displacements with the situation evolving rapidly in terms of people's movements. More IDPs arrived in Pinlaung Township so KMSS-Pekhon had to review their food distribution plan and expand their targeting. More vulnerable IDPs (elderly, pregnant and lactating women, people with disability, etc.) received a multi-purpose cash grant and some nutritional supplements. However, in two villages, IDP representatives asked for cash to be replaced with the provision of shelter materials as this was their main need and more helpful, given the movement limitations and price increases. One camp did not have access to safe water, so KMSS-Pekhon remedied this with a WASH intervention. The response in Malawi provides another example where CICOD was able to fulfil an unexpected gap – the transportation and installation of mobile latrines in camps. Without CICODs support, donated latrines would not have been used as the district council lacked the resources to transport and install them. During the COVID-19 response, KADDRO set up feedback mechanisms in the government quarantine centres that were severely under-resourced. Feedback received from people in the quarantine facilities was listened to and acted upon, as KADDRO designed their interventions using the pre-positioned funds.

- **Accessing emergency funding**

Local partners often face barriers in accessing funding when application processes are complex and difficult to navigate. Moreover, local partners rarely have a dedicated person to take the lead on proposal development or reporting. The pre-positioned funding model is light, in terms of the proposal, final reporting, and compliance requirements, which decreases the burden and barriers for local partners to navigate their way through the management of this fund.

- **Safe programming for the partner**

In one case, the flexibility of the funding mechanism enabled the partner's security concerns to be heard. The partner was concerned about having to travel back and forth with voucher documentation (needed as a supporting document) due to the conflict situation within their area of intervention. Trócaire agreed for copies to be sent to them on site and then destroyed these to avoid the potential harassment of partner staff.

### 3.1.3 Responding to localised crises together with communities

In the majority of the pre-positioned funding pilots, partners used the funds to address smaller crises that were geographically limited in scope, and which arose quickly. Five out of seven responses fell into this category and were unlikely to be addressed by traditional humanitarian funding mechanisms or even the Start Fund.



Caritas Nyundo carried out a rapid needs assessment with communities before determining the preferred form of support for communities affected by heavy rains, floods and landslides in Rubavu district, Rwanda.



KADDRO distributed food items to women farmers as part of their COVID-19 response in Kambia district, Sierra Leone.

While Trócaire has access to pre-positioned funding for emergency responses from the Irish Aid Emergency Response Facility (ERF), none of these localised responses would have warranted the use of the ERF. The ERF is dedicated to larger-scale emergencies with a relatively high minimum funding threshold, around €50,000 to €150,000.

External stakeholders confirmed that no other actors were able to support most of the responses that were carried out by Trócaire's partners with pre-positioned funds, or even the needs assessments. Several pilots clearly demonstrated that a small fund led by a local organisation has the potential to marshal additional non-financial resources from other local and national actors, or even communities. Particularly for localised responses, the pre-positioned funding leveraged existing systems, and sometimes in-kind contributions (fuel, meeting space, volunteers, etc.) to conduct the needs assessment and to respond. Partners reflected on how this also promotes transparency and accountability at all levels as

members of the local coordination structures are aware of the pre-positioned funding, needs assessments are done jointly, and results are shared collegially. For example, in Sierra Leone for both the windstorm and fire responses, AAD-SL and KADDRO provided financial support to the needs assessments that were jointly led by the local government and other partners, such as the local Red Cross, which provided the volunteers. The Red Cross, the National Disaster Management Agency, and the local authorities at different levels also supported both partners in mobilising the communities, targeting and verifying the list of affected people, distributing items, and even monitoring. Specifically, for the Yealiboya fire incidents, with a small financial contribution (towards fuel and per diems), KADDRO was able to organise a two-day training on fire prevention that was tailored to the specific environment of the community, led by the Red Cross and the local Fire Brigades.

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*“When you are there to respond, you get the organisation connected with other institutions, government institutions, and other partners, and form part of it. It strengthened our relationship at that level. It built our relationship of trust and confidence with other institutions because we always work as a team, we move as a team.”*  
(Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Program Director, AAD-SL)

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Key informants also revealed that the pre-positioned funding meant that partners were seen as responders in their own communities. It enabled them to support communities with analysing and proposing actions themselves to address or mitigate risks they were facing. For the response to floods in Rwanda, a committee composed of the partner organisation Duhamic Adri, community representatives, and local authorities was set-up to support the assessment and the targeting process for affected people. Partners were also able to use community-based structures that they had helped establish or supported during their ongoing development projects to support the emergency response. During COVID-19, AAD-SL worked with the Safeguarding Community Protection focal persons in each community to engage in risk communication. A few partners mentioned that the pre-positioned funding



reinforced their social standing and legitimacy with vulnerable communities to some extent as the partners had the ability to respond rapidly to the communities' priorities. External stakeholders also echoed that having a local organisation who knows the community creates a greater impact as the local organisation often receives information about what happened, the community's needs, and how to support and mobilise communities as first responders before international organisations and sometimes even before the government itself.

### 3.1.4 Leveraging additional funding

The pre-positioned funding was also found to be a type of seed funding that enabled partners to swiftly engage in needs assessments and start some life-saving activities while waiting for institutional funding to be secured. In Sierra Leone, through their rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both partners ended up in strategic positions in terms of coordination with local authorities. This contributed to them being able to leverage significant European Union and Irish Aid funding (Team Europe Approach), in consortium with Trócaire and two other INGOs<sup>11</sup>. In Malawi, Trócaire and CICOD helped Start to raise the alarm due to CICOD's engagement from the outset, which subsequently helped secure a Start grant. CICOD also received another Start grant through a different international organisation that had witnessed their work and strong relationship with the District Council. In Myanmar, KMSS-Pekhon secured two additional funding pots to continue assisting the IDPs in Pinlaung Township. In Nicaragua, COOPAMOV had an opportunity to complement what they had started through the pre-positioned funding with funding from the World Food Programme.

