

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Humanitarian capacity exchange in a fragile context: a review of the Tearfund–CRUDAN model of engagement in north-east Nigeria



tearfund

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1. Definitions and acronyms

Note: A number of key definitions have been taken from *Accelerating localisation through partnerships*.¹

- **CRUDAN**: Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria
- **DRA**: Dutch Relief Alliance, a partnership of Dutch NGOs in humanitarian action, which received funding from the Dutch government for joint responses for both protracted crises, acute crises and innovation projects in humanitarian action
- **Humanitarian action**: preparedness, response and recovery programming, including certain aspects of resilience programming but not development actions
- **ICR**: internal cost recovery, an allowed contribution (in a budget) towards an organisation's overhead costs
- **INGO**: international NGO, founded and headquartered in the global North, often with national offices in the countries in which it operates
- **JDF**: Jiroo Doo Foundation, a national NGO in Nigeria
- **Partnership**: the relationship between international humanitarian actors (especially INGOs and NNGOs) whereby the international actors work with, support and resource the national and local actors to design and implement (in this case) humanitarian preparedness and response programming
- **Localisation**: a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision-making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations
- **NJR**: Nigeria Joint Response, a consortium of DRA agencies responding together in north-east Nigeria with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **NNGO and LNGO**: national or local non governmental organisations. All local, national and regional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (including Red Cross National Societies) that are founded and headquartered in the global South. Excluded are governments, southern chapters/offices/branches of INGOs founded and headquartered in the global North, the private sector and diaspora

2. Executive summary

The Executive Summary can be found here:

learn.tearfund.org/shouldertoshoulder_summaryreport

¹ *4 country report: Accelerating localisation through partnerships*, 2018, Turnbull et al, p. 11

3. Research rationale

In 2015, Tearfund embarked upon a new way of working with the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN), one of its long-standing development partners in Nigeria. Tearfund is a partnership-focused international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that aims to respond through national partners wherever possible. As CRUDAN had historically focused almost exclusively on long-term development work, its experience in disaster response was limited. The new 'model' of working was therefore intended to support CRUDAN to strengthen its capacity to respond to emergency needs brought about by the Boko Haram crisis in the north of the country and involved the establishment of a Tearfund base and accompaniment team with an intentionally small, capacity-strengthening focused footprint. The model supported CRUDAN to take the lead on implementation, with Tearfund remaining in close proximity, occupying a hands-on advisory/supportive role.

As advocates for the localisation of humanitarian response, Tearfund and CRUDAN wish to document and reflect upon the journey they have undertaken together, in order to identify learning for the benefit of both organisations as well as the wider localisation 'movement'.

This research therefore seeks to examine the nature of Tearfund and CRUDAN's model of partnership in northern Nigeria, with a view to contributing to the evidence base for the localisation of disaster response. In addition, it is anticipated that the research will provide inputs for Tearfund's development of an Operational Support Model for work in complex fragile states, as well as feeding into the ongoing development of Tearfund's Disaster Management Capacity Assessment programme for partners.

4. Summary of key findings

(See section 8 for full details.)

- **Relationships and trust** are critical when embarking upon a new, intensified model of working which is likely to produce episodes of disagreement and conflict.
- **Attitudes** towards partnership, learning, localisation and capacity strengthening are key. International NGOs (INGOs) should hire staff who 'walk the talk'.
- **Investment** is needed for partnership models focused on capacity strengthening to succeed.
- **Influence and visibility** are important for both national NGOs (NNGOs) and INGOs and maintaining an appropriate balance between the two is important.
- **Time** – change is not achieved over a project cycle or donor funding period.
- **Capacity-strengthening approach** – accompaniment and 'learning by doing', achieved through working in close proximity, were the most effective approaches.
- **INGO capacity** – INGOs should have their own houses in order, to ensure they can provide high-quality, consistent support.

- **Sustainability** – capacity strengthening should include a focus on corporate systems, culture and practice in order to institutionalise capacity.
- **Overheads** – more consideration should be given as to how internal cost recoveries (ICRs) are split when funding is secured via one or more intermediary INGOs to ensure NNGOs are adequately supported.
- **Exit plan** – an exit or transition plan should be considered from the outset in order to ensure that INGO support adapts as NNGO capacity is strengthened.

5. Research framework

5.1 Research questions

The research has a strong localisation lens, for the reasons outlined in section 3, and aims to explore the questions outlined below:

- **Partnership/model:**
 - How was the response model initially conceptualised and what was the eventual outcome/final model?
 - Was Tearfund’s working model/relationship with CRUDAN evidence of a better, more genuine, ‘partnership’ (less of a subcontracting relationship)?
 - What were the barriers and facilitators to a genuine partnership?
 - What were the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regards to the model?
 - How efficient and effective was the resultant work?
- **Visibility:**
 - To what extent was there greater recognition and visibility for the efforts, roles, innovations and achievements of CRUDAN as a local actor?
 - What were the barriers and facilitators here?
- **Capacities:**
 - To what extent was effective support provided to strengthen CRUDAN’s capacity?
 - Were any local capacities undermined?
 - What were the barriers and facilitators?
- **Funding:**
 - How (if at all) did better and more direct funding contribute towards a more localised response (eg more direct (to national partners), longer-term, more flexible/covering core costs)?
 - What were the barriers and facilitators?

5.2 Methodology

The research consisted of a literature review and interviews. The literature review considered in excess of 40 documents including external papers on localisation together with internal strategies, evaluations, project documents and visit reports. The literature review was followed by 16 semi-structured interviews with current and past CRUDAN and Tearfund staff, Tear Netherlands staff, and the Nigeria DRA Consortium Coordinator (employed by Save the Children).

All interviews were recorded with the explicit permission of the interviewees; however job titles have been used instead of names and in some cases, quotations have been anonymised to protect the privacy of the interviewee.

5.3 Limitations

This is a remote piece of work, which primarily focused on interviews and documents relating to CRUDAN and Tearfund. Affected communities were not interviewed during this process, therefore their perspective is not captured directly (though indirect evidence from evaluations is included). The DRA Consortium Coordinator was interviewed; however other consortium members were not.

Capacity is difficult to measure in empirical terms: a clear baseline (for CRUDAN's organisational capacity) was not established at the outset of the model, therefore it is not possible to measure capacity gains using specific measures; however there are strong proxy indications of significant capacity gains, which are included in this report.

While the author of the report has not been involved in any work in Nigeria (past or present), she is a Tearfund staff member, therefore it should be recognised that there is a possibility that this could have influenced some interview answers.

6. Background to the CRUDAN–Tearfund model

Tearfund is a Christian international relief and development agency working alongside local churches and other locally based organisations in over 50 countries. Established in 1968, Tearfund works with more than 350 local partners, including churches and civil society organisations, focused in the world's poorest countries.

CRUDAN was formed in 1990 following the merger of two long-standing Christian organisations in Nigeria. CRUDAN is a Christian interdenominational NNGO which operates as a membership organisation: its members comprise churches, Christian organisations and individuals engaged or interested in development work in Nigeria.

Tearfund and CRUDAN have worked in partnership for a number of years, primarily focusing on development needs within the country. The establishment of Tearfund and CRUDAN's operational model in northern Nigeria was precipitated by a desire to respond to growing humanitarian needs as

a result of the Boko Haram crisis, and subsequently galvanised by a funding opportunity which emerged via the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA).

