

Report

Are we there yet? Localisation as the journey towards locally led practice

Models, approaches and challenges

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Acronyms

C4C	Charter for Change
CABRI	Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CLD	Community Led Development
CPA	Country Programmable Aid
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEPP	Disasters & Emergencies Preparedness Programme
ELNHA	Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors
GAC	Global Alliance for Communities
GB	Grand Bargain
GBF	Grassroots Business Fund
GFCF	Global Fund for Community Foundations
GFFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria
GGLC	Green Growth Leaders' Coalition
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
JSR	Joint Sector Review
LAC	Local Accelerator Coalition
LNO	Local and National Organisation
MCLD	Movement for Community-led Development
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RFF	Radical Flexibility Fund
SAS	Stopping As Success
SCLR	Survivor and community led crisis response
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNODRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Executive summary

Localisation and locally led international development practice has long been discussed, but has still not been delivered. Systemic barriers have posed challenges, and the term itself is contested. Now, the last tumultuous 18 months could provide a critical juncture to finally move forward with this crucial agenda. The pandemic has highlighted structural inequalities in the global system, and disrupted ways of working in the international development sector. The Black Lives Matter movement has brought conversations about racism and colonialism to the fore. And the climate crisis has highlighted the need for global action on humanity's challenges that remain rooted in local realities.

The emerging analysis in this review aims to set out the key issues in this agenda, building on a wealth of existing knowledge. It aims to span sectors, highlighting many new and existing models and approaches in the humanitarian, development, philanthropic and private sectors (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Sectors covered in this report



It reviews the barriers and challenges to localisation and locally led practice, with a view to informing a campaign for systemic change to move forward with this agenda. The review is based on: a rapid review of the literature and evidence on localisation and locally led practice; two consultations with over 100 total participants, targeted at Global South actors; and analysis of 28 existing models and approaches.

Section 2 of the review sets out a framework for analysing localisation efforts. Localisation is viewed as the journey towards an end-goal of locally led practice. There are many ways to undertake this journey, and the framework focuses on the importance of three key dimensions: resources; agency; and ways of being. It includes a series of 'levers' or descriptions of localisation efforts: decision-making, priorities, knowledge, relationships and delivery. The framework also points to the importance of clarifying and interrogating the question of 'who is local?'. The paper calls for a more critical, nuanced and reflective approach, which pays attention to the power dynamics in the process of defining who is 'local' (Box 1). Finally, the framework highlights the directionality of localisation efforts, in terms of whether they originate from the Global South or Global North. While we did not use the framework to undertake a comprehensive evaluation in this report, it helped us examine various localisation models from which we derived insights that can be used to promote localisation and locally led practice.

Box 1 What do we mean by ‘local’?

The language we use to describe concepts in development matters because inclusive and equitable terminology can serve as a catalyst for collective advocacy and movement-building. In many instances, the term ‘local’ is used to describe a wide range of Global South actors, including local and national governments, local and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, community-led organisations and communities themselves. In this review, we found many conceptions of the term ‘local’, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Conceptions of the term ‘local’

Type of model/approach	Definition of ‘local’
Global South movements, networks and funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities across the Global South • Community-led organisations • Community foundations • Community and other proximate leaders • Local and national civil society organisations in the Global South
North to South funds and funding mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots actors and movements • Local and national organisations based in the Global South • Representatives from Global South country governments • Private sector representatives from the Global South • Organisations rooted in the communities they serve
Global networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional governments across the Global South and North • Community-based organisations • Social entrepreneurs and innovators across Global South and North • Local leadership within developing contexts
Policy frameworks and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and national non-state actors (headquartered in their own aid-recipient countries, not affiliated to an international NGO) • National and sub-national state actors (state authorities in aid-recipient countries at local or national level) • Local and national organisations from the Global South
Practical and measurement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and national organisations from the Global South • Civil society organisations in the Global South • Community-led organisations in the Global South • Global South organisations and partners

Section 3 of the review describes barriers and challenges to the localisation agenda. These are analysed from the viewpoint of both Global North and Global South actors. The barriers shed light on the gap between rhetoric and reality: between the widespread use of localisation discourse and

its implementation on the ground. The barriers are well rehearsed and well documented, but have tended to take the perspectives of donors. This has been connected to top-down definitions of local actor capabilities and characteristics, used to demonstrate the perceived risks of funding

more directly. Ultimately, however, the literature points towards donor risk perceptions being more commonly based on assumptions than evidence. There are also risks associated with localisation for national and local organisations, including damaging horizontal accountability to communities, undermining efforts for genuine self-help, increasing competition between civil society actors, eroding their capacity for collective action, as well as security risks in humanitarian contexts. Underlying all this, a key risk is that ‘localisation’, rather than redistributing power, is seen as the end goal.

Section 4 examines a selection of models of and approaches to localisation efforts, which span many countries, actors, scales and modalities.

This mapping is illustrative rather than exhaustive, and is not intended as an evaluation or comparison of different initiatives. Two key observations surface from this analysis. One is the many different answers to the question ‘who is local?’ that are used by different actors and organisations, as shown in Box 1. The second is the wealth of innovative and varied models and approaches that have emerged, with many originating from Global South organisations and networks (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Examples of initiatives promoting localisation and locally led practice: a multitude of existing efforts



These lie mainly in four overlapping areas: movement-building and collective advocacy; shifting funding to the Global South; supporting proximate leaders; and knowledge creation and sharing. This section also describes several frameworks for measuring aspects of localisation that exist. Finally, it discusses different ways that the interventions of Northern bilateral and multilateral donors can support the dimensions of localisation, and spotlights a selection of their approaches, as well as cross-government agreements such as the Grand Bargain. Readers who are policymakers may wish to read this section first.

Section 5 concludes that many of the debates and demands around localisation are perennial, but that the current critical juncture may yet be an opportunity to move forward with this agenda. Based on our analysis, we make six key observations: power shapes the journey; power also shapes the destination; resource transfers

remain extremely low; agency and ways of being are neglected; good models for localisation already exist, especially from the Global South; and there is a dearth of data and evidence especially in measuring localisation progress.

There are four recommendations for international actors including bilateral and multilateral donors, intermediaries, and philanthropic organisations, as follows:

1. Learn from and accelerate initiatives that already exist – especially from the Global South
2. Transfer greater resources, including by tackling root causes of risk aversion and redesigning funding flows
3. Reduce encroachment of local actors' agency and respect their ways of being by rethinking organisational roles (and stepping back if appropriate) and shifting one's mindset
4. Let Global South actors lead the campaign to promote localisation and locally led practice.

1 Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

A wealth of recent research has recognised the transformative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that the resulting global crisis has further exposed deeply entrenched inequalities across all countries. Nevertheless, it is well known that injustices and power imbalances in the global development sector are longstanding, despite multiple efforts to bring about change. Citizens, governments and community organisations across the Global South have long called for a shift of power towards locally led practices and community led organisations and initiatives.

Recent developments during the pandemic have shifted more of the world's attention to these perennial issues. The Black Lives Matter movement, and increased calls for decolonisation of the aid system, have refocused the conversation about reform onto a key root cause of inequality in the global system: racist and colonial structures and behaviours that perpetuate unequal funding and decision-making systems and other power imbalances. Alongside this, advocates for climate equity and justice across the Global South have reinforced the need to support people fighting the causes and effects of the climate crisis in their own contexts, a cause which gains greater prominence as the climate crisis deepens.

The actions of many advocates for locally led practice, anti-racism, decolonisation and climate justice – further galvanised by the effects of the pandemic – have combined to create a unique entry point to more firmly advance a transformational shift in power, process and funding to local actors in the Global South – a key moment for a 'localisation revolution'.

1.2 Research purpose, questions and methodology

To inform and support change at this critical juncture, this report brings together analysis and reflections on localisation and locally led development practice from a wide range of sources, with a particular focus on increasing the emphasis on perspectives from the Global South. This report was produced between August and October 2021 with three key objectives in mind:

- **Key contribution to 17 Rooms leadership:** To feed into the ongoing 17 Rooms, which is a process that convenes stakeholders to promote action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prior to and after the September 2021 United Nations General Assembly meetings, particularly from the perspective of Room 11 on sustainable cities and communities.
- **Knowledge synthesis:** To summarise existing knowledge on issues related to different models and examples of localisation.
- **Future advocacy:** To inform a strategy for an upcoming 24-month campaign plan to measurably change the degree to which locally led development is supported through the SDGs.

The research questions for this paper fall into three main areas.

- **Reviewing evidence and conceptual frameworks**
 - What is the scale and nature of the problem that localisation is trying to address (including disparities in funding and decision-making power)? How is localisation defined in the existing literature, and what measurements/metrics/indicators exist?