### 3.1.5 A funding mechanism supporting Anticipatory Action

According to the Start Network, 55% of humanitarian funding goes to crises with regular patterns of recurrence, yet only 1% of that funding is prearranged (Lena Weingärtner et al., 2019). The possibility of using the pre-positioned funding for early/anticipatory action was added

<sup>11</sup> This funding was the result of advocacy and showcasing the work that the partners were already doing. It did not come out of a call for proposals.

into Trócaire's internal guidance on the use of the funds after the initial experience in Sierra Leone. One country – Nicaragua – used the fund for such a purpose, activating the funds before acute impacts of an out-of-the-ordinary drought were felt by vulnerable households in Santa Maria.

Anticipatory Action is based on three main pillars: (i) ex-ante funding mechanism or pre-committed funds, (ii) triggers or pre-set parameters for intervention, and (iii) planning or pre-agreed activities. These three pillars will ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided within the appropriate window between a forecast and the shock or, for slow onset disasters, before acute impacts are felt. When applying for the pre-positioned funding, Trócaire Nicaragua and COOPAMOV had already planned to use the funds to respond to the drought if the situation was to deteriorate. To prepare for this eventuality, a set of pre-agreed activities and a budget were prepared jointly between Trócaire and COOPAMOV to ensure a quick approval to use the pre-positioned funding when needed. Suppliers were pre-selected after a bid analysis process and to ensure stock would be there if required. COOPAMOV engaged with communities to closely monitor the situation, enabling them to trigger the 'release' of funds before losses were too great. While triggers for intervention were not pre-set or formalised, COOPAMOV's presence within the communities was important. As for slow-onset disasters, the intervention needs to happen before the expected spike in impacts, which is challenging to identify.

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*"With this mechanism the response is faster because we already have the proposal, the general plan of activities, and we already have the money so it's very quick to proceed. All we need is to follow up the situation of the communities, to update the information."*  
(Lucia Medina, former Programme Director, Trócaire Nicaragua)

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According to interviewees, this response enabled COOPAMOV to work and shift their mindset from intervening in reaction to intervening in anticipation of crises. In terms of impact, key

informants mentioned that the distribution mitigated and reduced potential harm and further loss. However, a response evaluation would be needed to assess whether the early action was early enough to prevent vulnerable households from enacting negative and difficult-to-revert coping strategies or to prevent the need for a response. The latter is a common challenge identified with early action, even when contingency funds (crisis modifiers) are included in budgets (K. Peters et al., 2017; USAID, 2015).

While other partners used the pre-positioned funding to respond to disasters with regular patterns of recurrence such as floods or windstorms, they did not engage in early actions. Interviews showed that the Anticipatory Action is still a relatively new concept and is not always well-understood.

## 3.2 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MODEL

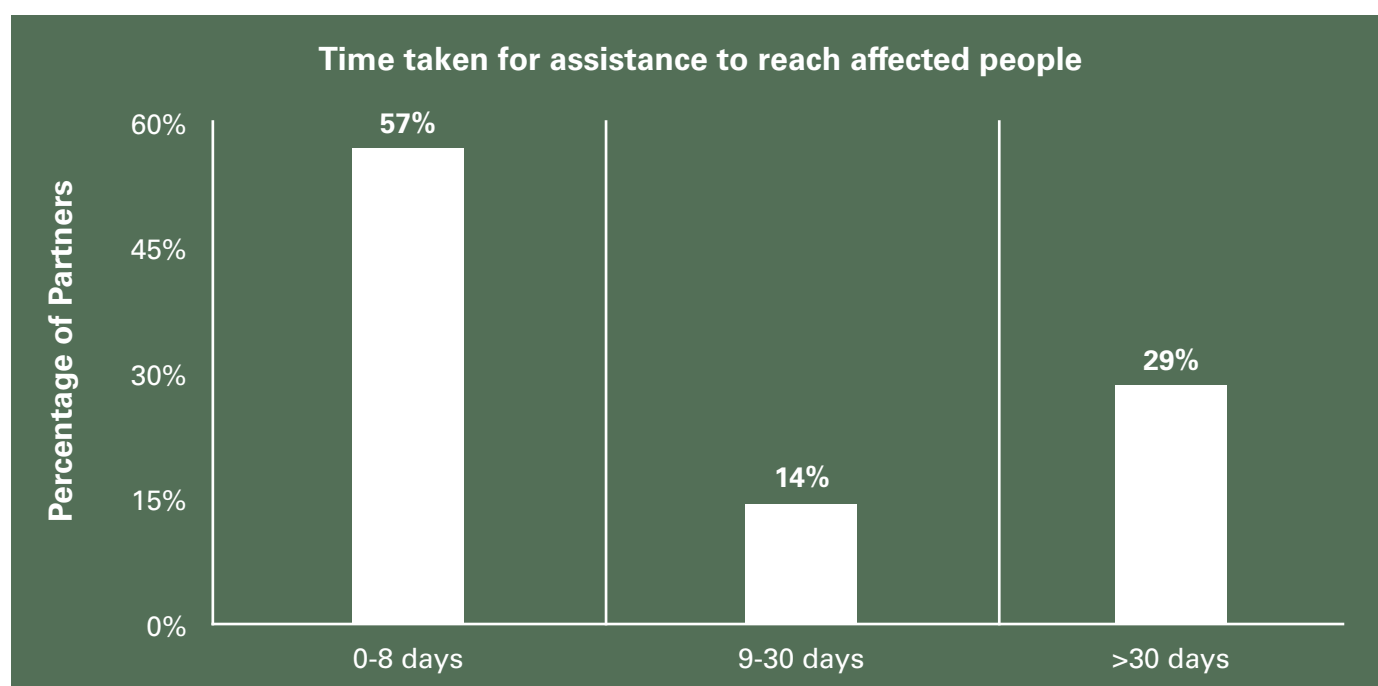
### 3.2.1 Timeliness of the model remains to be fully harnessed

Detailed observation and analysis from the initial experience in Sierra Leone and the four pilot countries raise a need to track the response timeliness more effectively. The exact timeline of each response has been challenging to collate as the information was not systematically

measured as this was not required when the model was first developed. The timeline exercise is a key part of the review process and should be supported by exact information before and during the implementation (see recommendations).