Tearfund's preferred mode of response is to operate through national partners wherever possible and while CRUDAN had almost exclusively focused on long-term development work, it expressed a strong interest in developing its expertise in disaster response. According to one interviewee: 'Tearfund didn't want to go fully operational in response to the Boko Haram emergency; they didn't want a situation where, once the humanitarian response work was over, [the] partners were nowhere to be found. They wanted a situation in which the humanitarian capacity of the partners could be built at the same time as they maintained their capacity for development work.'² From CRUDAN's perspective there was a clear desire to respond to the needs in its country, coupled with an attitude of learning. The idea to respond 'didn't come entirely from Tearfund – there was a necessity on the ground. The insurgency had been going on, there was nothing that was happening there... we had to help somewhere. So when Tearfund said, "we are thinking of going to the north-east to do humanitarian work," we said "yes"... One of CRUDAN's values is that we are a learning organisation, so we don't run away from things.'³

What eventually emerged was a highly flexible operational model with a capacity-strengthening component focused on accompaniment and mentoring. CRUDAN took the lead in terms of implementation, with Tearfund occupying a close, supportive role. According to a Tearfund interviewee, the model was 'more fluid than I first expected, but this has been very helpful. CRUDAN... is a core part of the work, an important, key actor. At the same time they understand that they are undergoing a learning process.'⁴ Another interviewee noted that 'Tearfund works very closely with [CRUDAN], especially in terms of sharing office space, so that there is constant interaction, engagement and feedback. We can pass information to them, and they can ask questions of us, in real-time... face-to-face. In other INGO–NNGO partnerships, the main mode of working together is by sending emails.'⁵

Tearfund's team in the north-east was (by 2016) comprised of three staff members (a Disaster Response Manager, a Project Coordinator, and a Finance Advisor), all of whom worked alongside a similar or mirror role in CRUDAN, providing technical advice and support. The CRUDAN–Tearfund operational model in northern Nigeria shared resources, including offices and vehicles, as well as training and capacity-strengthening opportunities, with Tearfund providing global technical advisors and surge support as required.

² Tearfund Nigeria Country Representative.

³ CRUDAN Chief Executive (CEO).

⁴ Tearfund Nigeria Project Officer.

⁵ Tearfund Nigeria Programme Manager.

7. Analysis

7.1 Partnership/model

A number of factors led to the creation of Tearfund and CRUDAN's model of working in northern Nigeria. CRUDAN staff recalled that, despite the fact it is a development organisation, CRUDAN had a desire to respond to increasing need in the north of the country. It had previously responded on a small scale to humanitarian needs (prior to the conflict-related crisis in the north-east) which had arisen in communities in which it had been working longer term; however according to CRUDAN's Disaster Response Coordinator, past responses had been carried out, 'without the necessary tools and based on preconceptions of what was needed'.⁶

From Tearfund's perspective, while the need to respond to the conflict-driven crisis in the north-east was clear, the model for doing so was not. With no experienced humanitarian response partners in its portfolio, there was an option to set up a direct operational response; however the strong preference was to engage and strengthen national capacity if possible. Partner assessments were carried out and while CRUDAN had limited experience in disaster response, it was otherwise considered to be a high-capacity partner. Thus the decision was taken (in conjunction with CRUDAN) to pursue a model of working that involved CRUDAN taking the lead in terms of implementation and Tearfund in a supporting role. Funding from the DRA (as part of a consortium) was secured, and work commenced in 2015.

The first year was described as extremely challenging by almost all those interviewed, for a number of reasons:

1. At the project design stage, Tearfund's initial plan was to have a single support role on the ground – a Disaster Response Manager – supplemented by remote (regional/global) finance, logistics and thematic/technical support. However Tearfund struggled to recruit the Disaster Response Manager and as a consequence, the project commenced without this vital position in place for several months.
2. Tearfund's capacity assessments were felt (in hindsight) to be inadequate in accurately ascertaining CRUDAN's abilities, skills and gaps. CRUDAN's CEO recollected that, 'expectations from the Dutch Relief Alliance were higher than we had thought. When reporting started, there were issues that came up, identified as things that CRUDAN could not deliver.'⁷ The support model Tearfund had intended (a single role on the ground plus remote support) was therefore felt to be insufficient.
3. Project implementation was hampered in the first year by a lack of agility with regards to CRUDAN's own corporate processes and systems, which had not been designed with emergency response timeframes in mind.

⁶ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

⁷ CRUDAN CEO.

Tearfund's Senior Finance Business Partner reflected that Phase 1 was a 'learning process for all of us. The project started in April/May and I was supporting remotely from Nairobi. In October/November, we were due to send an interim financial report to the donor and it [became obvious] that the partner had spent less than 10 per cent of the funding. It... woke us up... we realised that we'd possibly expected the partner to do much more than they were capable of. And that's when the idea of Tearfund having a small presence... in the area where the project was being implemented came about.'⁸

The aforementioned concerns over progress in the first year led to the gradual establishment of a small support team (of three Tearfund staff members) located in the north-east, including the awaited Disaster Response Manager, in order to support CRUDAN in its implementation on the ground, and to ensure a greater degree of oversight. While CRUDAN accepted the higher level of Tearfund involvement, it was not entirely appreciated at the outset, with some staff in CRUDAN feeling 'policed'. The new model came as a result of perceived failings in CRUDAN's early work, thus CRUDAN's Disaster Response Coordinator noted that, 'the support model was not welcomed at first... staff felt like they were being policed instead of supported. They didn't agree with [the assessment which suggested work was not meeting required standards]. However in retrospect, the support model has been really beneficial. If it had been birthed out of a capacity assessment and a joint plan from the outset it would have been better received. Expectations also were not clear at the start in terms of deliverables.'⁹ Tearfund's Project Coordinator in the north-east similarly reflected that in the beginning, 'everyone was overwhelmed, and many of them felt, "why are you harassing us?"' It was only in April 2016, when someone from Donor Compliance visited, that they understood and their eyes really opened – they understood that there were things that they needed to do in order to be compliant.'¹⁰

The new model gained traction as supportive relationships were established between the Tearfund team and CRUDAN staff, with the latter still afforded primary responsibility for implementation. Numerous CRUDAN staff, including the Reporting and Communications Officer, attributed the success of the model in part to 'the freedom [Tearfund] gives for us to grow – I don't think other NGOs have that – I don't think they undergo the same level of capacity growth. We are given the liberty to learn and to grow because of the responsibility that is given to us and the confidence Tearfund has in allowing us to do the work we do.'¹¹ According to the DRA Consortium Coordinator, '[the model is] different because this is a long-term investment. It is led by the local organisation; Tearfund works as a facilitator for them to realise their capacities. The partnership is focused on finding solutions that are beyond a budget timeline or a donor timeline. It's about long-term sustainability. The fact that there's a technical person available to work through the process with CRUDAN is very significant. People are able to be guided on a day-to-day basis rather than a get in/get out model.'¹²

⁸ Tearfund Senior Finance Business Partner.

⁹ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

¹⁰ Tearfund Project Coordinator for NE Nigeria.

¹¹ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

¹² DRA Consortium Coordinator.

CRUDAN staff noted that they quickly started to see the benefits of the new, 'more intense' working model, recognising that they learned valuable new skills: 'The relationship has been, I would say, very helpful because CRUDAN has grown so much, to the point where we are now independent and can source funds somewhere else... Tearfund really, really modelled and mentored CRUDAN, so well that CRUDAN is doing far, far better than many of the NGOs you find in Nigeria right now, especially in the north-east.'¹³

Tearfund supported CRUDAN with a variety of short- and long-term technical and support roles; however CRUDAN noted that Tearfund's guidance was not always consistent, especially in the first year: 'We received conflicting advice: different people visited, and looking back, they were probably learning themselves; because they all spoke in different ways into the project. One person would come and say "no, you are not doing it correctly, you should do it this way". Then they would go back, we would start doing it that way, and then another person would come and say "no"... One person came at one point, and changed everything [in the proposal], then after a while, another person came and changed everything. So... was it our own ignorance? Was it different expectations, different cultures, different perspectives, all conflicting? I can see that this is what was happening.'¹⁴

At the end of the first year, an external evaluation of the Nigeria Joint Response Consortium work noted that: 'the local partners demonstrated fragile capacities as well as knowledge of the core arenas and dimensions of humanitarian programming. Their understanding and application of the approaches to community based humanitarian programming was somewhat rudimentary and may require concerted efforts to improve capacity to meet the need of humanitarian programming. It is unlikely that most of the local implementing NGOs will be able to operate independently, even if given adequate resources to lead and manage the humanitarian response without external support.'