- **Exposing barriers to localisation, and recommendations**
 - Why has the shift towards localisation not already happened? How can various actors practically advance a ‘localisation revolution’?
- **Capturing and analysing models and approaches**
 - What are the current and proposed models, modalities and approaches which aim to shift power and deliver localisation, and what insights/recommendations can be gained?

The methodology adopted for this report comprises four key components:

- A rapid review of an inclusive range of **literature and evidence** sources.
- A **framework** for analysing locally led international development practice and localisation.
- Review of a range of existing practical **models and approaches** to localisation efforts through a range of examples.
- Targeted **consultations** with community and broader Global South stakeholders involved in advocating for localisation, locally led development and shifting power, in partnership with the Global Fund for Community Foundations. *These inputs have been treated anonymously to protect identities.*

1.3 Positionality

As we explore further in the section below, existing published and cited research on this topic has been largely driven by actors in the Global North who are not themselves community or proximate leaders. This has reinforced existing knowledge hierarchies in the development sector, whereby knowledge production is driven by Northern actors. We therefore feel it important to

explicitly recognise the positionality of the team that has produced this research. Two out of the four core team researchers are of Global South background, and all team members are based in the Global North, working through a Northern-based think tank to produce this research.

Given this, we have sought throughout to adopt the following practices to embed research equity principles into this project:

- Openly exploring and writing about our own positionality in this research, and acknowledging perspectives that are traditionally excluded from this type of research.
- Carefully considering whose voices are and are not heard ‘through’ this research, and creating meaningful and credible avenues for under-represented people and groups through targeted consultations within the available time frame.
- Ensuring that the ways in which the research is disseminated, packaged and discussed is accessible to a wide audience and invites continued discussion and engagement on the ideas and initiatives presented.

In summary, we have sought to be explicit about our own commitment to equity and transparent about our own positionality. We have also sought to involve a wide range of voices and perspectives – particularly from the Global South – in our own analysis of different models and mechanisms of localisation and locally led development or practice. We do, however, recognise the inherent limits of this exercise and we invite discussions, participation and critiques of our analysis.

1.4 Research limitations

This research was conducted over a condensed period of two months. In this timeframe, we

identified a wide range of initiatives focused on localisation and locally led practice, however we were not able to conduct primary research to fully evaluate each example included in this report. We have used publicly available sources to describe different initiatives and map them against our proposed framework, based on their stated aims and activities. As such, we do not attempt any comparisons or formal evaluations. In addition, the examples highlighted in this report were identified through desk research and additional purposive sampling – they are therefore not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they constitute a fully representative sample of all localisation efforts.

Publicly available information on bilateral and multilateral donor approaches to localisation and locally led development varies across

institutions, and it was not possible to compare either approaches or performance against stated localisation goals in the absence of primary data. A key challenge is the lack of data transparency across all Northern donors regarding the percentage of funds channelled directly (or indeed indirectly) to a wide range of local actors in the Global South.

The outline of the report is as follows. Section 2 provides a conceptual framework of localisation; Section 3 examines the barriers blocking localisation; and Section 4 outlines examples of specific initiatives. Section 5 concludes and presents a series of recommendations. We have also produced a separate Annex that presents each of the initiatives included in this report in more detail, and maps them across to the conceptual framework.

2 Localisation as a journey towards the goal of locally led practice

Over the decades, the importance of locally led practice in global aid, development and philanthropy has become firmly established.

In international development assistance, international agreements have been reached, such as the commitment to ‘country ownership’ and ‘using country systems’ in the Paris Declaration and subsequently Busan. In humanitarian aid, there are promises to channel more funds to local actors with the Grand Bargain, which aimed to transfer 25% of global humanitarian funds to local and national actors by 2020 (IASC, 2016). Donors have made efforts towards these promises – for instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Obama administration committed to channel 30% of its funding to local actors during USAID Forward and its procurement reforms. There have been many terms and concepts associated with locally led international development practice, such as locally led development, community-led development, community philanthropy and people-led development.

There are a number of questions associated with these different terms: who is ‘local’, what is ‘community’, who defines ‘development’ and whose perspective merits the description ‘locally led’ (see, for instance, Kuipers et al., 2019; Roepstorff, 2020). No term is perfect; existing terminologies might not be able to capture the complex realities of people’s lives. Box 1 in the previous section highlights the complexities of the question ‘What do we mean by “local”?’.

There are also many different terms for the methods used to promote locally led practice, and

different terms are more common in some areas than others. For example, localisation is more common in the humanitarian sector, while ‘shift the power’ is more common in philanthropy, and the terms ‘ownership’ and ‘using country systems’ are more often used in development discourse.

Interpretations of these concepts are also contested. In humanitarian action, for instance, there are those who interpret localisation as decentralising the sector compared to a more transformative approach (Van Brabant and Patel, 2017); in philanthropy, there are multiple approaches to ‘shifting the power’ (see, for example, Hodgson and Pond, 2018; The Share Trust, 2021). Meanwhile, ‘ownership’ is seen in a range of ways, for example:

two competing, and potentially contradictory, concepts coexist: ownership as commitment to policies, however they were arrived at; and ownership as control over the process and outcomes of choosing policies ... multiple definitions make the term useful as a lubricant in development diplomacy. Recipient governments, donors and NGOs all use ‘ownership’ as a proxy for the deference others show to their claimed right to influence policy. As such, all can agree that ownership is a good thing (Fraser and Whitfield, 2008).

2.1 Our proposed conceptualisation: the journey and the destination

In this paper, towards our aim of reviewing and understanding localisation efforts, we propose

making a distinction between the destination (locally led practice) and the journey (localisation).

In our August consultations, we asked a mostly Global South audience the question: ‘How will we know if we have arrived at locally led development? What does locally led development mean to you?’. A clustering of the responses is shown in Figure 3. While many different terms are used, there is some agreement about the nature of the destination different actors are heading towards. Recognising these complexities, as a shorthand in this paper, we will use the term ‘locally led practice’ for the destination many actors seek.

If locally led practice is an ideal, then a journey is necessary to arrive there. In this paper, we use the

term ‘localisation’ to refer to this journey: that is, what is necessary to achieve locally led practice in international development – whether that takes the form of changing the architecture of an existing system, or the emergence of a new one, as shown in Figure 4.

Of course, localisation and locally led development practice are both so deeply interlinked that they are often treated as a single concept. But as we will attempt to show further, making a distinction between these two concepts is helpful in revealing the power dynamic that shapes the process of localisation, which may determine *whether or not* it arrives at locally led practice.

Figure 3 Responses from a Mentimeter exercise during the August consultations on the destination or vision

Questions: ‘How will we know if we have arrived at locally led development? What does locally led development mean to you?’

Happier communities	Sustained change	Marginal voices count
Pride in place	Suitable and sustainable progress in development	Self reliance, self governed
All people have agency and feel part of the solution	People at local level deciding on their own that they need change using their own resources.	More active community members
Gender and social inclusion	I envision a place/space where there is a culture of collaboration and active communication	For me, we will have arrived at locally led development when actors from the Global North no longer control all decisions and funding
Donors are not at the centre of decisions or conversations about how money is used	A situation where individuals freely contribute to aspects of their development without being forced, told or pushed to do so	Feminist
The local community participates in the event we are calling Localisation and then we accomplish our vision	Power with	Equitable partnerships, solidarity, self determination

Source: Anonymous participants in the August consultations

Figure 4 Localisation as the journey, locally led international development practice as the destination



Source: Authors

2.2 Localisation's ends and means

In its most basic form, power is an obstacle to localisation because power remains in the hands of international actors to decide who has capacity or not, what capacity counts, who gets funding or not, what types of partnerships prevail, and who gets access to coordination structures and strategic decision making forums (Barbelet et al., 2021).

There is a long history of promoting locally led development practice. As mentioned earlier, the Paris and Busan agreements promoted the concept of ownership. Then there is the so-called 'Second Orthodoxy' that emphasises the importance of politics in development practice – some approaches under it advocate for a 'politically smart, locally led' way of working (Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Teskey, 2017). However, there have been questions raised regarding previous efforts and concepts around whether they can actually lead to locally led development practice (Fisher and Marquette, 2016; Green and Guijt, 2019; King, 2020; Pinnington, forthcoming).

At the same time, many practices in international aid and development – even including ones that

purport to be locally led – can be characterised as racist or colonial (Pailey, 2019; Bheeroo et al., 2020; Peace Direct, 2021).