In all responses, pre-positioned funding has enabled timely needs assessments – within zero to three days after the crisis. This in turn led to the timely development and submission of concept notes and budgets to Trócaire to request the use of funds (ranging from one to five days). For two out of seven responses implemented in 2022, it took roughly a month for the partner to submit the proposal and budget after the needs assessment. Regarding the time for assistance to reach affected people (after the disaster or crisis strikes), four responses were initiated within one to eight days. The following graph shows the differences in timelines for the responses:

The reasons behind the delays have sometimes been unique to each country's context and partners' responses, but four main causes can be highlighted: i) delays in validating proposals or budgets due to Trócaire staffs' leave schedules and gaps in handover; ii) needs assessments and writing of analysis reports taking longer than anticipated; iii) the lack of dedicated humanitarian staff in partner organisations; and iv) operational and logistical challenges in accessing communities and transferring cash or resources.





Ugewize Janvier, Program Manager at Duhamic Adri, sensitising communities in Rutsiro district, Rwanda on how to react to and prevent losses during heavy rains.

The question around what is considered a timely response needs further unpacking within Trócaire and between Trócaire and its partners. However, when compared with other ways of working such as responding to emergencies through the Irish Aid ERF, the pre-positioned funding model stands out in terms of timeliness. In a recent study looking at the effectiveness of Trócaire's utilisation of the ERF, findings showed that it took on average 4.2 weeks to start responding to a crisis (Trócaire, 2022), compared to around three weeks for the pre-positioned funding. The Start Fund timeline can provide another good comparison benchmark.

However, in both cases – the Irish Aid ERF and the Start Fund – there is a need to understand the difference between 'starting a response' versus 'beginning implementation'. The Start fund manual states: *"(...) there is an expectation that activities must reach communities within seven days of that date (the funding decision)"* (Start Fund, 2020).

### 3.2.2 Limitations of Funding

Even for the smaller scale and localised responses, partners mentioned that funds were not enough. Because these crises were localised, they failed to attract external funding or even governmental support. Trócaire's partners often found themselves to be the only ones assessing and responding to the affected communities' needs, and the amount of pre-positioned funding often fell short in addressing those needs. As partners were embedded in the communities and often supported by local authorities and other local actors, they were able to address some of the shortfalls. At times, they needed to further restrict the vulnerability criteria or reduce the amount of cash support per individual/household in order to reach more people. A risk associated with being the only respondents is that partners might feel the pressure and urge to respond to any crisis, depleting the pre-positioned funding when a crisis of greater magnitude could occur later on. However, it may not be advisable to hold on to the funds in anticipation of larger crises as the pre-positioned funding has been most effective in facilitating localised responses to small scale crises, and larger crises would be likely to attract additional funding.



# 4. MORE THAN JUST A FUNDING MECHANISM: ADVANCING LOCALISATION



Duhamic Adri conducted a rapid needs and market assessment in communities affected by heavy rains in Rutsiro district, Rwanda, before deciding on cash transfers as the preferred form of support.

While the model was initially designed by the Trócaire Sierra Leone team to encourage timely responses for localised disasters or crises, it quickly became apparent that the impact of the funding mechanism goes beyond the mere timeliness for the partners and extends to other dimensions of the broader localisation agenda.

This section unpacks this impact through the lens of Trócaire's Partnership and Localisation Strategy, which identifies practical pathways to advancing localisation against four core areas: (i) voice and influence<sup>12</sup>, (ii) capacity strengthening<sup>13</sup>, (iii) quality of partnership<sup>14</sup>, and

<sup>12</sup>. Objective of Outcome 1: Increase voice and influence of local and national partners in key spaces nationally and internationally.

<sup>13</sup>. Objective of Outcome 2: Provide more effective capacity strengthening support for our local and national partners and more opportunities for two-way capacity strengthening.

<sup>14</sup>. Objective of Outcome 3: Ensure equitable partnerships with local and national actors, based on mutuality, respect, and reciprocal accountability.

(iv) funding and resources<sup>15</sup>. The pre-positioned funding model's impacts along these four pillars are interlinked, with one impact often fostering or triggering another.

## 4.1 VOICE AND INFLUENCE

*"The active participation and leadership of local actors enriches and contextualises discussions and decision-making, while also benefiting these organisations in terms of access to information, visibility, and potential funding opportunities."* (Trócaire, 2021a)

The pre-positioned funding model hands power to the local/national partner, who has the agency to decide when and how to intervene

<sup>15</sup>. Objective of Outcome 4: Local and national partners receive increased quantity and quality of funding and resources from Trócaire and other sources.

rather than having an international organisation directing them on when or how to respond. It also cultivates partners' responsibility to be timelier and more responsive. By enabling partners to conduct and often lead rapid needs assessments, the pre-positioned funding boosted partners' abilities to be active from the onset and to get first-hand data to design and influence their respective responses as opposed to relying on others' information, which also made a difference in terms of their ability to influence decisions. The pre-positioned funding enabled partners to not only engage but be considered as key actors in existing coordination platforms at their district level. A number of clear examples underpin this impact:

**In Sierra Leone**, during COVID-19, both KADDRO and AAD-SL, because of their rapid response through the pre-positioned funding and Trócaire's advocacy support, were nominated as co-leads of their district-level coordination structures despite the initial intent of the Government to have an INGO assume this leadership. This meant that partners played a prominent role on a day-to-day basis in engaging with both authorities and other national and international actors involved in the COVID-19 response. During the pandemic, Ministers visited the quarantine centres supported by KADDRO and acknowledged their capacity not only regarding the quality of their work but also their leading role in the coordination structures.