¹⁵ While it should be recognised that the evaluation spoke in general terms rather than of CRUDAN specifically, it was nevertheless indicative of the capacity challenges faced. Despite this, the evaluation found that overall, 'the NJR1 was effective in delivery of its proposed outputs which were appropriate and relevant to the humanitarian context and local needs of the beneficiaries'.¹⁶

Despite the slow and challenging start, CRUDAN completed the first year of the project and funding was secured for a subsequent year. Interviewees across the board noted that the closer working model allowed for hands-on accompaniment and support in real time, while still allowing CRUDAN to take the lead. Tearfund and CRUDAN staff testified that CRUDAN was encouraged to take an ever-increasing role in terms of representation (at coordination meetings, etc), thus increasing its visibility in these arenas.

CRUDAN has now entered its fifth year of implementing DRA consortium funding in conjunction with Tearfund, and its capacity was unanimously felt to have been strengthened immensely. CRUDAN was the first national organisation to carry out cash-based transfers in the north-east and CRUDAN (through Tearfund) now receives 70 per cent of the funding given to the DRA consortium, which currently comprises five other INGOs (Save the Children, ICCO/Christian Aid, Terre des Hommes, ZOA and Tearfund) and their national partners. CRUDAN has recently secured money via other sources directly, including the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (the UN country-based pooled fund managed by

¹³ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

¹⁴ CRUDAN CEO.

¹⁵ *Final Evaluation of Joint Response for Nigeria Phase 1* under the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), Garuba and Monye, pp. 33–34.

¹⁶ *Final Evaluation of Joint Response for Nigeria Phase 1* under the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), Garuba and Monye, Executive Summary.

OCHA) and Oxfam and is regularly invited to train others within the consortium. According to the DRA Consortium Coordinator, 'the quality and the technical capacity [within CRUDAN] is very high. CRUDAN have been implementing partner for the consortium from NJR1 to NJR4 – many others were dropped along the way. Half the time, when I'm doing trainings, it's the CRUDAN staff who train for me... if we are going to do training for local partners, I would ordinarily be facilitating, but... I can comfortably say to CRUDAN staff, "you are going to take this... this... and this", and I know that they'll run with it. This year, I let CRUDAN and JDF do all the procurement and organisation for a training that brought in all the partners; everything was properly done.'¹⁷

According to subsequent evaluations carried out, Tearfund and CRUDAN's work on the ground has been efficient, effective and relevant. An external joint evaluation carried out at the end of Year 2 remarked that, 'the NJR2 was very effective in the delivery of its results',¹⁸ going on to note that, 'the LNGOs are locally grounded organizations that are accepted by the communities. Their knowledge of the communities and acceptance by the community enabled them to reach locations where INGO staff could not reach.'¹⁹

The DRA Consortium Coordinator highlighted CRUDAN's achievements specifically: 'you see more innovation, and the dollar in Tearfund and CRUDAN does more than the dollar in [other members of the consortium]'.²⁰ The Consortium Coordinator highlighted a project location in which CRUDAN and Tearfund had the same budget for the same activity as another consortium member, noting that, 'you could totally see the difference in terms of more knowledge, more understanding of what is applicable, better relationships... I get requests from [CRUDAN], like "we've saved this amount of money, and we are thinking of exploring this, what do you think?" and half the time they are really, really great ideas.'²¹

The model has evolved over the years, as needs have changed (see Figure 1 below). As CRUDAN's capacity has increased, Tearfund's support has adapted. In late 2018/early 2019, Tearfund and CRUDAN transitioned to a lighter support model, with Tearfund establishing independent office space in the north-east. The roles of some Tearfund staff within the support model (eg finance and project support) were expanded to support Tearfund's entire portfolio of work instead of exclusively focusing on CRUDAN. 'At the beginning, Tearfund was involved in virtually every aspect of the project, to get it up and running. Tearfund involvement has gradually decreased as CRUDAN's responsibility has increased.'²² Roles have become more advisory, with less hands-on support over time.

¹⁷ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

¹⁸ *Final Evaluation of Joint Response for Nigeria Phase 2*, Afriye et al, Executive Summary.

¹⁹ *Final Evaluation of Joint Response for Nigeria Phase 2*, p. 32.

²⁰ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

²¹ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

²² Tearfund Nigeria Programme Manager.

Figure 1: Evolution of Tearfund’s NE Nigeria support model structure 2015–19

Year	Tearfund support model roles ²³	No. of Tearfund staff during period ²⁴	Office space
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (February 2015) No dedicated support roles on the ground • (May 2015) Project Coordinator recruited (1 role on the ground) • (October 2015) Disaster Response Manager recruited 	0 - 2	Shared office space in the north-east following arrival of Tearfund support model staff
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Response Manager • Project Coordinator • Finance Advisor recruited 	3	Shared
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Response Manager • Project Coordinator • Finance Advisor 	3	Shared
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Response Manager • Project Coordinator • Finance Advisor 	3	Shared
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Response Manager 	²⁵ 1	Separate (with dedicated proportion of time spent at CRUDAN’s offices)

7.2 Visibility

The extent to which a national partner (eg an NNGO) receives recognition and visibility for its effort, role and achievements in a response is seen by advocates as a strong indicator (or not) of localisation.²⁶ In the CRUDAN and Tearfund model, there are a number of extremely positive examples in this area, as well as a number of areas which could be improved. In addition, the question of legitimate and necessary visibility for INGOs (in this case, Tearfund) was raised, and presents an interesting area for future exploration.

On the whole, interviewees were extremely positive regarding the extent to which CRUDAN’s visibility had been promoted and/or safeguarded in the response at the country level. Tearfund was

²³ Tearfund roles with an exclusive focus on support to CRUDAN in NE Nigeria.

²⁴ Total number of Tearfund staff employed (with an exclusive focus on support to CRUDAN in NE Nigeria).

²⁵ NB only the Disaster Response Manager remains in post in the north-east with an exclusive focus on supporting CRUDAN; however Tearfund has other staff in the north-east and in Jos who play a role in supporting CRUDAN alongside all other partners.

