

2026 Edition

INNOVATING FOR A WORLD BEYOND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS




GOAL PROGRAMME INNOVATION FUND

ANCHOR Activating Neighbourhoods & Communities for
Holistic Organised Response

GOAL | Sierra Leone



Stage of innovation

-  Ideation and piloting
-  Validation
-  Scaling ✓



BACKGROUND

In Sierra Leone, communities face persistent challenges when it comes to responding effectively to health emergencies, such as disease outbreaks. These challenges stem from limited access to timely and reliable health information, inadequate communication channels, and a lack of systems that support community ownership of preparedness and response efforts. At the heart of resilient health systems is the active participation of local people, who possess a deep understanding of their own community contexts, household needs, and individual concerns.

GOAL, in collaboration with partners and local stakeholders, has designed and deployed ANCHOR an innovative, community-led solution designed to address these challenges by equipping individuals, communities, and key health system actors with tools to lead, respond, and adapt. This initiative aligns with GOAL's broader commitment to safe, responsible, and inclusive innovation that prioritizes community voices, strengthens local systems, and ensures effective responses. ANCHOR is built on three critical pillars: active engagement, early warning, and timely action. These guide every aspect of the platform's development and implementation.



WHAT IS THE INNOVATION ABOUT?

ANCHOR is a decision-support tool built to connect communities, health facilities, and policymakers through real-time, actionable data. It operates as an integrated, user-friendly system that brings together disease surveillance, service monitoring, and local feedback to strengthen how health systems function during an outbreak. By combining mobile technology, generative AI, digital networks, and interactive dashboards, the platform creates an evidence base that allows health actors at different levels to anticipate risks, coordinate responses, and adapt services as crises unfold.

At its core, ANCHOR promotes multi-way communication. Communities can ask questions to culturally-sensitized chatbots at any time; machine learning translates the chatbot conversations into critical insights regarding disease symptoms, rumours, and concerns; and health officials and service providers use these insights to prioritize resources and interventions to prevent disease transmission. The result is not just improved data collection but a more responsive system where frontline realities actively shape health system and emergency response decision-making.



KEY OUTCOMES OF THE INNOVATION

ANCHOR delivers:

- **Stronger community** resilience through better preparedness and coordinated response.
- **Empowered citizenship**, equipping local leaders with tools to lead health initiatives.
- **Improved data use** via real-time insights for more effective decision-making.
- **Increased community engagement** and ownership of health preparedness plans.
- **Reduced spread of misinformation** through rumour tracking and behaviour change messaging.



IMPACT

The innovation is changing how health resilience is practiced in Sierra Leone. By ensuring that communities are part of the data loop, ANCHOR has also strengthened trust between communities and health institutions, creating stronger accountability mechanisms. Importantly, ANCHOR is building a model of anticipatory action in fragile settings, showing that with the right tools, local systems can become more adaptive and capable of absorbing shocks.



POTENTIAL TO SCALE

One of the strengths of ANCHOR lies in its adaptability. Designed with a modular structure, it can be customized for different health priorities, geographic regions, and governance contexts. Its integration with existing systems, including customer relationship management tools and national health data platforms, ensures that it

complements rather than duplicates ongoing efforts. The platform also supports multiple languages, making it accessible across diverse communities. This flexibility positions ANCHOR as a scalable solution not only within Sierra Leone but also in other fragile and crisis-affected settings where resilience is urgently needed. And it is not just a health solution. The technology behind ANCHOR and its purpose - system strengthening through community involvement and resilience building through local responses - can be applied to other humanitarian sectors such as food insecurity with farmers and water, sanitation and hygiene in rural areas.



NEXT STEPS

In Sierra Leone, GOAL is working with the National Public Health Agency to transfer ownership of ANCHOR to the government, enabling greater integration with national health information systems and expanding the range of diseases the platform can surveil and respond to. This handover marks an important milestone in building sustainable, government-led health resilience.

In 2026, ANCHOR is being scaled in South Sudan with enhanced epidemiological modelling and prediction capabilities for Cholera – a climate-influenced disease shaped by poor water infrastructure – strengthening early warning signals and enabling localized responses before outbreaks are even declared.

Also in 2026, the first non-health ANCHOR solution launches to support rural water schemes in sub-Saharan Africa. By connecting community members and district engineers through AI-driven, easy-to-use digital platforms, the solution addresses delayed reporting of broken water points and prevents communities from reverting to unsafe water sources – demonstrating that ANCHOR's model of community empowerment and system strengthening extends well beyond health emergencies.



Join us in advancing health resilience in Sierra Leone and beyond. Whether you are a stakeholder, funder, or technical expert, your support can help scale this impactful initiative — ensuring that communities have access to timely, reliable health information and response tools during crises. Together, we can build stronger, more adaptive health systems that save lives and create sustainable resilience.

For more information or to get involved, contact us at:

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Innovating to Overcome Humanitarian Crisis

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