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*"The biggest impact, the most surprising impact, was seeing those changes in the coordination structures and the level of respect towards the partners that went beyond the common narrative of local partners being confined to doing jingles, towards local partners having the capacity to lead an effective response."*

(Michael Solis, Global Director - Partnership & Localisation, Trócaire)

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Post the COVID-19 pandemic and KADDRO and AAD-SL's emergency responses, both partners are still acting as NGO representatives in their respective districts. An external stakeholder pointed out how key AAD-SL had become in coordinating and engaging local actors and relevant authorities at both the City and District Council levels.



Distribution of food and non-food items by KMSS Pekhon to communities affected by conflict-related displacements in Pekhon and Pin Laung townships, Shan state, Myanmar.

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*"Aiding us in this response has proven to us that, indeed, AAD-SL are really what I will call dependable partners, they are partners that are reliable, trustworthy, and partners that we really value working with. The role they played from the coordination meeting, up to the assessment, the verification of the impact of the cash transfer for the windstorm victims demonstrated how responsible, how transparent AAD-SL is and how they are creating impact in our society."*

(Regional Coordinator, National Disaster Management Agency, Makeni district, Sierra Leone)

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**In Rwanda**, Caritas Nyundo recalls how the Minister in charge of disasters sent his team from Kigali straight to its office as he had learned about the partner's latest and timely response to floods. Caritas Nyundo was then asked to intervene by a mayor of another district, following the advice of the Minister. Both Caritas Nyundo and Duhamic Adri in Rwanda mentioned that having pre-positioned funds enables them to be part of the humanitarian coordination and discussions alongside bigger international organisations such as UNHCR.



Local partners reported having not only a voice but being listened to when proposing ideas. This simultaneously provided them with greater influence while strengthening their confidence to speak up.

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*“Before, when an emergency strikes, usually, the local authorities would call upon different actors, both international and local actors, to support. But if you don’t have any resources at all, how do you come up or raise your voice and say I’m able to do this?”*

(Modeste Sibomana, Programme Manager, Trócaire Rwanda, Trócaire).

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**In Malawi**, similarly, the pre-positioned funding, though limited compared to the scale of Cyclone Ana, enabled CICOD to ‘get a seat at the table’. CICOD was able to enter and share information at the cluster level, something that Trócaire in country wants to solidify further to help the partner raise its profile but also drive some of the narratives around local partners’ capacities. Because of its close collaboration with relevant authorities, CICOD managed to swiftly fill key gaps like the transportation and installation of already donated mobile latrines. Key informants strongly believed that, without the pre-positioned funding, this would not have happened.

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*“Because of that (pre-positioned) funding, we were quickly made a member of the District Civil Protection Committee, which makes the decisions whenever there is an emergency and in terms of preparedness and response. We also entered the WASH cluster.”*

(Edward Hole, Program Manager, CICOD)

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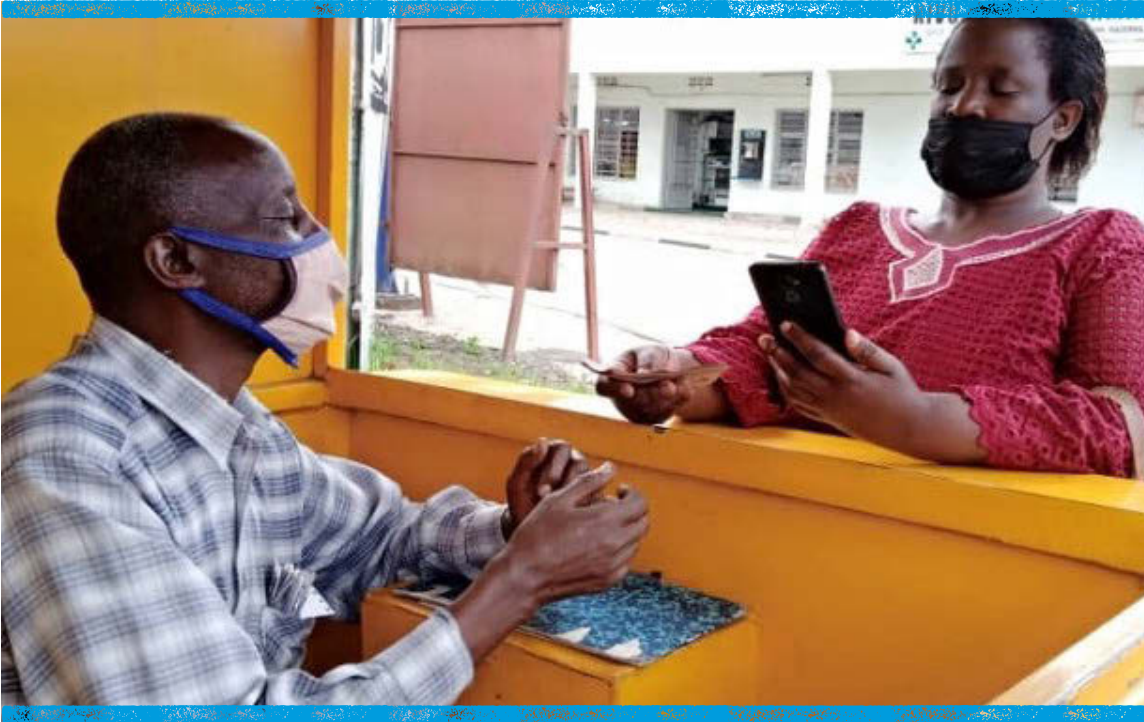
These examples demonstrated that the pre-positioned funding has enabled local partners to solidify their organisations’ strategic positions when it comes to humanitarian responses in their respective operational districts, something that was less true in countries where relationships with authorities were more problematic or sensitive. However, this recognition and greater visibility was double-edged. A number of key informants voiced the pressure that accompanied such recognition.