²⁶ Charter for Change highlights visibility as key in the localisation of humanitarian aid. Charter for Change is an initiative, led by both National and International NGOs, to practically implement changes to the way the Humanitarian System operates to enable more locally-led response.

commended by a number of interviewees in so far as it had sought to ensure CRUDAN was able to attend and participate in consortium meetings (something which not all INGOs did) as well as sharing the responsibility with CRUDAN for attending interagency coordination meetings. While other INGOs and their NNGO partners attended the meetings, it was noted by a number of stakeholders that at the time of this research, CRUDAN was active, engaged and confident in meetings as opposed to other NNGOs who frequently remained silent, with their INGO partner taking the lead. According to a CRUDAN staff member, 'CRUDAN [was] the first NNGO to attend planning/inception meetings with the INGOs in the consortium. Other NNGOs were asked to follow suit and now other NNGOs are present at [consortium meetings] because of what Tearfund started... Most of the time, you find that CRUDAN is the only local NNGO present. It gives a chance to introduce oneself: "I am from CRUDAN", "What is CRUDAN? What do you do?" If not for Tearfund, we probably we wouldn't be let into those meetings.'²⁷

CRUDAN's Food Security and Livelihoods Officer noted that, 'in places where CRUDAN was not known before, it is now a household name. In cluster meetings, in sector meetings, people know CRUDAN staff and know that they will have something valuable to contribute. At the beginning [the cluster meetings] were confusing. Over the years, we have become able to understand the humanitarian system, speak the same language, and integrate.'²⁸

CRUDAN also felt that it had been able to access new funding opportunities as a result of its increased visibility: 'Working with Tearfund has made CRUDAN very, very visible to other INGOs. I think there are more opportunities to come because other INGOs are seeing the good work [CRUDAN is doing], seeing how well it's being executed, wanting to come on board. For example, the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund is looking forward to working with CRUDAN in the coming year.'²⁹

A number of those interviewed noted that while the close, symbiotic relationship between Tearfund and CRUDAN was commendable in many ways, it had at times led to confusion in terms of visibility and identity. Branding and visibility items often had CRUDAN/Tearfund listed on them, and as a consequence it was not always clear who was implementing, or indeed that they were two separate organisations. Latterly, this issue has been resolved with branding amended to 'CRUDAN, supported by Tearfund'.

While Tearfund has intentionally taken a back seat to ensure CRUDAN receives appropriate visibility as the implementer, the question of Tearfund's own visibility and related influence in Nigeria emerges as a question. According to Charter for Change, 'the second challenge most identified by signatories concerns the issue of fundraising. Numerous signatories discussed the delicate balance between the organisational need to showcase their own work to attract funding and the mission driven interest of highlighting the work of their local partners.'³⁰

INGOs still enjoy access to spaces from which a number of NNGOs are excluded, and play an important role in raising awareness and lobbying for national actors to be admitted into such spaces. Should Tearfund retreat entirely and forgo all its visibility in the Nigeria response, there is a significant risk that it will lose credibility and influence with donors and other INGOs, and with it, the

²⁷ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

²⁸ CRUDAN Food Security and Livelihoods Officer.

²⁹ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

³⁰ Charter for change: From commitments to action. Progress report 2017–2018, p.18.

ability to support other national partners in these arenas. As noted by one Tearfund staff member, ‘in terms of coordination, [CRUDAN] are taking the lead – to the extent that we are now having to make sure that Tearfund’s visibility is not completely obliterated in the north-east. People like UN OCHA and OFDA are asking “where are you?” when they look at maps of implementers [in the region].’³¹ Tearfund’s Geographic Head of West and Central Africa went on to say: ‘I agree that it is appropriate that we are moving from Tearfund/CRUDAN to “CRUDAN, supported by Tearfund”, and in due course, even that can be removed from all materials. Yet if CRUDAN are not seen to have some linkage with Tearfund, at this stage they will go off the radar... I would not be surprised if CRUDAN’s visibility and prominence comes and goes. Tearfund’s relationship with them needs to be agile, adjusting to the dynamics at any one time.’³²

While CRUDAN has enjoyed good visibility at consortium and community levels, there was work to be done in ensuring CRUDAN received the visibility it deserved at donor and interagency coordination levels: ‘Where visibility is missing, is at the higher coordination levels. Some people see us only as part of Tearfund.’ Various interviewees noted that there was a discrepancy in the way that higher-level coordination groups responded to international vs national actors (in terms of speed of reply and how seriously they were listened to), though acknowledged this differed from cluster to cluster. According to a CRUDAN staff member, ‘there is no commitment to actually making localisation happen... At some forums, we feel we are not taken seriously – we just get told “your view is being considered”. For example, at a sectoral WASH meeting, we tried to explain what CRUDAN was doing, but were not paid any attention. All the attention was given to the activities of a bigger player.’³³

Notably, CRUDAN’s visibility was weakest at the evaluation level. In the Year 1 (external) evaluation report, ‘Tearfund’ appears 23 times whereas ‘CRUDAN’ appears four times. When programme activities are being described, the reference is generally to Tear/Tearfund as having implemented them.³⁴ Consequently, CRUDAN’s direct visibility to the donor is very limited in these channels.

7.3 Capacity strengthening

Charter for Change³⁵ Commitment 7 states that signatories commit themselves to ‘robust organisational support and capacity strengthening. We will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response.’³⁶

In the case of CRUDAN and Tearfund, capacity strengthening was central to the approach undertaken and was hard-wired into the design of the model (albeit the design/model was adaptive and evolved over a period of time in response to perceived capacity needs). Critically, capacity strengthening did not focus on training (though significant training did take place and was generally cited as useful by CRUDAN staff); rather capacity strengthening was primarily achieved through 1) accompaniment/mentoring; 2) experience/learning by doing; and 3) learning from mistakes.

³¹ Tearfund Disaster Response Manager.

³² Tearfund Geographic Head of West and Central Africa.

³³ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

³⁴ NJR1 Evaluation

³⁵ Charter for Change, *Localisation of humanitarian aid*, <https://charter4change.org/>.

³⁶ Charter for Change, *Localisation of humanitarian aid*, Commitment 7.

The accompaniment-focused design of the model meant that capacity strengthening was an iterative, flexible process, tailored to the real-time needs of CRUDAN. CRUDAN staff also noted that a key element in capacity growth has been as a result of the responsibilities they were given. ‘The capacity of CRUDAN has been greatly enhanced by dealing directly with INGOs, sitting in the same room to rub minds and share ideas... CRUDAN [was] the first NNGO to attend planning/inception meetings with the INGOs in the consortium. Other NNGOs were asked to follow suit – now other NNGOs are present at meetings because of what Tearfund had started.’³⁷

Numerous interviewees highlighted the extended timeframe for capacity strengthening as of critical importance. Year 1 of the DRA-funded programme was marked by significant challenges, which can be directly linked to weaknesses in capacity assessment, capacity gaps as well as a lack of knowledge and experience in some areas. However as the DRA programme entered into its second, third and fourth years, CRUDAN continued to grow and – according to a number of interviewees, including the DRA Consortium Coordinator – to excel. ‘CRUDAN has been given the opportunity to try and fail, learn from their failures and become stronger. [It was] not a subcontracting relationship in which “you”, the partner, didn’t deliver and so next year won’t qualify.’³⁸ (See section 5.4 for further exploration of donor flexibility and trends.)

According to Tearfund’s Senior Finance Business Partner, ‘the CRUDAN we have today is an organisation that is able to implement big institutional donor-funded projects without much support from Tearfund. [It is] much easier to measure the growth of a staff member than the growth of an organisation. But if you are to look at CRUDAN’s audited accounts of three years ago and compare to what they do today – there is a very big difference, in that they have picked up what we have shown them over the course of the project.’³⁹ Institutional growth has been seen in other areas too: ‘At the beginning of the partnership, everything had to be approved by senior [CRUDAN] staff in Jos. Trust has grown in the [CRUDAN] head office, such that the [CRUDAN] teams on the ground are now trusted with decision-making processes. That is organisational growth.’⁴⁰

While some of CRUDAN’s capacity gains in emergency response have been institutionalised, much still remains at the individual and/or project level; therefore there is no room for complacency. CRUDAN is still significantly reliant on key staff and DRA funding – the loss of either or both at this stage could impact its ability to retain or build upon its current capacity in emergency response – and therefore continued consideration as to institutional capacity strengthening as well as funding diversification is key.

7.4 Funding

As previously noted, the DRA funding was cited by numerous stakeholders as having supported localisation efforts in that it 1) strongly encouraged working with national actors; 2) offered comparatively more flexibility and tolerance for risk, as well as a medium level of compliance as compared to a number of other institutional donors; 3) included an element of flexibility which allowed for changes in programming; 4) continued year-on-year (though continued funding was not

³⁷ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

³⁸ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

³⁹ Tearfund Senior Finance Business Partner.

