

A Review of Survivor and Community Led Response (sclr) in Haiti



Community members and representatives of local CBO thank partner SJM for the micro-grant to support their initiative to repair the pathway access to the local market following the earthquake.

Background

On Saturday 14th August 2021 a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwestern Haiti with devastating consequences. There was significant loss of lives and injuries, infrastructure damage, and impact on food production and availability, compounding in multiple immediate needs for local people.

Christian Aid worked with local partner organisations Konbite pou Ranfose Aksyon Lakay (KORAL) and Service Jésuites aux Migrants (SJM) to implement the Haiti Earthquake Response which would test the sclr approach at scale for the first time in a complex emergency response in Haiti.

What is Sclr

Sclr is an emergency response approach developed to support and resource individuals and communities affected by sudden or protracted crises.

Local to Global Protection Initiative (L2GP) established the approach with aspirations to build on and support the spontaneous self-help actions of crisis affected population. The approach brings together the cash, localisation, nexus and participation agendas of the Grand Bargain.

In sclr, cash microgrants paired with a participatory action learning in crisis methodology are used to transfer power and resources to existing and emergent local self-help groups and organisations that mobilise during every crisis. This allows for the rapid and decentralised provision of additional assistance to scale up interventions and increase survivor's resilience.

"This is the method that is good for the community because the community is involved more. When they impose things on us, it is in the cadre of restraint. But when they give us the liberty of choice, we enlarge the cadre more." Community participant

The Haiti Earthquake Response

The Haiti Earthquake Response aimed to provide lifesaving assistance and respond to the immediate needs of the most affected by the earthquake, including displaced women, men, boys and girls in remote communes in the Sud and Grand' Anse departments.

Distributing micro-grants to community-based organisations (CBOs), the planned output was that communities would be enabled to respond collectively, resulting in concrete results to support their community during crises. The desired impact was that communities, using their local leadership, would be able to meet their basic needs by identifying their own priorities and enacting their own planned solutions.

Haiti Earthquake Response Results

During the first 3 months after the earthquake, this response was able to support 71 self-help initiatives for a total budget of £282,187 ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The self-help initiatives included unconditional cash distribution amongst groups members, rehabilitation of services, kit distribution and psychosocial assistance.

The community-led initiatives had direct and meaningful impacts on the lives of 12,580 individuals of whom 4 % were disable and 18% elders.

The activities were funded by Start Fund, Irish Aid Emergency Response Fund, and Christian Aid.

Analysis

Sclr was a new concept to many of the groups that participated. Some had experience with participative methods in the past. However, stark differences were noted from past experiences.

The key elements that participants highlighted to describe their experience were:

- **Transparent**

“There is no transparency in the other method because they just came to give it to me. I don’t know the associated costs or anything. But here, I was the one that calculated the budget, I knew what I was going to do with the budget, what I was going to buy, and what I needed. I planned all of the activities within the budget. They gave me the means for the project and I executed everything I said I was going to execute”. Community participant

Information was accessible to all stakeholders and community members, there was compliance with the process and all steps were followed methodically. Communities relished the chance to be informed of what is happening in their area, who is behind it, how much is being spent, who is involved and why, and what the intended outcomes were.

- **Participatory and inclusive**

“People feel good about themselves when they participate like this. There are times when they would like to execute a project but cannot or don’t know how to start it, nor do they have the means to start. But, when they have backup, when they find a person or organisation that encourages them, it is a pleasure for them.” Community participant

There was greater involvement of CBOs and more people within the community assisted in the execution of the work due to the ownership they felt. The needs of the most vulnerable (disabled, elderly, pregnant women) were considered, with aid being delivered to people’s home instead of a central location which is often difficult for them to access.

- **Efficient**

Participants noted the speed of which KORAL and SJM appeared in their areas after the earthquake. Due to capitalising on local knowledge of needs and solutions, projects were executed quickly. Teams were energised and excited for the opportunities to highlight their capabilities.

- **Sustainable**

“This method makes you an actor. When there is someone coming to do for you versus when you are the one figuring out how to do it, it is two different things. When it is yourself, you are going through a training process and building the habit so you can continue to do it. But when they come to do it for you, you have no idea of what is being done. It’s like you are an assistant.” Community participant

Sharing knowledge and allowing the development of skills such as writing proposals, budgets and workplans is better long terms for the CBOs. CBOs reported feeling a new sense of control, being better armed for “the fight” and advancing. Additionally, this has increased the confidence that partner organisations have in CBOs.

- **Adapted to community needs**

Communities executed their projects in different ways. There is no one-size-fits all approach and CBOs were able to make the adjustments as necessary to meet their specific needs.

There was a strong sense of pride in being able to identify their individual tasks within the collective work and seeing immediate results of their efforts.

Summary

The experience of the Haiti earthquake proved that sclr is a viable, accountable and effective approach that can work at scale. It showed that people were able to identify and meet their needs with speed, in an inclusive way, and more holistically than more traditional sector specific humanitarian way of working led by external agencies. The sclr approach promotes mutually beneficial outcomes and leaves community members with the tools, skillset, and most importantly the empowered mindset to continue to advocate for their communities and their long term development.

As Christian Aid, we advocate for and encourage other agencies to get involved in this type of people-led approaches where people are empowered with being in the driving seat.