Therefore, there seems to be a risk that the partners become the de-facto first responder and for governments to discharge that responsibility on them. This can challenge partners to assess when to respond and that the pre-positioned funds are going to the right place. In the long-term, this pressure could get complicated without funding sources in general – the very thing giving them legitimacy with local and national authorities could end up being what compromises their legitimacy and positioning.

In addition, there were instances where the pre-positioned funds enabled local partners to showcase their capacity to actively participate in or lead coordination platforms, and respond to emergencies to other international stakeholders. A few partners reported that based on their work with the pre-positioned funding, other international organisations have reached out to them for partnership. For KADDRO, this helped support its expansion from one to two and eventually four districts, giving them a national geographic scope.



KADDRO supported communities with safe water as part of their COVID-19 response in Kambia district, Sierra Leone.



Caritas Nyundo provided cash assistance to 99 households affected by heavy rains, floods and landslides in Rubavu district, Rwanda using their pre-positioned funds.

## 4.2 CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Trócaire's pre-positioned funding model allowed partners to build on their existing capacities and showcase their ability to deliver a quality response to crises within a short timeframe. By giving partners access to pre-positioned funds and playing a supportive and, when needed, mentoring role, Trócaire strengthened the capacities of partners, who are seldom given the opportunity to decide, influence, coordinate, design, and respond rapidly to humanitarian crises. However, retaining staff with enhanced humanitarian capacities in the partner organisations proved challenging.

### 4.2.1 Equipping local partners to lead and deliver timely and quality humanitarian responses

All key informants emphasised that the pre-positioned funding model goes hand-in-hand with capacity strengthening and needs to be more systematically and specifically tied with emergency preparedness processes (such as the EPP) to maximise the impact of the fund. Three partners (AAD-SL, KADDRO and Duhamic Adri) had been part of Trócaire's SCORE project focused on humanitarian response capacities. Partners who had not undergone such comprehensive training had been trained to some extent on humanitarian preparedness,

cash transfer, and rapid needs assessments, among other areas, by Trócaire staff in country. Apart from the formal training, what came out strongly from the interviews is the ongoing mentoring and practical support of Trócaire staff in country.

**In Myanmar**, while Trócaire had been partnering with the KMSS national office before, it was the first time Trócaire worked with KMSS-Pekhon. The latter had not undergone specific emergency preparedness training before implementing the response using the pre-positioned funds. Trócaire Myanmar applied a mentoring approach throughout the process, from project design to implementation, emphasising the importance of respecting minimum international standards (such as SPHERE). They provided close accompaniment to KMSS-Pekhon and coached them to take critical and timely decisions, empowering them to come up with solutions themselves, rather than providing these to the partner. Trócaire Myanmar also facilitated a review and lessons learnt workshop<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Following the response with the pre-positioned funds, when the KMSS national office accessed another fund to continue responding to ongoing conflict-driven displacements, KMSS-Pekhon was given the responsibility for grant management because of their previous experience with the pre-positioned funds.



*“Trócaire’s staff were very supportive, they contacted our team almost every week and they exchanged on difficulties, the contextual changes, the need to adapt, etc. I personally learned a lot from Ma Wint Whar Htay, particularly when it comes to international humanitarian standards.”*

(Nobel Tu, Project Manager, KMSS-Pekhon)

**In Malawi**, prior to getting the pre-positioned funding, CICOD had undergone Trócaire’s Humanitarian Partner Capacity Assessment and Support process to identify the main technical areas that required strengthening. During the implementation, Trócaire provided support to the partner in terms of needs assessments, coordination, and procurement. **In Rwanda**, Trócaire closely supported one of the partners that was less experienced in cash transfer responses. Duhamic Adri in Rwanda reflected on the fact that previous emergency responses were conducted jointly with Trócaire and that this had prepared them to be able to assess, plan, and implement independently when they used the pre-positioned funding.

Finally, regarding emergency preparedness plans in particular, two partners reported that they drove the development of EPPs in their operational districts, which was also acknowledged and appreciated by external key informants.

#### 4.2.2 Maintaining humanitarian capacity in partner organisations

Across the five countries, and particularly in Sierra Leone where partners have done a series of emergency responses, experience showed that maintaining humanitarian capacities is a complex challenge. The latter is particularly true for countries where the focus is on development programming rather than protracted crises. Partners respond to humanitarian crises cyclically, which proved to be an issue when it comes to maintaining that particular set of skills. Partners that had finished the SCORE training in 2020 confirmed that they have not organised or benefitted from refresher trainings due to lack of time and resources. A few key informants highlighted that Trócaire’s in-country staff also needed training on humanitarian responses



AAD-SL helped equip police checkpoints and screening booths, including with infrared thermometers, as part of their COVID-19 response in Makoth village, Sierra Leone.

to be able to better support the partners, particularly when it comes to timeliness and mentoring throughout the response, or even to step in when the partners’ humanitarian focal point was not available.