⁴⁰ Tearfund Senior Finance Business Partner.

guaranteed), affording the opportunity for successful national partners to gain multi-year experience; and 5) Tearfund now transfers funds directly to the partner: ‘For some NGOs, the funds are transferred to them in bits, and that limits them... they don’t have control over what happens in the field. CRUDAN [are an exception], they are truly given the power.’⁴¹ However, CRUDAN staff noted that funding was still channelled exclusively through INGOs, and INGOs still chaired the consortium.

Nevertheless, interviewees highlighted the fact that overheads for models such as CRUDAN and Tearfund come at a cost, and one which is not often entirely funded by a donor. In Tearfund’s case, resourcing the model required additional funding from Tearfund’s own funds. A Tear Netherlands interviewee noted that, ‘it’s more expensive, particularly in the beginning... in the long-run, it might be cheaper, but we haven’t reached that stage because we still have the international involvement... If you look at the earlier proposals and the budgets, then you see that we paid for the Tearfund team, and also paid for the CRUDAN team, and a lot of capacity building was needed.’⁴²

Figure 2:

HUMANITARIAN FUNDS EXPENDED IN NIGERIA 2015–2019 (BUZA PROJECT PHASES 1–5)			
Details	Donor contribution £	Tearfund contribution £ ⁴³	Total budget £
Buza I	372,425.00	30,000.00	372,425.00
Buza II	605,516.00	30,000.00	635,516.00
Buza III	694,444.00	31,406.00	725,850.00
Buza IV	732,375.00	56,000.00	788,375.00
Buza V	637,664.00	10,667.00	648,331.00
TOTAL	3,042,424.00	128,073.00	3,170,497.00

CRUDAN staff noted that the funding agreement (in conjunction with Tearfund and Tear Netherlands) meant that ICRs were allocated to the INGO partners and not to CRUDAN.⁴⁴ While a number of CRUDAN roles were instead written into the budget, CRUDAN staff pointed out that not receiving any ICR meant that it was unable to cover other overheads costs, something which hindered organisational development and sustainability.

Charter for Change Commitment 7 states that, ‘we undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by May 2018 we [INGOs] will have allocated resources to support our partners in this’.⁴⁵ According to a CRUDAN staff member, ‘there

⁴¹ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

⁴² Tear Netherlands Programme Officer.

⁴³ Some additional capacity building activities, not specific to BUZA and/or not specific to CRUDAN are not reflected in this table

⁴⁴ Tearfund and Tear Netherlands split the ICR 50/50 between 2015 and 2017. In 2018 and 2019, 100 per cent of the ICR went to Tear Netherlands.

⁴⁵ *Charter for Change, Localisation of humanitarian aid, Commitment 7.*

has been little benefit for the whole organisation in terms of financial sustainability. Admin recoveries don't come to CRUDAN; and so the moment the project ends, we will discover there's nothing to fall back on to support the humanitarian team.'⁴⁶

CRUDAN's CEO reflects: 'The model is wonderful... in as much as it has empowered [CRUDAN] in terms of building capacity, building systems. But in terms of funding... to improve certain systems, to improve governance, to improve training, just basic things... that's a major weakness for me. The funding is great, it is wonderful... but [not] in terms of ensuring that... when there's no more funding, the organisation continues and sustains the project. Even just keeping the staff and being able to pay them well enough [is a challenge]. Last year, we heard that funding was going to be reduced. We then heard that Tearfund was making [financial] arrangements for its staff and needed CRUDAN to do the same for its own staff, [but my question was], "from where and how?"'.⁴⁷

Allocation of ICRs is a challenging issue and points to a common concern when implementing via partners in that there are two or more organisations with central costs to support instead of one. INGOs need to recoup the costs they incur in order to obtain funds and support the project; however NNGOs also need to be able to support themselves and their head offices. With a reliance on donor funding which primarily funds direct implementation costs, the question of financial sustainability prevails.

7.5 Key strengths of the model

The following six characteristics were identified as key strengths of the Tearfund–CRUDAN model:

1. Relationships and trust
2. Long-term model
3. CRUDAN's network
4. Donor funding requirements
5. Focus on strengthening financial capacity
6. Staff characteristics

Relationships and trust: The most cited strength of the CRUDAN–Tearfund model was that of the trust relationship between Tearfund and CRUDAN (and in more recent years, Tear Netherlands), highlighted as a critical component in terms of a) the ability to establish the model; and b) the efficacy of the model itself.

The relationship between CRUDAN and Tearfund prior to the establishment of the joint response model was a long-standing one, and was noted by both parties to be extremely positive. According to CRUDAN's CEO, 'our own relationship with Tearfund dates back as far as maybe when CRUDAN was formed, so that informs... all of this'.⁴⁸ The decision to enter into the model of working in the north-east was not without risk for CRUDAN; however, trust was identified as a key reason for going forward: 'CRUDAN took a risk when we agreed to do this... not knowing what would happen. We lost staff from our own end because we had not seen the bigger picture of how things would

⁴⁶ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

⁴⁷ CRUDAN CEO.

⁴⁸ CRUDAN CEO.

develop, but I am happy that we took that risk, and I am happy that eventually it paid off for us. It makes us more credible, and it has given us the experience – as a local organisation – [of operating] with more funding, we can operate with international organisations. We can be trusted to deliver because Tearfund trusted us... It dates from that. Tearfund could trust CRUDAN, therefore CRUDAN could also take the risk of being trusted.⁴⁹

The mutual respect inherent in the relationship was highlighted by most stakeholders: ‘Tearfund is working from this very distinctively Christian background which shapes and influences the way we see partnership. We don’t see it as a master–servant relationship. It is viewed from the perspective that we are jointly working together to achieve a common goal. We don’t see the partner as some entity that is less in terms of their abilities and capacities to be able to do the work... We value them and their input.’⁵⁰

Tear Netherlands also remarked upon the ‘very high level of trust between CRUDAN and Tearfund’, noting they were very much ‘on a journey together... Both need the other, and both also need Tear Netherlands as the link to the DRA. At [a recent DRA workshop in November], we were one team.’⁵¹

The establishment of new ways of working was understandably exceedingly challenging; however the relationship between the two partners was the reason given for the fact that the model survived the early rocky start, and went on to thrive. There was trust and mutual respect which meant each side gave each other the benefit of the doubt in times of disagreement. According to Tearfund’s Geographical Head of West and Central Africa, the model was, ‘relational... [which means] being able to have tough conversations without the relationship falling apart’.⁵² Tearfund’s Country Representative in Nigeria agreed: ‘We’d had a [development programming] relationship before. This helped CRUDAN to know that despite the challenges [in the first year], Tearfund wanted the best for them. It had never been a master–slave relationship but rather a partnership motivated by mutual desire to help local communities. They felt able to give it time.’⁵³

The mutual respect referenced was evident in the design of the model itself. Particularly commended by numerous interviewees was the close working relationships and sharing of resources such as office space and vehicles. Tearfund and CRUDAN staff worked side by side in offices, using the same vehicles. Such practices stood in stark contrast to those in place between other INGOs and their NNGO partners working in the north-east: ‘Other organisations aren’t even allowed inside the INGO compound or vehicles. Tearfund and CRUDAN share offices and vehicles.’⁵⁴

Long-term model: Tearfund has invested in strengthening CRUDAN’s capacity for disaster response over the long term, substantively (though not exclusively) aided and facilitated by the opportunity afforded by DRA funding, which has been successfully secured for four consecutive years. According to multiple interviewees, this was of paramount importance as it provided a realistic timeframe for capacity to be strengthened. It allowed space for growth and – critically – room to make mistakes and learn from them. Mistakes are inevitable in fast-paced, ever-changing humanitarian responses

⁴⁹ CRUDAN CEO.