The key insight from these critiques is that in international aid and development, including in efforts to promote locally led development practice, there is often a failure to sufficiently account for power dynamics especially among donors, international actors and national and local actors.

Going by our proposed understanding (that localisation is the journey, while locally led practice is the destination), localisation can be seen as a means to an end. But if localisation is a means to an end, then any localisation effort faces the same pitfalls as others that have tried to promote locally led practice in the past. That is because power infuses everything – including localisation efforts.

If we decouple being locally led (the destination) from localisation (the journey), then it follows that localisation might not necessarily arrive at being locally led. Indeed, it may merely 'localise the sector' without embodying the ideals of being locally led (Baguios, forthcoming a). This tells us that, in shifting power to local actors, the means matter just as much as the end. Shifting power cannot be 'imposed' (Abrahamsen, 2004).

In this paper, we attempt to address this by putting the problem of power at the centre: that is, by characterising localisation efforts through a framework that reveals their power dynamics.

That power is central to our analysis presents an important shift in the way localisation and locally led practice is often framed. In our framework, the ultimate value of localisation is not necessarily aid effectiveness (although that is an important positive feature of it), but in shifting the power from international to local actors.

2.3 Characterising the journey of localisation

The main unit of analysis in this report is localisation efforts, or efforts to promote locally led practice, because this is what we seek to understand better. This could include specific funding mechanisms (e.g. community philanthropy), discrete initiatives (e.g. Charter for Change), networks (e.g. Network for Empowered Aid Response), movements (e.g. Shift the Power) and policy frameworks (e.g. the Grand Bargain). We understand all these as different journeys that all try to get to the destination.

How can localisation efforts be characterised holistically with regard to both ends and means and with a view of power dynamics? In this paper we propose an analytical framework.

First, we propose looking at what Baguios (forthcoming c) calls the three dimensions of localisation: **resources**, **agency** and **ways of being**. Second, these dimensions, in turn, are shaped by five levers of localisation – which describe different features of localisation efforts. Third, we also look at the directionality of localisation – whether it stems from the Global North or Global South. Fourth, we ask the question ‘who is local?’

These dimensions, levers, directionality and issue of ‘who is local?’ shape how power is manifest – i.e. the power dynamics – within the localisation process. This builds on the classic work of Rowland (1997) and Lukes (2005) and their conceptualisations of power. These dimensions (resources, agency and ways of being – which, in turn, are shaped by the levers), directionality and answer to ‘who is local?’ determine the extent to which local actors *can exercise* decision-making power, non-decision-making power and ideological power, as well as the extent to which

local actors *can resist* the same kind of powers imposed on them by external actors.

2.3.1 Dimensions of localisation

Baguios (forthcoming c) proposes looking at the following three dimensions of localisation.

Resources

Resources mostly refers to the funding transferred to local actors. Many efforts to localise/promote locally led practices measure funding; for example, the humanitarian Grand Bargain among donors and humanitarian stakeholders aims to transfer 25% of global humanitarian funds to local actors by 2020 (IASC, 2016); the Local Accelerator Coalition (The Share Trust, 2021) highlights how less than 1% of the \$167.8 billion in official development assistance (ODA) in 2018 went directly to local development actors. The quality of funding is important too: promoting locally led practice requires funding local actors ‘as directly as possible’ (i.e., via fewer intermediaries), in a flexible way that could cover core costs, and over longer time frames (IASC, 2016; Peace Direct, 2020). Finally, how funding is accessed matters: ideally, funding eligibility and contractual obligations are not onerous to local actors, especially those who may not have the existing infrastructure/personnel to deal with international requirements (Hodgson and Pond, 2018; Urquhart et al., 2020). In the development sector, these three elements of directness, quality and access are also emphasised. For example, in the Paris and Busan agreements (OECD, 2005; 2011), donors committed to using country systems as their ‘first’ or ‘default’ option; to increasing the predictability of aid flows; and to reducing the transactions costs of aid.

Agency

Agency in this context can be understood as ‘the ability of national/local actors to identify their problems and priorities, and design/implement

their own solutions' (Baguios, forthcoming c). This definition builds on the works of Fraser and Whitfield (2008), Obrecht (2014) and King (2020). The starting point of this concept is that everyone has agency: it accepts collective agency via the sovereignty of states, but also individual agency in people's right to exercise 'self-determination' – that is, their ability to 'determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development' (United Nations, 1966, in Slim, 2021). Second, recognising states' sovereignty and people's self-determination places the responsibility of pursuing development primarily on the government and its citizens, including civil society. In other words, the pursuit of development is 'the province of local actors' that, through foreign aid interventions, 'is encroached upon by international agents' (Obrecht, 2014). This point is important because it highlights that, while everyone has agency, it can be encroached upon by others. The participation of international actors in the development process of other countries means that there is an inherent tendency in encroaching on national/local actors' agency (e.g. donor use of policy conditionality deliberately encroaches on agency). Third, also recognising that donors and local actors may have competing preferences, agency can therefore be understood as the ability of local actors to 'pursue their own policy preferences, resisting donor priorities while still taking the money' (Fraser and Whitfield, 2008). Fourth, it is important to realise that barriers to agency may manifest at the level of individuals (e.g. the exclusion of local actors in particular meetings), and that barriers to agency are not only external but can also be, to some extent, internal (e.g. a local actor's lack of confidence because they cannot speak the language in which a decision-making meeting is being held).

Ways of being

Ways of being is a concept that brings a decolonial lens to localisation. Decolonial critiques argue

that a specific kind of 'development' is being advanced by dominant powers: one that is 'linear, unidirectional, material [...], driven by commodification and capitalist markets' (Kothari et al., 2019: xxii), with negative impacts not only for social relations but also the environment. This kind of 'maldevelopment' (Tortosa, 2019) is encouraged by a particular conception of modernity, that has a tendency for 'universalism', envisioning a 'single, now globalized world' that privileges Western ontologies (*being in the world*) and epistemologies (*understanding the world*) (Kothari et al., 2019: xxii). Within aid/development in general, even without a decolonial lens, there are already critics of simply adapting Western/Weberian ways of working, even if they are not suitable to the context (Ang, 2018). For localisation, decoloniality extends this argument: the imposition of Western/Weberian concepts of 'modernity' – seen in the bias towards certain actors or actions over others (e.g. bias for formal NGOs over indigenous entities with a different structure; bias for contractual over informal embedded relationships) – is contrary to a vision of what the Zapatistas call a 'world in which many worlds fit' (Baguios, forthcoming b; Escobar, 2018). In the same way that encroachment of agency can be manifest at an individual level or internally, the same is true with regard to respecting dignity (or lack thereof): it may be that a local actor's dignity is undermined because they might not live up to their internalised Northern notions of what they think is 'good' or 'correct'.

Table 2 provides some analytical questions to determine how these dimensions play out in a given localisation effort. These questions are normative. We propose that the ideal localisation effort, which leads to genuinely locally led practice, is one that sufficiently transfers resources to local actors, does not encroach on local actors' agency, and respects local actors' ways of being.

Table 2 Questions for the dimensions of localisation

Dimensions of localisation	Key questions to determine whether the dimensions are present and their extent
To determine whether resources are sufficiently transferred to local actors, we can ask:	Are funds transferred to local actors in line with or greater than existing targets (e.g. 25% according to the Grand Bargain commitment)? Are funds transferred directly to local actors without intermediaries? Is the way to access funding inclusive and not burdensome to local actors? Are local actors able to use the resources according to their needs and preferences? Are there time frames and restrictions associated with the funding?
To determine whether or not local actors' agency is encroached upon, we can ask:	Are local actors able to set their own agenda and pursue their own priorities? Are local actors able to identify the problem and lead in the search for a solution? Do local actors have space to make key decisions by themselves or with local/ domestic stakeholders (or do they have to negotiate decisions with external actors)?
To determine whether or not local actors' ways of being are respected, we can ask:	Are local actors compelled to change their (organisational/individual) identity or form in engaging with international actors? Are local/indigenous knowledge systems recognised, respected and used? Are local cultures and ways of working respected? Are local meanings and values respected?

Source: Authors

2.3.2 Levers of localisation

These dimensions, in turn, are determined by the stakeholders and the process involved in a given localisation effort. For example, the resources dimension is shaped by how the funding mechanism is designed, who decides on allocations and what kind of activities/goals are eligible for funding.

These 'levers of localisation' are the material facts about localisation – i.e. they are descriptive of a particular localisation effort. These levers cover the practical issues that are often discussed in the literature on localisation activities, and are where intervention can occur to make the journey (localisation) remain on track for getting to the destination (genuine locally led practice). In other words, if an external actor wants to improve their localisation effort, then they can do so by tweaking the levers of localisation.