The issue of staff retention and staff turnover cannot be glossed over when it comes to maintaining humanitarian capacity within partner organisations. Key informants mentioned it was a particular risk associated with this model that resulted in significant delays and targeting challenges in two recent responses in Sierra Leone. Several partners echoed the difficulty of staff retention, emphasising that when trained and empowered staff leave, humanitarian capacity is mostly lost for the organisation. One partner mentioned that not only staff, but board members were also trained (through the SCORE project), and some interviewees felt this would help retain the capacity within the organisation as the board members could help train new employees. Moreover, partners generally do not have a dedicated person to lead on emergency responses or keep the organisational EPP updated. In most cases, an existing programme manager will take on the additional workload, which in turn can lead to delays in responding and taking swift decisions.

## 4.3 QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP

*“Trócaire’s Keystone survey results have shown that our partners value the quality of their relationship with Trócaire, which they characterise as one of ‘trust, mutuality, complementarity and shared ownership.’”*  
(Trócaire, 2021)

Trust was the key element emphasised by key informants when reflecting on the pre-positioned funding model design and the choice of partners. Trust enabled the model to be flexible and successful. When designing the model in Sierra Leone, trust was the underlying factor enabling the team to navigate the system in a different way.

*“Another innovation in Sierra Leone was just how much trust there was because we had been engaged in a trusting relationship with these partners over a long period of time, and we could work with them in a very flexible way.”*  
(Michael Solis, Global Director - Partnership & Localisation, Trócaire)

While there was already trust between Trócaire and its partners, it expanded with the roll-out of the pre-positioned funding. Key informants reported that their day-to-day relationships with the partners evolved as a result of the model, with partners feeling motivated and appreciative of being trusted with pre-positioned funding.

*“Using this pre-positioned fund was for us, what I can say, this was to be trusted by Trócaire following the trainings, the capacity building received from the SCORE project, the joint implementation we did together, but also the checks on our work, the quality of the report we are producing, the quality of implementation at field level.”*

(Janvier Ugeziwe, Programme Manager, Duhamic Adri)

The pre-positioned funding model leveraged the complementarity between Trócaire and its partners to ensure that partners have a leading role in decision-making throughout the response cycle, but when they felt they needed the additional support, Trócaire played a supportive or even mentoring role. The skills and attitudes



KADDRO provided food and non-food items as part of their COVID-19 response in Kambia district, Sierra Leone.



that the staff bring at that intermediary level are therefore paramount to the success of a horizontal, equitable, and trust-based model. It is a model that – if resourced – could potentially be managed by L/NAs themselves.

Trust and flexibility are an integral part of Trócaire’s partnership model<sup>17</sup>, and Trócaire’s key informants did not emphasise any specific fiduciary risks associated with the model. Instead, they held the view that the risks were similar to other types of fundings, despite the fact that funds were pre-positioned in partners’ bank accounts without detailed plans on how they would be spent.

## 4.4 FUNDING AND RESOURCES

*“The main thing about localisation is putting the local actors at the forefront to be able to respond. With the pre-positioned funding, the partners already have the resources available and when the local authorities or communities are reaching out to them, they have all the confidence that they are able to offer support, that they are able to actually respond to the needs.”*

(Modeste Sibomana, Programme Manager, Trócaire Rwanda, Trócaire)

At a cursory level, L/NAs do have access to some direct funding opportunities, but these are often tied with complex due diligence processes, pre-financing conditions, and compliance requirements that L/NAs cannot meet due to lack of resources. Pooled funding mechanisms are often brought to the forefront when it comes to L/NAs’ direct access to humanitarian funding, but even pooled funding can have restricted access. For example, Start funding is only accessible to members of Start, more than half of whom are INGOs, although an increasing number of L/NAs are now gaining membership. One key informant added that accessing Start grants requires a lot of work in terms of going through the alert process, designing a concept note in twenty-four hours, and engaging in the

<sup>17</sup> Trócaire’s partnerships are based on five overarching principles, including Principle 3 ‘Relationships are based on Trust, Accountability, and Transparency’ and Principle 4 ‘Partnerships are based on Mutual Commitment and Flexibility.’

Skype conversations, which local partners find hard to cope with due to the lack of dedicated resources. A number of Trócaire’s partners have benefitted from Start grants but always through Trócaire. One partner staff compared their experience of responding to ongoing displacements through Trócaire’s pre-positioned funding to their experience with the country-based pooled fund and emphasised how difficult it was to navigate the compliance requirements and complex processes under the conditions of the latter, impeding the agility of their response.

As evidenced in this report and reflected in Trócaire’s Partnership and Localisation Strategy, funding is only one dimension for enabling equitable partnerships, but it is a core dimension as it has the potential to have ripple effects on other dimensions. The quality of funding matters. According to key informants from partner organisations, the quality of funding is intertwined with lighter compliance and due diligence requirements and thus with the **quality of the partnership** itself. While limited in amount, Trócaire’s pre-positioned funding enables partners to have access to **predictable, timely, and flexible funding**, which can be used to leverage additional funds.



KMSS Pekhon provided non-food items including blankets and mattresses as part of their support to communities affected by conflict-related displacements in Pekhon and Pin Laung townships, Shan state, Myanmar.

# 5. CONCLUSION



KMSS Pekhon distributed food items to communities affected by conflict-related displacements in Pekhon and Pin Laung townships, Shan state, Myanmar

This research aimed to document learnings from the pre-positioned funding model – an innovative funding mechanism that pre-positions funds directly with local partners **to respond to or anticipate crises** in their operational areas. After a successful roll-out in Sierra Leone in 2020, Trócaire refined and deployed the model in four additional countries in 2021.