⁵⁰ Tearfund Nigeria Programme Manager.

⁵¹ Tear Netherlands Acting Programme Officer.

⁵² Tearfund Geographic Head of West and Central Africa.

⁵³ Tearfund Nigeria Country Representative.

⁵⁴ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

and are certainly not exclusive to NNGOs. While allowing space for mistakes might seem a high-risk strategy, it should be noted that the close accompaniment model meant that mistakes were identified – and rectified – very quickly.

National partner network: CRUDAN is a network organisation (see section 6 for more details), which affords it unparalleled reach and access across Nigeria. It is also an organisation with a self-described culture of learning and a background in capacity strengthening. Tearfund’s Geographic Head of West and Central Africa concurred, noting that CRUDAN ‘have inculcated the idea of learning and development within the whole organisation’.⁵⁵ All of these characteristics were credited by numerous interviewees as contributing strongly towards the success of the model. CRUDAN’s extensive network gave it access as well as credibility and trust with communities in affected areas. Organisationally, its focus on learning and capacity strengthening meant that it was well positioned and open to developing its skills in a new direction (in this case, disaster response).

Donor funding requirements: The particular nature and design of the DRA funding was highlighted by a number of interviewees as contributing significantly towards the success of the model. The funding stream had a focus on working through national partners, a flexible component which made appropriate modifications to programme design feasible, and continued over a number of years which afforded the opportunity for CRUDAN to grow and develop over time. It also – critically – contained a strategic objective directly relating to national partner capacity strengthening. In Year 1, Objective 2 focused on ‘strengthening the national humanitarian response and humanitarian capacity in Nigeria’.⁵⁶

Focus on strengthening financial capacity: Tearfund’s specific and concerted focus on strengthening financial capacity through accompaniment, training and ongoing mentoring was also seen as particularly successful in supporting CRUDAN to grow in its ability to manage institutional funds – a critical component of enabling localised responses, highlighted in the 2016 report, *Too important to fail*,⁵⁷ which looked at the issue of humanitarian financing in the context of the Grand Bargain. The report notes ‘the challenges faced by large government donors in processing a multitude of small grants to national or local NGOs’ and adds that, ‘unsurprisingly’, funds typically end up being channelled via the UN and INGOs ‘who can assure that adequate capacity, risk management systems and humanitarian policies are in place’. The report goes on to highlight the need for ‘efforts to strengthen the capacity of smaller and local civil society organisations to manage funds and navigate the complexities of the humanitarian system’.⁵⁸

Staff characteristics: Both Tearfund and CRUDAN staff were repeatedly noted as possessing specific skills, attitudes and characteristics which contributed to the success of the model.

A number of Tearfund staff (within the support model as well as surge staff brought in on a short-term basis) were notable for their focus/skill set on strengthening capacity – something the DRA Consortium Coordinator credits as having a significant impact on the success of the model: ‘the choice of people that Tearfund sends out [has been important]... [they are] very seasoned, they

⁵⁵ Tearfund Geographic Head of West and Central Africa.

⁵⁶ NJR1 Mid-term report.

⁵⁷ High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General, *Too important to fail – addressing the humanitarian financing gap* (2016).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

have very strong competencies in building capacity and creating the right environment. It's rare to find that kind of competency in humanitarian workers who are used to being "there" for just six months.'⁵⁹

The point is echoed in *Accelerating localisation through partnerships*, which notes that, 'while many INGOs have developed a strong in-house culture for training, no NGO or individual is presumed to automatically be both an expert doer and a good teacher. Expertise in organisational development is a related but different skill set... add to this the need to comprehend organisations in humanitarian action – a very unique demand.'⁶⁰

This combination meant that staff were well equipped to advise and support CRUDAN; however they were also very willing to step back and allow CRUDAN to take the lead in both implementation and coordination. One Tearfund staff member commented: 'I have a lot of passion for capacity building, and I know how long it takes to build capacity – it can take years. But for me, appreciating the baby steps that people are making is very important. And also, appreciating the fact that we're not looking for perfect partners to work with, because if they're perfect they would be able to strategically position themselves for institutional funding without Tearfund's support.'⁶¹

Equally, CRUDAN's staff were commended for their passion and commitment, something potentially linked to CRUDAN's practice of recruiting volunteers: 'A lot of the staff came onto the programme as volunteers. They didn't come expecting to be employed as staff to respond to this crisis. It was later on that their jobs were regularised. So when somebody comes with that kind of passion, it's not something that you can just throw away and fortunately, many of the staff who came later came with that same passion understanding it as a service, as a ministry.'⁶²

7.6 Key weaknesses of the model

The following three issues were identified as key weaknesses of the Tearfund–CRUDAN model:

1. Inadequate initial capacity assessment of CRUDAN
2. Tearfund's internal capacity gaps
3. Lopsided capacity strengthening

Inadequate initial capacity assessment: The capacity assessment carried out by Tearfund at the outset was highlighted as a key weakness by a number of interviewees. According to CRUDAN's Disaster Response Coordinator, 'the capacity assessment wasn't adequate and didn't really identify skills gaps. Expectations were not clear.' Tearfund's Geographic Head of West and Central Africa went on to note that 'assessors went to only 50 per cent of the locations that they should have done, and relied too much on the answers given by the partner'.⁶³ Consequently, the assessment overestimated CRUDAN's capacity in key areas and did not result in a clear capacity-strengthening plan, leading to initial problems in the first year.

⁵⁹ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

⁶⁰ 4-Country Report, *Accelerating Localisation through Partnership*, Turnbull et al, 2018 Executive Summary, pp. 6-7.

⁶¹ Tearfund Senior Finance Business Partner.

⁶² Tearfund Project Coordinator for NE Nigeria.

⁶³ Tearfund Geographic Head of West and Central Africa.

Tearfund's internal capacity gaps: Several interviewees noted that Tearfund was not always in an optimum position to strengthen CRUDAN's capacity. Recruitment delays as a result of Tearfund's 'inability to drawdown quickly enough on the right people to fill accompanying roles'⁶⁴ at the outset of DRA Year 1 left CRUDAN implementing without key support/management roles in place. Additionally, while Tearfund recruited three new roles to support the emergency work in the north-east, it was noted that the Tearfund Nigeria country office was itself previously development-focused in terms of its own expertise and skill set, thus was not always able to provide the specific support required to strengthen CRUDAN's capacity: 'There was a lot of capacity building needed...Tearfund also invested quite a bit extra over the funding they received, to help CRUDAN to grow, and... the Tearfund team in country to grow.'⁶⁵

A notable example here is in the area of proposal and report writing – highlighted by both the UK-based Programme Officer as well as Tear Netherlands as a weakness on Tearfund Nigeria's part. Ironically, this may have played a part in allowing CRUDAN to develop more quickly in this area. According to Tear Netherlands, 'the Tearfund Nigeria team is a very good team but which has had weaknesses [eg in report writing] in the last two years, which made it easier for CRUDAN to step up [in these areas]'.⁶⁶

Lopsided capacity strengthening: The Tearfund–CRUDAN model focused on emergency programming in the north-east of the country and was largely self-contained, operating separately from CRUDAN's head office in Jos. To a large extent the decision to create a satellite office which functioned separately was initially necessary: as a development organisation, CRUDAN's pre-existing systems, procedures and central expertise were not fit for purpose when it came to emergency programming. In the first year of the programme, the September 2015 monthly report records an issue in terms of communicating with CRUDAN in Jos, highlighting 'different budgets which slowed down the process (soap procurement)'.⁶⁷ The initial separateness was therefore in the interests of speed and effectiveness. According to Tearfund: 'We realised that the north-east response was being seen by [CRUDAN's head office in Jos] as another "department" of development work and there was no suitably responsible director of it. Another base was needed to set the humanitarian work apart from CRUDAN's development projects and enable staff responsible for it to make decisions quickly and work more effectively. It was a matter of goodwill that the [CRUDAN head office] was okay letting go of the humanitarian wing. Now, the office in Yola has its own independent banking. However line management still goes ultimately back to Jos.'⁶⁸

Arguably the separateness persisted for too long, and capacity strengthening failed to incorporate needs at the CRUDAN head office level. Consequently, a number of interviewees felt that the emergency work was (particularly initially) disconnected from CRUDAN's head office. According to CRUDAN's Disaster Response Coordinator: 'HQ and field were disconnected in CRUDAN. Initially [HQ] didn't take full ownership of the work, seeing it as something separate and self-contained. However this has changed: the work is much more integrated and HQ are independently seeking out funding. At first [HQ] didn't understand the needs in the field, for example there were long delays in decisions

⁶⁴ Tearfund Geographic Head of West and Central Africa.