Table 3 sets out our five levers of localisation, which are an attempt at a relatively comprehensive and conceptually clear description of the different ways that external actors can change their practices, and which are drawn from the extensive literature on localisation, ownership and related topics. These levers are relatively detailed, with the aim to conceptually detangle the features of localisation efforts that are sometimes considered together. For example, the frequent emphasis on the importance of using local knowledge does not usually clarify which actors are creating and using that local knowledge, even though these latter aspects are crucial.

These levers do not neatly correspond to a particular dimension – indeed, the dimensions are more than simply the sum of all levers. Whether resources are sufficiently transferred to local actors, whether their agency is encroached upon, and whether their ways of being are respected are

an outcome of the different configurations of these levers. Given the complexity of these interactions, the questions in Table 3 are descriptive rather

than normative. They can be used to understand, describe and analyse the details of each localisation effort more clearly.

Table 3 Levers of localisation

Levers of localisation	Key questions to describe the levers
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who gets to make decisions, and what decisions do they get to make? For example, regarding: funding allocations, which priorities to pursue, how to define success/results, how to design the localisation effort, who would deliver it, and how to monitor and evaluate it. ● Who gets to define who ‘local actors’ are? ● What is the decision-making process for each of these? Who is included? How have stakeholders been involved? Was there negotiation and/or participation, and if so how is this conducted? Are all aspects of the process communicated to all stakeholders?
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whose priorities/preferences are considered in the localisation effort? What are the criteria/what are the values used in making decisions about the localisation effort? Whose priorities or preferences are used to define success? ● What information/evidence is available on stakeholders’ priorities/preferences? For example, is there a survey or consultation that reveals local actors/people’s priorities or preferences? How is this information/evidence captured?
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whose knowledge counts in understanding the local context, including in identifying the problem and developing solutions? ● How is knowledge, data and evidence being produced, collected and used? For example, how is it used in decision-making or in evaluation? ● Is learning occurring, and if so how and by whom? Are local actors learning and creating knowledge? ● How is the localisation effort evaluated?
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the relationship among the stakeholders – for example, between local actors and donors, or between local actors and communities? Between state and non-state actors; between different state actors; between private sector actors and NGOs/CSOs? ● How is the relationship defined? Through a contracting process? A long-term partnership? What are the factors that may affect this definition – for example, trust between stakeholders, or the embeddedness of actors? ● What roles does each stakeholder have in the localisation effort – for example, as intermediaries or implementers? How are these roles determined? And how do these roles shape the effort’s outcome and ultimate impact?
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is the localisation effort in terms of transferring resources? For example, how much funding is available to local actors? What are the requirements for accessing funding? What are the requirements in terms of spending the funding (e.g. in terms of reporting or audit)? ● How is the transfer of resources delivered? For example, through sub-contracting, open calls for proposals or through donor selection? Which organisations and/or personnel actually deliver localisation efforts? Who carries out the monitoring and evaluation?

Source: Authors

2.3.3 Directionality of localisation

The directionality of localisation is the third important aspect to consider. Directionality refers to the source of localisation efforts, which can be either from the Global North or the Global South. In the same vein that localisation literature is mostly produced in English and by Global North individuals/organisations, many localisation efforts that feature as case studies in the literature are often initiated by Global North organisations (for example, localisation efforts of large international NGOs, or INGOs). We recognise that the directionality of most localisation efforts cannot be adequately captured by the North–South binary – most of them will fall somewhere in between. Nevertheless, by drawing attention to localisation’s directionality (even if our categorisation is imperfect), we can not only honour our commitment to equity by highlighting localisation examples that can be said to have emerged from efforts of Global South actors, but also raise a key question: can localisation efforts themselves be ‘localised’? If so, how can this be done? This calls for more evidence in future with regard to the differences (if any) between localisation efforts that stem from the North compared to those stemming from the South.

2.4 Who is local?

The final element which completes our framework relates to the crucial question we mentioned at the beginning of this section: ‘who is local?’. Key questions to be asked here include:

- Who is considered ‘local’? What is being ‘local’ defined by? Who is eligible for funding for ‘local’ actors? Who is considered to have ‘local’ knowledge?

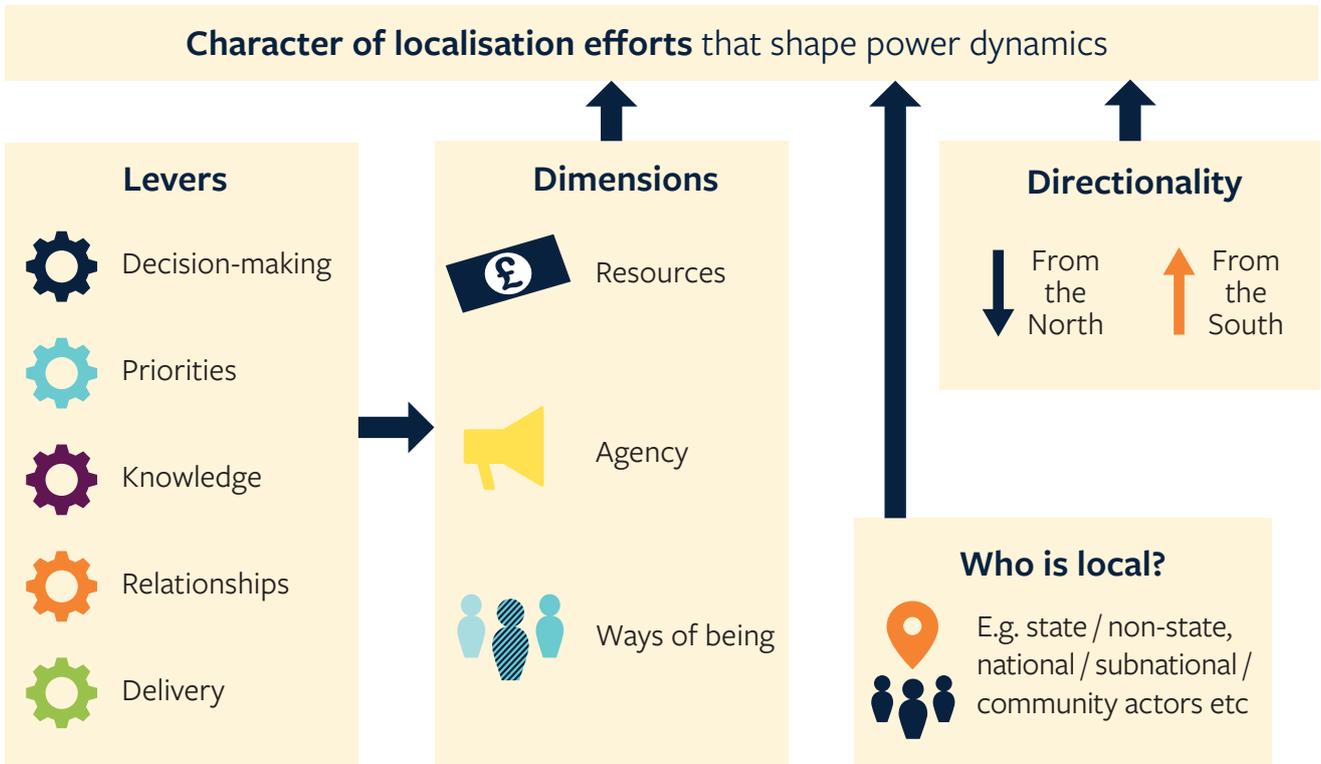
- Where is local? Among rural vs. urban communities? Immediate family? Diaspora, migrants and refugees?
- Who is the direct recipient of the localisation effort, and what is the extent of their involvement?
- Who is ultimately impacted by the localisation effort, and what is the extent of their involvement?

Crucially, the process of defining who is local in any particular context is contested. Once again, there is a need to pay attention to power – for instance, who has the power to define who is local, and how certain power dynamics may be obscured using such labels (e.g. between local elites versus local non-elites who both fall under the label ‘local’) (Roepstorff, 2020). This can pose a challenge to localisation efforts (see Section 3).

We recognise that there is a diversity of local actors, and that local actors are not a homogenous group. Thus, it is important to include this within the characterisation to add nuance to our understanding of localisation efforts.

As shown in Figure 5, these factors all play a part in characterising the journey of localisation. The dimensions, levers and directionality and the answer to the question ‘who is local’ shape the power dynamics within the process of localisation, and provide a useful framework for analysing and characterising the models of localisation. In turn, the power dynamics within the localisation process can reveal whether or not the journey is likely to lead to the destination.