Since 2020, seven local partners across five countries have benefited from €10,000 to €20,000 of pre-positioned funding. Most of the partners responded to localised emergencies such as floods, a windstorm, and fire incidents. Two partners responded to larger-scale emergencies (cyclone, conflict-led displacements) and one partner engaged in early action for a slow-onset disaster (drought). While the potential for timely response remains to be fully harnessed, in most responses pre-positioning funding to local partners boosted **the timeliness of service delivery to affected populations**. By stripping back levels of bureaucracy and thanks to its decentralised decision-making, the pre-positioned funding model enabled **adaptive programming** more closely **aligned with communities' needs**. Partners were able to implement agile

responses in rapidly changing situations where otherwise complex, compliance-heavy funding mechanisms would have impacted the provision of assistance to communities. When responding to larger-scale crises, partners' ability to rapidly engage in needs assessments and their early responses with pre-positioned funds resulted in the **leveraging of additional funding** to scale up or continue their responses. When responding to localised crises, pre-positioned funding enabled partners to **strengthen their social standing** with both communities and local/national authorities. Moreover, local partners were able to collate and mobilise other resources thanks to their existing networks and relationships with relevant L/NAs and communities, making the sum bigger than the parts.

Furthermore, the research found that the pre-positioned funding – despite its relatively small scale – had knock-on effects on Trócaire's four core areas of Partnership and Localisation. Having access to **predictable, timely, and flexible funding** meant that local partners were able to engage with, and in some cases, have a prominent role in local or regional coordination structures and take part in and influence decision-making.



The latter is an important step towards more inclusive coordination structures, as having local partners co-leading or actively participating in coordination structures could have the potential to bring in more local actors.

While all local organisations involved in the pre-positioned funding model were Trócaire's pre-existing partners who had benefited from a range of formal and informal training, the pre-positioned funding model was accompanied by support and mentoring from Trócaire's in-country teams, particularly around emergency preparedness and monitoring. The model, therefore, worked with local development partners with **embedded humanitarian capabilities**. Staff retention, as well as structural and resourcing barriers, were challenges highlighted by both Trócaire and its partners to maintain the humanitarian capacities, particularly for countries that do not have ongoing humanitarian programming.

**Trust** between Trócaire and its partners enabled the model, and this trust was strengthened as a result of the model's roll-out, while also helping to minimise risks along the way. Prior to the pre-positioned funding, none of the partners benefitted from direct flexible funding to respond to or anticipate crises from any of their donors, not to mention pre-positioned funds. The pre-

positioned funding was regarded by the partners as **quality funding** due to its flexible and user-led nature and a core dimension fostering equitable partnerships. The sustainability of the pre-positioned funding impacts on the legitimacy and the positioning of local partners – particularly when funds will not be available – remains to be monitored.

While funding is only one dimension of Trócaire's Partnership and Localisation strategy, it constitutes a significant tool to contribute to Trócaire's efforts to balance power dynamics to the benefit of local partners. In a context where the role of INGOs from the Global North – often referred to as intermediaries – is increasingly being questioned, the issue of the quantity and quality of funding also relates to the interrogation of the present and future role of international organisations within the humanitarian and development system. With knock-on impacts on other dimensions supporting locally-led humanitarian action, new ways of working ought to shift towards both increasing the quantity and quality of funding to L/NAs. Models such as Trócaire's pre-positioned funding – which have the potential to leverage the complementarity between L/NAs and international organisations while enabling early, timely, responsive, and locally-led humanitarian action – need to be further explored and scaled up.



AAD-SL distributed non-food items to communities in Mabanta, Sierra Leone as part of their COVID-19 response.

# 6. RECOMMENDATIONS



Duhamic Adri conducted community sensitization sessions on how to react and prevent losses in times of heavy rains as part of their support to communities affected by heavy rains in Rutsiro district, Rwanda.

## TO TRÓCAIRE

### 1. Expand the roll-out of the pre-positioned funding model across other country offices

The pilot proved that the model's in-built flexibility has significant potential to support Trócaire's journey towards supporting efficient, locally-led humanitarian action. With trust between partners at its core, the model also enabled the mitigation and minimising of risks, which too often inhibit flexibility. Trócaire should look to widen the adoption of this model across various country offices, where the contexts allow for it.

### 2. Maximising the potential for timely response

- **Agree on benchmarks regarding what constitutes a timely response.** A specific Key Performance Indicator demonstrating how timely or effective a pre-positioned funding response is would further support internal learning and review processes while providing Trócaire with objective data that can be used for advocacy with donors on the value of such models<sup>18</sup>. Expectations

<sup>18</sup>. For example: Percentage of responses carried out using pre-positioned funding that reached affected people within seven days of the funds being approved.

regarding the timeline of the response should be incorporated into guidelines for country teams and partners, and project templates should be updated to collect this information at the reporting stage.

- **Develop a guidance document for the Pre-positioned Funding approach tailored to partners.** The current guidance document is intended for Trócaire's country offices. A similar document designed for local partners as the main audience will be useful. It could include concrete examples of early action to support partners' understanding of the concept and encourage preparedness activities.
- ### 3. Fostering a culture of anticipation
- **Emergency Preparedness Plans and Contingency Plans should be developed with partners to harness the potential for timely response and anticipatory action.** Trócaire could identify resources to support partners to develop and update their EPPs. In addition, contingency plans for the highest-rating risks (such as floods, droughts, conflict-led displacements, etc.)



should be developed to embolden partners to be proactive and to react in time or in anticipation of crises, supported by the co-identification of triggers. Investing in and fostering the operational readiness of partners will be key to improving the timeliness of their responses or early intervention. This will avoid missing the critical window of opportunity that can render the response or the early action ineffective.

- **Raise further awareness or organise trainings for both Trócaire and partner staff on anticipatory action.** Provide concrete guidance and examples on what early action covers for imminent crisis, sudden-onset disaster, and slow-onset disaster. When validating applications for pre-positioned funding, engage with countries prone to both rapid and slow onset disaster to encourage a discussion around early action. Anticipatory action will require the guidance or training to define – i) activities that can have an impact within the set window of opportunity, ii) thresholds and triggers depending on the type of disaster (for example food-security forecast/ Infection Prevention Control phases, hydro-meteorological forecast, review of previous disasters' impacts, etc.) to help partners know when to intervene.