⁶⁵ Tear Netherlands Programme Officer.

⁶⁶ Tear Netherlands Acting Programme Officer.

⁶⁷ Tearfund internal monthly report for NJR1 (September 2015).

⁶⁸ Tearfund Disaster Response Manager.

and lengthy processes not equipped for humanitarian response. Next time it would be better to move collectively from the outset and involve HQ and the field at every step.’⁶⁹

Evidence suggests that the gap is closing, and CRUDAN’s central leadership is now taking a prominent role in steering both development and emergency work, as well as seeking out funding independently of Tearfund. CRUDAN’s CEO reflects that ‘more capacity has been built in the north. This has been necessary – the project funding was meant for the north and less so for needs in the rest of the country. I think there’s been a strong connection between Jos and the office in the north-east, but I think more can be done through capacity building to significantly improve or include the headquarters. We need to increase [CRUDAN’s] headquarters’ supervision of the humanitarian project... by next year I would like to know a lot more than I know now on the humanitarian work. I think I will involve myself more than I have done this year and in the past years. We do hope that we should be able to extend our [humanitarian] scope to other areas within the north-central.’⁷⁰

7.7 Key opportunities for the model

Two key opportunities were identified in terms of the future of the model:

1. CRUDAN’s role in wider national capacity strengthening
2. Development of donor relationships and funding opportunities

CRUDAN’s role in wider national capacity strengthening: A number of those interviewed identified a clear opportunity for CRUDAN to become a leader in training and strengthening the capacity of NGOs and other national actors in emergency response management. Currently, CRUDAN is regularly invited to train others within the consortium, and its experience in capacity strengthening means that it is well positioned to become a leader in this area. According to the DRA Consortium Coordinator, ‘among most of the organisations we work with, there is a clear lack of knowledge on networks, which CRUDAN holds. Also a lack of long-term thinking. CRUDAN should look at capacity building other organisations in these aspects, as an income-earner. If you look at the MDF Training School in Tanzania, they started as an NGO and then became a capacity-building training institute. This is something I think that CRUDAN should [do], because they have the capacity and there’s a need.’⁷¹

Development of donor relationships and funding opportunities: CRUDAN has the opportunity to utilise the position it now occupies in order to proactively promote its strengths and the work it has carried out to other donors. CRUDAN’s DRA-funded work has provided it with an opportunity to gain significant experience and expertise in emergency work, as well as visibility in coordination forums; however, this should be leveraged further in order to proactively build relationships with other donors (with or without Tearfund’s support) in order to ‘market’ its work and unique position among national actors. ‘They have so much happening that would be so much of value within the general humanitarian space. They need to be selling it. For example, they are doing something around accountability – that’s something that the whole humanitarian network is struggling with. They

⁶⁹ CRUDAN Disaster Response Coordinator.

⁷⁰ CRUDAN CEO.

⁷¹ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

manage to go as a Christian organisation into a very Islamic area, and get acceptance. They need to start showcasing their successes.⁷²

7.8 Key threats facing the model

The two key threats facing the model were found to be:

1. CRUDAN staff capacity and retention
2. Narrow funding base

CRUDAN staff capacity and retention: Staffing was seen by most as one of two key threats facing the CRUDAN–Tearfund model. The DRA Consortium Coordinator noted that, ‘some of the staff that we have in CRUDAN are very, very, very well-trained – extremely well-trained – these are people whom [INGOs] would pick up so fast.’⁷³

Staff retention was highlighted as a significant issue by a wide variety of stakeholders, in part due to the lower salaries offered to CRUDAN staff compared to those at INGOs and in part – ironically – as a result of the capacity strengthening undertaken. The Year 2 joint evaluation states: ‘it was observed that the capacity building support provided to staff of the Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) in order to strengthen their capacity to implement projects better might have contributed to increasing staff turnovers in some organizations. With the new knowledge and skills the staff moved to different international organizations.’⁷⁴

CRUDAN has made significant progress in addressing this challenge in view of the fact that it has traditionally operated on a volunteer staff model. However over recent years, a number of key roles have been formalised and have become salaried in order to encourage staff retention. That said, salaries cannot compete with those of larger INGOs and a number of interviewees noted that it is reasonable to expect people will want to pursue other opportunities in order to develop their careers. ‘Local staff will keep leaving local NGOs for INGOs because of the difference in pay. So that is there, whether it’s been done the right way or the wrong way. Because the pay is different. But what I think is [if people leave an NNGO] you pick other people and train them again, because if people from the local NGO leave, other people will fill in that space. So I feel that’s a good way of building up, and allowing others to also grow and have [opportunities].’⁷⁵

While all organisations face staff turnover, it was noted that – in CRUDAN’s case – most of the capacity gains still sit at an individual staff level. Therefore the potential loss of trained staff is felt acutely. It should be noted, however, that CRUDAN is making significant efforts to mitigate the effect of staff losses through ensuring ‘apprentices’ are attached to key roles for the purposes of succession planning. The Food Security and Livelihoods Officer at CRUDAN explained: ‘There is somebody [in CRUDAN]... assisting me and learning what I’m doing, on a daily basis. So that, anytime I’m not around, he takes charge.’⁷⁶

⁷² DRA Consortium Coordinator.

⁷³ DRA Consortium Coordinator.

⁷⁴ *Final Evaluation of the Joint Response for Nigeria Phase 2*, 2017 Afriye et al, p. 26.

⁷⁵ CRUDAN Reporting and Communications Officer.

⁷⁶ CRUDAN Food Security and Livelihoods Officer.

As referenced above, capacity strengthening was substantively (though not exclusively) focused at an individual staff level, indicating a clear need to provide additional organisational capacity strengthening at head office systems level in order to ensure capacity gains are embedded at an organisational rather than project level.

Narrow funding base: While the DRA funding was commended on a number of levels for having provided opportunity and space for national capacity strengthening, nevertheless it was noted that CRUDAN was almost wholly reliant on DRA funding for its emergency work, and needed to broaden its funding portfolio in order to sustain and/or expand that work. It should be noted that CRUDAN has successfully obtained humanitarian funding from the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund and Oxfam, independently of Tearfund; however its emergency funding base is still reliant on one institutional donor (DRA).