Figure 5 A framework for characterising localisation



Source: Authors

As mentioned above, we propose that the ideal localisation effort, which leads to genuinely locally led practice, is one that sufficiently (in terms of quantity and quality) transfers resources to local actors, does not encroach on local actors’ agency, and respects local actors’ ways of being. There might be localisation efforts that exhibit some of these characteristics but not others: for example, a funding mechanism that shifts resources but encroaches on local actors’ agency and does not respect their way of being. These characteristics can also be exhibited to a great extent or only to a small extent. It might even be that some localisation efforts have mixed dimensions: for instance, it may encroach on a local actor’s ability

to identify a problem, but not encroach on their ability to design a solution.

This framework uses abstractions for the sake of analysis. As with all abstractions, it may not fully capture the complex realities of localisation efforts. At the same time, analysing and characterising models of localisation requires, to some extent, subjective judgement. Nevertheless, keeping such a framework in mind can help characterise localisation efforts. While we did not use the framework to undertake a comprehensive evaluation in this report, it helped us examine various localisation models from which we derived insights that can be used to promote localisation and locally led practice.

3 Barriers and challenges

3.1 Why is change not happening on a wider scale?

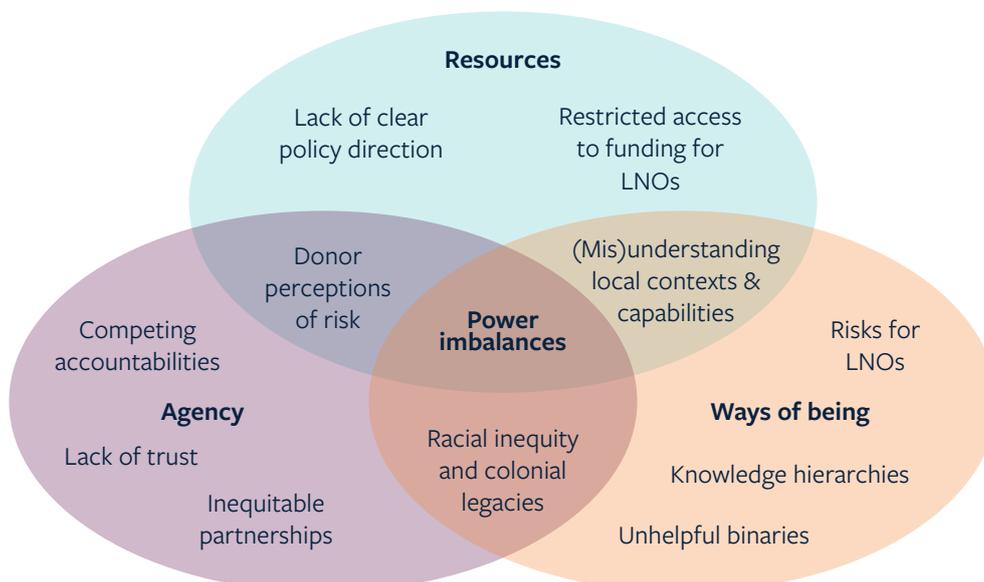
Unfortunately, the consensus in the literature is that much more is required to bring about the systemic change needed to enable genuine local leadership and agency within the aid sector. Drawing on the framework in Section 2, this section examines the barriers and challenges to localisation.

Studies that closely analyse the implementation of localisation efforts on the ground have uncovered gaps between rhetoric and reality. In the case of refugee-led organisations in Uganda, for instance, Pincock et al. observe: ‘whilst rhetoric at the global level suggests localisation has become a major theme in elite policy circles, this has failed to unfold at the local level’ (Pincock et al., 2021: 730). Similarly, Roche et al. comment that ‘despite general rhetorical commitments to supporting locally led change amongst aid agencies, in reality, effective practice in this area is actually quite rare’ (2020: 142).

Barbelet et al. note that the evidence on obstacles to localisation is based on ‘a strong consensus in the literature’ (2021: 69). The evidence has tended to be perceptions-based and evidenced through systematic documentation of the attitudes of international actors, as well as the experience of local actors (Barbelet et al., 2021). This section will outline the barriers and challenges associated with localisation and its implementation, based on the literature and consultations conducted for this review. It aims to view these challenges from the perspective of both international and local actors, recognising that there has been a tendency in the literature to view barriers predominantly from the perspective of donors.

Recognising that these barriers and challenges may be more nuanced depending on the context and may encompass the dimensions in diverse ways, we tried to approximate how these can be generally mapped onto the three dimensions of localisation (see Figure 6). The examples in this section show how heavily these dimensions overlap and are interconnected.

Figure 6 Overview of identified barriers



3.2 Resources

3.2.1 Competing accountabilities and donor perceptions of risk

A recurrent reason for resistance on the part of donors towards granting more power and agency to local actors, for example through direct funding, is the low appetite for risk among donor agencies (Barbelet, 2021; Bond, 2021). The perception of risk is closely connected to the perception of local actor capabilities. Larger INGOs might be perceived as ‘better equipped’ than local organisations, for instance to meet the reporting requirements of donors (Bond, 2021), and there is a connected perception that localisation infers a loss of ‘control’ (Global Alliance for Communities, 2021) over how funds are spent. Donor approaches to reporting and measurement can seem constraining and controlling to local and national organisations (LNOs), because they may not reflect what they believe is valuable in advancing change in their own context. At the same time, donors’ reporting requirements are affected by their domestic accountability to constituents, as well as concerns about waste and the diversion of aid money.

There is a perception that it is riskier to do assistance through local actors – possibility or reality of diversion of funds for corruption or to terrorist orgs. This is a perception, not necessarily the reality. But it is a strong issue. (USAID Consultation: barriers to localization; Global Alliance for Communities, 2021).

A common response to this perceived risk is to suggest longer-term investment in the capacity development of local organisations, so that, for instance, their financial management systems can meet the requirements of donors. Investing in

capacity, including through more core funding, is raised in the literature as an important feature of localisation (Wall and Hedlund, 2016; Barbelet et al., 2021), as project-based funding can negatively affect the sustainability of local organisations. However, developing local organisational capacity to meet donor needs and requirements poses challenges, especially in terms of what this review has called ‘ways of being’. When donor-defined capabilities are prioritised above others, there is a risk that local organisations are reshaped into ‘project implementers’. Studies also note that the focus on developing donor-defined organisational capacity can come at the expense of accountability to affected populations (Barbelet et al., 2021: 52; Bond, 2021). Another suggestion in the literature, to overcome the challenge of perceived risk, is to use intermediary organisations. However, this can result in such organisations (usually INGOs or UN agencies) imposing their own, often inflexible, due diligence and compliance processes, primarily focused on fiduciary risk (Stoddard et al., 2019, in Barbelet et al., 2021). In a systematic review of the localisation literature in the humanitarian sector, Barbelet et al. (2021) conclude that the perception of fiduciary and other risks is more commonly based on assumptions than evidence.

Donor articulations of risk are affected by their own politics and the perceptions of, and discourses around, aid within their domestic constituencies (Yanguas, 2018). In the UK, for instance, increasing pressure to demonstrate the ‘value for money’ of aid has coincided with the rise of anti-globalist political agendas that have pushed aid to become more firmly aligned with the ‘national interest’. Barakat and Milton note that ‘somewhat paradoxically, the localisation agenda is itself threatened by the rise of anti-globalist forces that support more localised, nativist ideologies’ (2020: 157). Baguios suggests that a domestic political environment that is not conducive to

localisation may be reinforced by unhelpful narratives that arise from the international aid sector itself – for example, in simplistic fundraising communications that perpetuate ‘white saviourism’ and do not sufficiently inform the public about aid (International Development Committee, 2021). On the other hand, a shift away from a ‘charity’ motivation for aid and towards a focus on solidarity, cooperation, resilience and diplomacy (Glennie, 2020) could potentially provide an alternative narrative which connects a drive for mutual interest with the localisation agenda.

Ultimately, the question of ‘control’ comes down to the ‘fundamental tension’ within donor agencies: between adapting to local contexts and financial and other management requirements (Wall and Hedlund, 2016; Gulrajani and Mills, 2019). Bond notes that declining support for UK aid among the general public, alongside ‘NGO scandals’, have resulted in the need to be ‘hyper accountable to donors’, with ‘limited structural incentives for direct accountability to local communities’ (2021: 12). Corbett, based on analysis in Sudan, states that ‘without a change in how aid agencies attempt to balance their bureaucratic need for centralised control with the grassroots need for flexibility and spontaneity, action arising from accumulated local learning will remain limited’ (2011: 70).