#### 4. Resourcing capacity strengthening

- By striving to **systematically include an emergency preparedness line in institutional funding budgets** where possible or relevant, Trócaire could resource refresher training or partners' new staff training needs due to turnover. Alternatively, for countries applying the pre-positioned funding model, a **requirement to dedicate a small amount of money from their unrestricted funding budget for partners' humanitarian capacity strengthening** could be considered.

#### 5. Dissemination and ongoing learning

**Build on this report and further evidence from the roll-out** of the pre-positioned funding model **to advocate for more direct and flexible funding to L/NAs.** To do so, setting up Key Performance Indicators (on timeliness, for example) would help underpin the



AAD-SL conducting verifications before the distribution of e-sim cards to people affected by windstorms in Makeni, Sierra Leone.

qualitative evidence obtained through reviews. Additionally, carry out follow-up learning processes periodically to assess whether the gains highlighted in this report are sustained in subsequent crises.

#### TO LOCAL PARTNERS

- **Ensure that the organisation's humanitarian capacity is maintained.** Despite existing financial constraints, local partners could take several actions to sustain their capacity to be first responders when a crisis occurs in their areas:
  - Document the impact and learning of the pre-positioned funding and use it for external visibility and dissemination to other potential donors or partners.
  - Diversify the support and funding for the further development or maintenance of humanitarian capacities within the organisation by advocating and proposing to include a dedicated budget line for this in other programmes.
  - Prioritise investing in operational readiness and preparedness to be able to respond in a timely manner to crises as they occur (development and regular updates of EPPs, contingency plans, etc.).
  - 'Strategise' capacity strengthening by prioritising investments in core staff members who are less likely to have short-term contracts and build systems for knowledge transfer within the organisation.

## TO DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

- **Walk the talk on renewed global commitments to provide more funding opportunities fit for L/NAs and give them the opportunity to lead and shape humanitarian responses.** Internal limitations faced by donors, such as the lack of resources to vet and handle multiple contracts with L/NAs, should not stop donors from providing quality funding to L/NAs. Direct funding is not the only way for L/NAs to get high-quality flexible funding: intermediaries or INGOs committed to pursuing **equitable or fair partnerships** can provide a solution (OECD, 2017a). Risks associated with this model are minimal as local partners have been pre-vetted and pre-qualified due to their ongoing funding relationships, as demonstrated by Trócaire's pre-positioned funding model. While the model is light touch and simple, the requirements associated with the model enable upward accountability on how the funds have been used. Trócaire's pre-positioned funding model provides donors with a possible approach for **decentralising pre-positioned funds further down the line** to remove barriers to direct funding to L/NAs and supporting locally-led humanitarian action.



Communities supported by CICOD in Chikwawa district needed to be evacuated in the aftermath of Cyclone Ana, which hit Malawi in January 2022.

- **INGOs working in partnership models are encouraged to adopt a similar model with their local and national partners** to (i) enable more locally-led responses, (ii) mitigate risks associated with timeliness due to mobility issues or the lack of immediate funding to respond to localised and under-the-radar crises; and (iii) invest in a simple, relatively easy-to-implement approach that has significant knock-on effects on advancing localisation.
- **Within long-term development funding streams, increase the possibility for INGOs and local partners to access contingency funds or include crisis modifier elements.** The case for crisis modifiers has been made for several years,<sup>19</sup> but this flexibility is particularly important as the line between humanitarian response and development is blurred for L/NAs embedded within their communities. Funding models for these need to calibrate compliance and accountability requirements properly to ease early, timely, and locally-led responses to crises when they occur. Funding for L/NAs' capacity strengthening on preparedness should be included to ensure they are equipped to anticipate and respond.
- **Be a champion in piloting or scaling up funding models designed for and with L/NAs.** Access to funding is a top constraint for L/NAs to lead and shape humanitarian responses (ICVA, 2020; David Ainsworth, 2022), as well as their ability to contribute to **thought leadership on the localisation of the humanitarian and development system.** Donors should ensure L/NAs have the means like their INGO counterparts to have voice and influence on the future of the humanitarian and development system.

<sup>19</sup> See K.Peters et al. (2017), OECD (2017a), OECD (2017b), USAID (2015), Mercy Corps (2021), etc.



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# ANNEX 1: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

ORGANISATION	JOB TITLE
Trócaire Global Hub on Partnership & Localisation	Global Director - Partnership & Localisation
Trócaire Head Office	Humanitarian Manager - Operations
Trócaire Head Office	Head of Humanitarian Programmes
Trócaire Rwanda	Programme Manager
Trócaire Malawi	Climate Justice and DRM Officer
Trócaire Malawi	Programme Manager
Trócaire Myanmar	WASH Coordinator
Trócaire Myanmar	Humanitarian Programme Officer
Trócaire Nicaragua (closed office)	Former Programme Manager
Trócaire Sierra Leone	Organizational Development Program Officer
Trócaire Sierra Leone	Business Development Compliance Manager
KADDRO	Disaster Focal Person
AAD-SL	Program Director
AAD-SL	Disaster Focal Person
CICOD	Programme Manager
COOPAMOV	Programme Manager
Caritas Nyundo	Project Officer
Duhamic Adri	Programme Manager
KMSS-Pekhon	Project Manager
Sierra Leone Red Cross	Branch Manager
Sierra Leone Red Cross	Branch Manager
National Disaster Management Agency Makeni, Sierra Leone	Regional Coordinator
National Disaster Management Agency Rutsiro, Rwanda	Disaster Management Officer
Start Network	Country Support Manager
Start Network	Risk Analysis Advisor, Crisis Anticipation and Risk Financing.
Poverty Action	Consultant



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