According to Tearfund's Programme Officer, '[D]onor organisations are not putting their money where their mouths are, they are not acting on the localisation narrative. With some donors, we are out of the game because our partnership with local actors is seen as "high risk"... [Localisation] takes time: we have, in the course of four years, built the capacity of CRUDAN. Other [INGO] actors came to the table already at full capacity in the first year, the difference being that they did not take the time to partner with local actors. This has affected our relationships with donors... The donors want double the assurance, they are not willing to wait. They also prefer making big grants for multi-sectoral projects of the kind that CRUDAN is not able to fulfil.'⁷⁷

These views are reiterated in the Charter for Change 2017–18 *Progress report*: 'While there seems to be an interest among donors to increase their support for local and national actors, including capacity strengthening initiatives, there has not been corresponding increases in funding to support these efforts. It remains difficult to persuade humanitarian donors to allocate a certain percentage of project funds to capacity strengthening for partners in the early stages of programming where the focus is on saving lives, particularly in the current climate of needs hugely outweighing supply... Another challenge highlighted was the emphasis donors give to programmes with high volume of funds and recipients of aid, whilst local partners often have a lower financial absorption capacity.'⁷⁸

8. Key findings

- **Relationships and trust** are critical if similar models are to succeed. Intense models of working or changes to pre-existing ways of working between an INGO and NNGO are likely to generate tension and disagreement at different stages, therefore strong foundations and a high level of trust and mutual respect between INGO and NNGO are necessary in order to work through conflict without the partnership disintegrating.
- **Attitudes** towards partnership, learning, localisation and capacity strengthening are key and INGOs should prioritise recruitment of staff who 'walk the talk'. INGOs need a twin focus on both capacity strengthening and meeting humanitarian need if they are to genuinely strengthen the capacity of a partner in a sustainable fashion (both of which need

⁷⁷ Tearfund Nigeria Programme Officer.

⁷⁸ Charter for Change, *From commitments to action. Progress report 2017–2018*, pp. 11–14.

resourcing). INGOs who view NNGOs as short term 'contractors' are unlikely to develop the quality of relationships with their partners required to sustainably strengthen their capacity.

- **Investment** is needed for partnership models focused on capacity strengthening to succeed: the creation of the Tearfund–CRUDAN model required sustained financial investment from Tearfund over a number of years and this is likely to continue, albeit with a reduction in the level of investment over time. Continued advocacy is needed in this area, to encourage donors to be willing to work more directly and over a longer-term period with carefully selected NNGO partners. Sources of funding for capacity strengthening (including accompaniment roles) need to be explored further, particularly where donors are unwilling to support such costs.
- **Influence and visibility** is important (both for national actors who often lack access to spaces and donors they wish to influence and for INGOs who can use their influence to create space for national actors) but maintaining it is a delicate balance. INGOs can easily lose their ability to positively influence if they do not continue to maintain their own presence in donor and coordination spaces and national partners risk being shut out again when funding dries up.
- **Time** – change is not achieved over a project cycle or donor funding period. Humanitarian actors are typically not well placed in this regard; however development actors don't always have the relevant (humanitarian) skill set. Tearfund is therefore positively positioned, given its dual focus and long-term presence in focus countries.
- **Capacity-strengthening approach** – training was not the main focus in terms of capacity strengthening in the Tearfund–CRUDAN model; rather, accompaniment and learning by doing, achieved through working in close proximity, was cited as most effective. Though training provided a great foundation, the real gains were seen as a result of intentional co-working, open dialogue and the space to put learning into practice.
- **INGO capacity** – incorrect assumptions are often made in terms of INGO capacity and their ability to strengthen NNGO capacity. It is important for INGOs to have their own houses in order, to ensure they can provide high-quality, consistent support. Internal country office capacity assessments should ideally take place prior to the development of a model of this kind to ensure the country office has the skills, resources and experience to support the partner appropriately, drawing in external capacity strengthening support for partners in areas outside its expertise.
- **Sustainability** – there are real threats to the sustainability of the model, primarily relating to staffing and funding. Capacity strengthening needs to focus on corporate systems, culture and practice (at head offices as well as at the project level) in order to institutionalise capacity further and to ensure national partners are able to take the lead in terms of future direction. Questions remain over salaries and incentives for staff, as NNGOs are competing with INGOs on a very uneven playing field. Efforts should continue to support CRUDAN to diversify and solidify its funding base in Nigeria.
- **Overheads** – working via INGO partners raises critical questions relating to overheads (ICRs) and whether national partners are being adequately catered for here. In accordance with Charter for Change Commitment 7, more consideration should be given as to how ICRs are split when funding is secured via one or more intermediary INGOs, including in the case of CRUDAN.
- **Exit plan** – as the Tearfund–CRUDAN model was an organic one that developed iteratively, there is no formal exit plan in place. Development of a transition plan whereby Tearfund reduces/adapts its support (without withdrawing it altogether) will allow CRUDAN to

become more independent, freeing up Tearfund to potentially support other partners to grow in a similar way. 'I think the capacity building was correct... but after two years, the CRUDAN staff know what to do, but we kept on having the same system... maybe now we should change the way we collaborate... maybe we don't need all those checks by Tearfund in the field anymore.'⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Tear Netherlands Programme Officer.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Secondary References

Title
Nigeria Country Strategy (Tearfund internal document), 2015
Learning Review for Nigeria Response Year 1 (Tearfund internal document), 2015
Charter for Change: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Case studies on localisation: https://charter4change.org/blog/- Eight commitments: https://charter4change.org/commitments/Grand Bargain commitments
DRA year 1 project documentation (internal), 2015 - 16 NJR1 Agreements NJR1 Initial CRUDAN capacity assessment NJR1 Project documents NJR1 Mid term report NJR1 Reports and Final Report NJR1 Evaluation
DRA year 2 project documentation (internal), 2016 - 17 NJR2 Agreements NJR2 Project documents NJR2 Mid-term report NJR2 Mid-term evaluation NJR2 Final Report NJR2 Joint Evaluation and Annexes NJR2 Audit and Compliance Reports
DRA year 3 project documentation (internal), 2017 - 18 NJR3 Agreements NJR3 Project documents NJR3 Mid-term review NJR3 Final Report NJR3 Audit NJR3 Joint Evaluation Audit
DRA year 4 project documentation (internal), 2018 - 19 NJR4 Agreements NJR4 Project documents NJR4 Mid term review
Localisation Examined : An ICVA Briefing Paper, ICVA, 2018
Supplement for Institutional Funding Tool (SIFT): Assessment full report CRUDAN, 2017 (Tearfund internal document)
Tearfund Country Rep and & CRUDAN Executive Director Project Visit report, 2018 (Tearfund and CRUDAN internal document)
CRUDAN Annual reports: 2014 - 2018
Mid-term review of Nigeria country strategy April 2014–March 2017
Accelerating localisation through partnerships – final reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>4 country report: Accelerating localisation through partnerships</i>, 2018, Turnbull et al- <i>Nigeria Country Report: “Accelerating Localisation through Partnership”</i>, 2018, Onwuemele et al

Appendix 2: Interview list

Role	Organisation	Location
West Africa Cluster lead (former)	Tearfund	UK
Programme Officer (former)	Tearfund	UK
Head of Strategic Programmes, West Africa	Tearfund	UK
Senior Finance Business Partner	Tearfund	Kenya
Nigeria Country Director	Tearfund	Nigeria
Disaster Response Manager, NE Nigeria	Tearfund	Nigeria
Programme Coordinator, NE Nigeria	Tearfund	Nigeria
Programme Manager, Nigeria	Tearfund	Nigeria
Executive Director	CRUDAN	Nigeria
Reporting and Communications Officer (Mafa LGA Lead) (former)	CRUDAN	Nigeria
Head of WASH	CRUDAN	Nigeria
Head of Food Security and Livelihoods	CRUDAN	Nigeria
Tear Netherlands, Acting Programme Officer	Tear Netherlands	Netherlands
Tear Netherlands Programme Officer (former)	Tear Netherlands	Netherlands
Coordinator for DRA Nigerian Joint Response	Save the Children International	Nigeria



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