Although control of all management functions does not always lie with donor HQs, who often delegate autonomy to ‘field offices’ (Honig, 2018), the control of higher-level strategy, objectives and oversight functions often remains highly centralised. In an assessment of locally led approaches in the Pacific-based Green Growth Leaders’ Coalition, Craney and Hudson conclude that ‘outsiders seeking to deliver locally led, politically smart programmes need to either

accept that competing priorities, results and values will work to limit the extent of true local ownership, or be sufficiently committed to true local leadership to accept that this may well cut against organisational imperatives’ (2020: 1,665). As shown in Box 2, Roche and Denney (2019) summarise seven features of the political economy of donors, many of which represent barriers to locally led practice.

Box 2 The political economy of donors

1. Tendency for the analysis and relationships of expatriate staff and external consultants (both of whom are usually short term) and Western leadership perspectives to be privileged.
2. Predominance of principal-agent notions of accountability, rather than peer, social or political forms of accountability.
3. Preference for more engineered and theoretically more predictable processes than less certain emergent ones.
4. Pressures to spend against and meet pre-determined and easily communicable, tangible targets.
5. Risk-averse, compliance culture which seeks a high level of ‘control’.
6. Discomfort with uncertainty and unpredictability.
7. The political space for development agencies is highly constrained and public attitudes to aid are ill-informed and not politically salient.

Source: Roche and Denney, 2019

3.2.2 A lack of clear and consistent policy direction within donors

The focus in humanitarian policy to date has tended to be on interpreting localisation within the frame of resource competition. Barakat and Milton identify this as one of the key barriers, arguing that ‘the focus of the debate on the 25% figure was a reductionist move that has in one sense created a zero-sum mentality between established Western NGOs and Southern NGOs, which is detrimental to the goal of humanitarian partnerships’ (2020: 150). Localisation is a politically contested concept, which Pincock et al. state has ‘no agreed upon policy definition, even in the humanitarian context’ (2021: 732). Looking specifically at the case of refugee-led organisations in Kampala, they argue that the lack of clear and consistent policy guidance results in an ‘ambiguity’ that catalyses contestation in local contexts, directly impeding localisation. They conclude that, in refugee governance, the inclusion and relative success of refugee-led organisations ‘owes more to either their instrumental value to international actors and national actors, or to their ability to strategically bypass formal humanitarian governance, than their inherent value to the community’ (ibid.).

Connectedly, Barbelet et al. comment that the literature ‘consistently reminds donors of their critical role in creating effective policies and incentives to support localisation’, while at the same time pointing to ‘the fundamental lack of clear strategic and policy direction from most donors on localisation’ (Barbelet et al., 2021: 12). They also point out that existing recommendations to donors and other actors are based on ‘emerging good practice and evidence’, which has not yet been systematically implemented at scale. On this basis, a key recommendation forwarded by the review is to promote collective action on

the part of donors to ‘create a common vision’ (Barbelet et al., 2021: 65). This could result in the development of ‘collective approaches’ that incentivise partners (including intermediary UN agencies) to change their practice (ibid.). Arguably, the weakness of this mainstreaming and scaling up of localisation efforts may have led to localisation efforts being seen as an ‘add-on’ rather than ‘core’ development practice and, as such, a failure to meet commitments and aspirations for localisation. This lack of clear policy and classification of funding flows also affects the ability to track and assess the implementation of localisation efforts, as discussed further in Section 4.

3.2.3 Funding flows and access to funding

Access to resources is low, the donors and development forces are stronger. (Consultation Participant, Session 2, 31 August 2021).

When viewed within the frames of resource competition, the ability to access funding becomes paramount. Despite the 25% target, the Local Accelerator Coalition (The Share Trust, 2021) highlights how less than 1% of the \$167.8 billion in ODA in 2018 was accessed by national and local organisations directly. Wall and Hedlund outline that current approaches to direct funding typically create many obstacles for local organisations. They note that, to apply, organisations are required to complete extensive paperwork, in English, as well as demonstrate organisational capacity for financial and narrative reporting. In a 2014 CARITAS survey of 195 representatives from national organisations, a variety of factors were identified that made sourcing international funding difficult for such organisations. These included lack of awareness of opportunities, short deadlines, language barriers and the need to comply with technical

requirements (CARITAS, 2014: 10). According to the CARITAS study, 63% of national organisations felt it had become more difficult to access international funding in the last three years (CARITAS, 2014, in Wall and Hedlund, 2016).

On the donor side, the challenge of funding large numbers of individual organisations has been raised. This increases the complexity of funding and necessitates more time and staff to manage all of the grants. There is a sense that this stretches the institutional capacities of donors so that they are less likely to be able to monitor and respond to risk. This is a barrier within organisations such as USAID, where there is a:

perception that localization (small grants to small organizations, versus the large contractors USAID typically funds) is too slow. You have large pipelines that emerge as you try to identify local partners, that are slow to materialize. It takes as much effort for USAID to sign a \$500M contract with [a] large INGO as it does [a] \$1M contract to [a] local organisation. (USAID Consultation: barriers to localization; Global Alliance for Communities, 2021).

Connectedly, Barbelet et al. observe that ‘the quality and quantity of funding to local actors is affected by the mechanisms used by donors to cascade funding to local actors with very few examples of donors directly funding local actors’ (2021: 55). As noted, intermediary organisations have been used by donors to implement their localisation goals, but the nature of local leadership and agency to emerge from these can be significantly harmed by inequitable partnerships. As Bond has shown, in the UK context donors using UK INGOs as intermediaries can reinforce existing power imbalances, where UK INGOs are in a position of power because

they have the relationship with the donor and are responsible for completing due diligence on local organisations (2021). Furthermore, Barbelet et al. observe that donors ‘do not tend to monitor the added value of intermediaries or how these intermediaries partner with local actors, whether in terms of the quality of funding or the quality of partnerships’ (2021: 55). Elsewhere, donors like USAID have identified resistance from intermediaries to do things differently:

[There is r]esistance from USAID’s current implementing partners, who are great partners for USAID, but have their own set of interests as well. They don’t want funding taken away from them, to go to local groups. (USAID Consultation: barriers to localization; Global Alliance for Communities, 2021).

Other challenges for local organisations identified include the marginalisation of specific types of actors, including women-led and refugee-led organisations; limited domestic resource mobilisation; and national-level restrictions that make formally registering as an actor that can receive international funding complex (Barbelet et al., 2021; Pincock et al., 2021). Indeed, in the case of the latter, a number of studies raise the challenge of shrinking civil society space affecting the capacity of local organisations to operate freely and build transnational partnerships (Roepstorff, 2020; Bond, 2021; Moyo and Imafidon, 2021).

Studies also raise issues related to the quality of funding and its effects on the capacities of national and local organisations, including the discretionary autonomy of local actors to choose how funds are spent, lack of resources for core costs, security and compliance costs (Barbelet et al., 2021). In the consultations and studies, more flexible and long-term funding is advocated

for, which is seen as especially important for developing relationships and equitable partnerships based on trust. These constraints affect not just the resources dimension, but also agency and ways of being, as elaborated below. Finally, the studies raise the issue that the prominence of project-based funding results in a lack of dedicated funding for increasing organisational capacity and organisational resilience (Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships, 2019; Barbelet et al., 2021). In their study of refugee-led organisations in Kampala, Pincock et al. state that they face ‘a chicken-and-egg problem of not having the funding or recognition to build capacity but not having the capacity to acquire funding or recognition’ (2021: 731). However, they note that some organisations succeed despite these constraints; they observe ‘a common pattern underlying the emergence of these outliers’, where they bypass the formal humanitarian system ‘by building their own transnational networks’ (ibid.).

3.3 Ways of being

3.3.1 Risks to local organisations

In order not to destroy the qualities that make local groups successful in the first place, care is required when increasing direct donor funding. For example, Bano has shown how external funding destroyed functioning civil society in Pakistan by eroding the cooperation that underpins collective civic action (Bano, 2012; Green, 2016). This point was echoed in the consultations, when one participant stated that, in the current funding climate:

there are no incentives for CSO[s] to collaborate as we’re in competition for funding. (Consultation Participant, Session 2, 26 August 2021).

Green notes that, when foreign money flows in, the unpaid activists that form the core of such organisations can lose trust in their leaders. Based on research with CSOs in Bosnia, Green claims that even their supporters can come to view them as little more than ‘briefcase CSOs’, only interested in winning funding (Green, 2016).

