

CAPACITY STATEMENT

AIDE LIBERIA

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT / ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

1.1. Presentation of AIDE profile

1.1.1. Overview: History, Structure, and Capacity

AIDE is a national Non-Governmental Organization with experience in humanitarian and development aid, and structural poverty reduction. AIDE (African Institute for Development and Equity) was borne during the exit of CORDAID (a reputable International NGO Project Office, with over 120 years of global operations). With the International NGO Foundation operations ending in Q3 of 2022 after twenty-two years of operations—the entire staff began to find ways to:

1. Sustain the gains made by the exiting International NGO in the areas of Healthcare; Community Development; and Systems Strengthening
2. Continue to utilize the staff and keep them gainfully employed in an organization which will harness and develop their skills—as well as use them for the common good.
3. Close the gaps in expertise that will be needed for future development grants and projects.
4. Strengthen localization and achieve Global Development localization goals by creating a local entity with similar expertise as the dissolving entity.
5. Create partnership channels where the expertise of Local Experts, Communities of Practices; and Networks can be utilized when the opportunity allows.

In January 2022, the staff under the leadership of their Country Lead requested a formal transition from the International NGO to a Local Non-Governmental Organization—which was agreed to be led by the former head of the outgoing organization alongside the existing team. We took the first step to realizing this dream by incorporating a legal local Non-Governmental Organization named AIDE (AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY).

We support local communities in their efforts to improve health care, food security, education, employment, entrepreneurship, security and justice. Where disasters strike, we offer humanitarian assistance. Our multi-stakeholder approach seeks and promotes alliances of civil society organisations, as well as the public and the private sectors. We focus on local agents for change and implement innovative digital and financial methods to increase the impact of interventions.

In Sierra Leone AIDE recently implemented a project that has a coverage of 10,802 households in the Food Security and Livelihood Sector (self-reliance, skills development, and energy and environment). Besides, we also have our development projects focusing on food security, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness, nutrition governance and skills development running in different districts of the country.

In terms of managerial capacity, AIDE has a Code of Conduct, Gender Policy, established financial procedures and an anti-corruption policy and an open data policy. Through AIDE's Open Data policy, we strive to be a transparent, results oriented and results driven organization.

We have strong HR, finance, procurement, and monitoring systems in place to support project implementation. The organization also has inclusion, integrity, gender equality, protection and safeguarding policies and complaint feedback mechanisms in place to ensure the projects delivered meet the highest humanitarian standards. AIDE has a country office in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It has been fighting poverty and exclusion in West Africa’s most fragile societies and conflict-stricken areas. It delivers innovative solutions to complex problems by emphasizing sustainability and performance in projects that tackle security and justice, health and economic opportunity.

1.2. Technical Approach

At AIDE, we employ five principles in our efforts to foster inclusive economic growth in our private sector initiatives:

- **WE ADOPT A HYBRID APPROACH—CONSISTING OF MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM APPROACHES**
- **WE COLLABORATE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR**
- **WE PLACE COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP AT THE HEART OF OUR PROGRAMMES**
- **WE INTEGRATE ACROSS AIDE’S BREADTH OF THEMATIC CAPABILITIES AS BEST AS WE CAN**
- **WE EMBED GENDER AND YOUTH SENSITIVE APPROACHES FOR EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT**
- **WE CREATE BRIDGES FOR CONTEXTUAL ISSUES SUCH AS ICT AND LITERACY GAPS WHEN WORKING WITH SMES**
- **WE FOCUS ON THE SEGMENTS OF SMES WHO ENCOUNTER THE MOST ISSUES WITH GROWTH—MAINLY THE MISSING MIDDLE**

Our AIDE team brings a span of expertise and in-country experience gathered from across Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the Americas. All our programmes are led by local programme managers experienced in the local context and economic dynamics. CORDAID operated as an international NGO with no expats. We instead worked through the private Sector. This strategy has retained our individual talents and experiences and will be one of the strategic opportunity drivers in our Organization.

Nationally to date Cordaid/AIDE have directly supported over 476 SMEs and 100 Start-ups with business development services, helping them to increase their productivity, become investment-ready and access new markets to scale and create employment. We also have private sector deepening activities which have given indirect benefits to thousands of MSMEs.

We work to support developing economies by promoting:



AIDE brings extensive experience in the development of the private sector in Sierra Leone; supporting SMEs development, facilitating access to finance and development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

AIDE's Private Sector Development Toolkit focuses on Increased Firm Productivity & Diversification and Increased Market Linkages.

How We Do Our Work

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars • Workshops • Accelerators • Incubators • Research • Exchange Programs (Domestic and Intl) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SME Firm Assessments • Policy Design • Project Design • Strategy • Coaching and Mentoring • Ecosystem Events
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List of Private Sector and Economic Opportunities interventions in Sierra Leone and Liberia include:

- Design of Business Development Accelerator Program for Women in partnership with the Belgian Embassy. (AIDE)
- Business acceleration and Business Development programmes for 76 top Agribusiness firms—including supporting their out-grower model with the appropriate BDS knowledge. (AIDE)
- Business incubation and business acceleration programmes for 55 SMEs for UNDP and CAFOD (AIDE)
- The development and embedding of multi-stakeholder platforms and private sector networks to expand forums for collective action and linkages between firms and deployment of market information systems to increase market access opportunities (Supporting Partners such as Innovation Axis in organizing Pitch Nights & other stakeholders in organizing forums); (AIDE/CORDAID)
- Agricultural Transformation Strategy White Paper for 2022-2025 which sections are being used by the current Govt and Opposition as pillars of their agricultural strategy. This was also tabled at high levels of Govt. (AIDE)
- Strengthening access to business support services; (AIDE and CORDAID)
- Apprenticeship and youth employment programmes (Partnership with Limkokwing University); (CORDAID)
- Collaboration with financial services providers to develop and deploy products which meet sectoral needs (Establishment of Revolving loan fund with Ecobank Microfinance & Providing funds through Cordaid Investments to A Call to Business to support SME lending); (AIDE/CORDAID)
- Business incubation and business acceleration programmes for USAID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands, STICHTING CORDAID, and World Bank (RBDS)

Please find attached our Private Sector Offerings including Business Development Support Services.

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