Large project-based funds can damage the agility, local asset base and horizontal accountability of community-based structures, often through processes that seek to formalise civic associations such as grassroots movements into NGOs (Pinnington, 2014). Grassroots movements (for example, self-help initiatives that rely on collective action through volunteers) are often weakly institutionalised and do not necessarily want to formalise themselves (INTRAC, 2014). In this context, analysts have noted that direct funding from international donors can impose institutional templates – at the very least for control and accountability purposes – that can have ‘very negative effects on capacities for genuine self-help’ (Booth, 2012: 83).

If funding mechanisms are not designed carefully, paying due attention to agency and ways of being, local civil society and self-help structures can be reduced to the implementers of externally constituted, upwardly accountable projects.

Another risk to local organisations raised in the literature relates to security and safety, particularly in humanitarian contexts. In the case of Syrian cross-border collaborations, Duclos et al. (2019: 9) raise a tension between ‘lives to be saved and lives to be risked’. They note that, in the absence of international agencies, local Syrian health workers can be made vulnerable to security and political risks. They state that aid collaborations have institutionalised practices whereby Syrian local staff are the only humanitarian workers risking their lives

on the ground, and conclude that efforts to forward the localisation agenda ‘need to engage in supporting local actors to mitigate risks that they (and their families) would be bearing’ (Duclos et al., 2019: 9).

3.3.2 Definitions of ‘the local’: unhelpful binaries and ‘critical localism’

In the consultations conducted for this review, as well as the literature, a common challenge associated with localisation is how the ‘local’ is defined in binary opposition with the ‘international’ or ‘global’. This has obscured the complexity of local contexts, and risks reinforcing unequal power dynamics. Roepstorff argues that constructing the ‘local’ and the ‘international’ as binary opposites is problematic as it ‘risks reproducing stereotypes and current power asymmetries within the humanitarian system through a focus on Western international actors and a blindness towards dominant local or non-Western international elites’ (2020: 285). Pursuing the ‘local’ in contradiction to the ‘international’ can be underwritten by colonial logics: processes of ‘othering’, which deny local contexts and actors their own independent, complex realities and identities. Studies and consultation participants argued that the identification of the ‘local’ as ‘an untainted, pure category’ is problematic due to elite capture of locally driven processes within local contexts, as well as the hybridisation of the ‘local’ with subnational, national or international influences (Barakat and Milton, 2020; Narayanaswamy, 2021).

Barakat and Milton observe that the label of ‘international’ is usually applied to Northern actors, which does account for the role of donors from the Arab world and elsewhere in the Global South. They note regional powers such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have played a major role in conflict and humanitarian response.

In such cases, ‘the definitions of regional and international interveners are blurred’ (Barakat and Milton, 2020: 154). Moreover, they echo a point raised in the consultations that many ‘local actors’ can be perceived as ‘outsiders’ within their own international borders, including experts and staff from capital cities in more remote locations. They conclude: ‘simply by virtue of recruiting nationally does not mean that you are doing things properly in terms of localisation’ (Barakat and Milton, 2020: 154).

Such observations have led to calls for different typological approaches, and what Roger Mac Ginty calls a form of ‘critical localism’ (2015). Critical localism attempts to decouple the ‘local’ from the ‘international’ or ‘global’ by expanding its definition beyond geographical location. Mac Ginty argues that the local is ‘a system of beliefs and practices that loose communities and networks may adopt’. He emphasises the inherent mutability of these beliefs and practices: the ‘local’ is not a static category, but ‘changes with time and circumstances’ and, while it may reflect territorial characteristics, it may also be ‘extra-territorial’ (Mac Ginty, 2015: 851). Roepstorff argues that critical localism ‘draws attention to the question of who claims to represent the local, who defines who the local is, and how this may lead to the marginalisation of certain actors in the humanitarian arena’ (2020: 285). Without addressing these assumptions, the localisation agenda risks reinforcing existing power dynamics and exclusionary practices within the aid sector (Roepstorff, 2020; Pincock et al., 2021; Narayanaswamy, 2021).

3.3.3 (Mis)Understanding local contexts and capacities

This section has raised the perceived, but not well evidenced, barrier of local actor capabilities. In the

consultations and studies the question of ‘capacity for what and for whom?’ was raised, connected to the challenge of capacity being largely defined by donors, in line with their bureaucratic requirements. In the consultations, participants argued that this can even translate into local organisations not recognising their own capacities. They noted that there needs to be a collective ‘mindset shift’: that people on the ‘receiving end’ have power, resources and agency (Consultation Participants, Sessions 1 & 2).

Bond (2021) notes that the dominance of donor-defined capacities results in the voices of those ‘most affected’ being unheard, reducing their decision-making power and resources. This is connected to the perception that communities and project participants are passive ‘beneficiaries’ rather than actors with agency. Similarly, Pincock et al. note that refugee-led organisations, within the approach of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to refugee governance, are viewed within the ‘provider/ beneficiary’ model. They note that, despite the immensely important work that they do, they are ultimately seen as beneficiaries, rather than engaged through meaningful delegation of responsibilities or supported to pursue their own ideas (Pincock et al., 2021: 729). UNHCR ‘remains unaware’ of the role that refugees play in social protection and assistance in Kampala (ibid.: 731). Due to visibility and participation constraints of such actors, they argue that ‘systematically mapping’ organisations is imperative to advancing their role in refugee governance (ibid.: 731). A Bond study argues that INGO communications play a role in perpetuating the image of affected communities as passive beneficiaries (2021), and can propagate harmful stereotypes that negatively affect local leadership and agency, including narratives that perpetuate ‘white saviours’.

In the humanitarian sector, Slim (2021) notes that donors’ perception of risk is connected to how ‘internationalists’ think that their capacity to fulfil their mandate (to protect people against national humanitarian failures, and to ensure there are global norms and fairness in the distribution of limited aid) will be weakened by localisation. Slim states that this case is argued on two fronts. The first relates specifically to humanitarian contexts of ‘societal collapse’ that necessitate external assistance and capacity: the argument here is that locally led aid is ‘operationally unrealistic’ (Slim, 2021: 3). Barakat and Milton echo this perception, stating that ‘if sufficient capacities already existed to cope with a societal crisis then the situation cannot be truly defined as a disaster, which is a shock event leading to losses “that exceed the community’s or society’s ability to cope using its own resources”’ (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2012: 9, in Barakat, 2020: 150).

The second relates to political risks connected to the perception that national and local actors are less likely to be able to uphold principles of impartiality because they are capable of being ‘politically captured by politicians who do not care about any of their people, or only care about some of them’ (Slim, 2021: 3). However, the conception of international actors as somehow immune from the politics of disasters is also noted as ‘overly naive’: any humanitarian presence in conflict zones is ‘inherently political’ (Barakat and Milton, 2021: 150). Similarly, Barbelet et al. argue that ‘perceptions that local actors compromise humanitarian principles more than their international counterparts and are a barrier to localised responses are overly simplified’ (2021: 57). All actors working in disaster or conflict areas are working in complex environments, with security, fiduciary and reputational risks (ibid.).

By relentlessly guarding their principles – and not necessarily adhering to the principles themselves – many humanitarian organisations put in place artificial and hypocritical divisions that prevent them from recognising their own limitations. As such they overlook capacity, funds, understanding and expertise from others who may not be card-carrying humanitarians, but may be better placed to help (Bennett et al., 2016).

Similarly, in their systematic review, Barbelet et al. (2021) observe that the literature does not provide evidence to support the perception that local actor capacity is a barrier to localisation. Rather, studies point to a lack of understanding and awareness on the part of donors and international agencies about what local capacity exists. This, coupled with the top-down definition of capacity, is the real barrier to localisation efforts. Barbelet et al. conclude that the burden of evidence unfairly falls on local actors to demonstrate their capacity, and that international organisations need to improve their approach to mapping local resources and capabilities (2021). This relates to the ‘asset-based’ approach that prioritises existing capacities rather than focusing on gaps to be filled by external actors (Hodgson et al., 2019).

3.4 Agency

3.4.1 Partnership models and trust

In a 2013 study, Ramalingam et al. found that agencies that attempt to work with local organisations in ‘partnership’ often set themselves up for failure. Typically, they underestimate the necessary investment in partnership-building, both in terms of financial cost and staff hours (Ramalingam, 2013, in Wall and Hedlund, 2016). Barbelet et al. note that commonly used subcontracting partnerships are more accurately

described as ‘top-down intermediary relationships’ (Barbelet et al., 2021: 58). When presented as partnerships, they erode trust, perpetuate power imbalances and lead to dissatisfaction among local actors (Wall and Hedlund, 2016). One Consultation Participant pointed out:

bilateral processes [result in] criteria that systematically preference non-locally governed mega-INGO and UN agencies, leading to Local and National organizations being ‘subcontractors’. (Consultation Participant, Session 2, 31 August 2021).

Such partnerships can lack ‘respect and transparency’; they can be marked by the ‘misuse of power’, as well as a lack of recognition of the value and capacity of local partners (Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships, 2019; Barbelet et al., 2021). Moyo and Imafidon observe that international development funding arrangements favour Western intermediary organisations at the expense of local African civil society organisations (CSOs), and that the majority of donor resources go to intermediary Northern-based NGOs (2021). In a 2018 report, it was found that at least 90% of UK, US and Australian aid contracts were being awarded to domestic firms (Meeks, 2018). In the consultations, one participant raised the additional challenge of falling back on the ‘usual suspects’ when forming partnerships:

funders [do not want] to support longer-term and newer initiatives with local organisations they haven’t heard of. (Consultation Participant, Session 2, 31 August 2021).

The literature commonly argues in favour of developing longer-term relationships that can foster trust. In humanitarian contexts, this involves

developing relationships before the onset of a disaster. Generally, longer-term partnerships that promote relationship-building are thought to support more equitable approaches. Barbelet et al. (2021) quote one study that found that ‘honest relationships, with open information-sharing, led to a higher likelihood of joint problem-solving’ (Howe and Stites, 2019). On the other hand, in contexts, for instance, of policy conditionality, proximity between donors and local actors can be a symptom of a lack of trust, as donors attempt to micromanage activities. Sometimes local actors need space to work, make decisions and build connections with their own stakeholders, without including external actors at every step (King, 2020). In turn, external actors could find new ways to provide support more indirectly and ‘obliquely’. As Roche and Denney (2019) put it: ‘there is recognition that donors can play a role in not just “picking winners” or champions [...] but in helping to shape the environment which allows local leadership to emerge and thrive’.

Trust is also intimately related to mindsets. In relation to organisational and governance structures, Bond notes that UK INGOs are predominantly staffed by white people, and their headquarters are overwhelmingly in the UK. This perpetuates power imbalances by placing the locus of decision-making, funding and donor relations in UK headquarters that are remote from where projects are being implemented (Bond, 2021; Moyo and Imafidon, 2021). This point was echoed in the consultations:

Political power from global offices is not trickling down to the local level’. (Consultation Participant, Session 2, 31 August 2021).

3.4.2 Knowledge hierarchies and the ‘evidence burden’

One of the barriers raised in the literature is a lack of more systematic evidence on the added value of local humanitarian action, local leadership and complementarity (Barbelet et al., 2021). The lack of evidence on the impact on humanitarian or development interventions has been found to undermine advocacy efforts and evidence-based policy change. It has also been connected to a disproportionate ‘burden of evidence’ being placed on local actors (ibid.). This is particularly problematic in light of prevailing knowledge hierarchies (Mwambari, 2019), whereby certain forms of knowledge and expertise are valued over others. Connected to ‘ways of being’, studies also highlight that technical qualifications and skills tend to be favoured over lived experience (Bond, 2021). And Consultation Participants identified a key barrier in the ‘dominance of euro-centric tools on how to do development’, as well as language barriers connected to such knowledge hierarchies (Consultation Participants, 26 August 2021). Barbelet et al. observe that placing the burden of evidence on local actors ‘is yet another example of how self-preservation and power dynamics are deeply entrenched in the humanitarian system’ (2021: 62).

3.4.3 Prevailing power imbalances

Power relations and asymmetries have been raised throughout this review. To conclude, it is important to highlight, as this review has done, that many efforts and initiatives that are labelled as localisation do not necessarily address the underlying power imbalances that define the aid sector. In a recent Gender and Development Network Briefing, Lata Narayanaswamy states that ‘there is a danger that “localisation”, rather than challenging existing power imbalances,

merely invisibilises them, leaving colonial logics and power structures largely intact'. On this basis, localisation 'must not be the limit of our ambition' (Narayanaswamy, 2021: 7). Addressing power imbalances involves a form of 'critical localism' that is able to appreciate the complexity and diversity of local contexts and their transnational relationships. If this more critical approach is not taken, power is retained in the hands of donors and their intermediaries because 'attempts to "localise" then become simply about

adapting Northern ideas to the local context and empowering only certain hand-picked "local" actors, invisibilising and even silencing the diversity of other stakeholder groups and ideas that may exist in that context' (ibid.). To genuinely 'shift power' to local actors, localisation must address the structural features of aid that construct 'local' contexts in binary opposition to 'global' ones. These include the racist mindsets and legacies of colonialism that continue to underpin the sector (Bond, 2021; Moyo and Imafidon, 2021).

4 Models and approaches

4.1 Examples of localisation and locally led efforts

Building on Section 2, we have established that localisation, locally led practice, and efforts to shift power come in many different shapes, sizes and directions. This section outlines examples of existing models and approaches as a collective reminder of how much already exists, and to provide inspiration for future efforts.

Through a desk review search, online consultations and input from a range of stakeholders, we have identified examples of initiatives and approaches that are driven by or linked to the push for localisation, locally led or community-led development, and shifting the power. We deliberately opted to cast a wide net to capture as many facets and different types of examples as possible, going beyond a narrow focus on localisation in the form of direct funding to Global South actors to also include global initiatives advocating for locally led practice in all contexts. In keeping with our research equity principles, we have included a particular focus on examples that originated in or are driven by a broad spectrum of local and national actors in the Global South. Section 4.6 highlights different ways that the interventions of Northern bilateral and multilateral donors can support the dimensions of localisation, given that these organisations will be a primary target of the upcoming advocacy campaign, along with a selection of example donor approaches in Box 3.

Due to the variety among existing models and mechanisms, we have included a wide range of examples that encompass different elements of the dimensions identified in our framework

(resources, agency and ways of being) in this section. We have also included initiatives from across a range of sectors, as outlined in Figure 1 in the Executive Summary.

We have largely focused on examples of collective action to advance localisation and locally led practices, as opposed to single organisations or projects that have individually committed to advancing this agenda – of which there are many (summaries of each initiative can be found in the Annex).

An important caveat: the examples highlighted in this section are not exhaustive, nor are they presented with any hierarchy in mind. In addition, the summaries included here and in the Annex are not intended to be evaluative or to elicit direct comparisons – it has not been possible to conduct in-depth assessments of each example within the given time and scope of this project. Instead, this is offered as a mapping of different models and approaches that illustrate one or more features from the framework presented in Section 2.

4.2 Who is described as ‘local’ in these examples?

As noted earlier, the term ‘local’ is contested and used differently in different contexts. Table 4 summarises the various uses of the term across the broad range of examples included in this report to illustrate the diversity of its usage.

As this table shows, there is no one definition of ‘local’ when it comes to localisation or locally led practice, even across a non-exhaustive selection of examples. But some potential distinctions do emerge. Global South-based movements and

Table 4 Definitions of ‘local’

Type of example	Definition of ‘local’
Global South movements, networks and funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities across the Global South • Community-led organisations • Community foundations • Community and other proximate leaders • Local and national civil society organisations in the Global South
North to South funds and funding mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots actors and movements • Local and national organisations based in the Global South • Representatives from Global South country governments • Private sector representatives from the Global South • Organisations rooted in the communities they serve
Global networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional governments across the Global South and North • Community-based organisations • Social entrepreneurs and innovators across Global South and North • Local leadership within developing contexts
Policy frameworks and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and national non-state actors (headquartered in their own aid-recipient countries, not affiliated to an INGO) • National and sub-national state actors (state authorities in aid-recipient countries at local or national level) • Local and national organisations from the Global South
Practical and measurement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and national organisations from the Global South • Civil society organisations in the Global South • Community-led organisations in the Global South • Global South organisations and partners

organisations primarily see ‘local’ from a geographic perspective, i.e. referring to the community level within countries. ‘Local’ can also refer to civil society and other types of organisations from the Global South. Global North definitions across this selection of examples tend to be more generalising, i.e. local is used to refer to a broad range of stakeholders, from national leaders and governments or local government authorities to community leaders and representatives from the private sector across a given country in the Global South.

4.3 Overarching summary of different models and approaches

There is no one way to advance localisation or to shift power – in part but not only because who is considered ‘local’ varies so widely. We have identified four distinct but overlapping purposes pursued by the organisations and initiatives reviewed in this paper. The three dimensions in the framework cut across each of these purposes, though several stand out as particularly relevant.

- **Movement-building and collective advocacy.**

Existing movements advocating for greater locally led development and shifting power differ in their exact purpose. But broadly speaking, they aim to connect large groups of like-minded people and organisations, and to advocate for addressing power imbalances in the international system.

- The act of building movements and engaging in collective advocacy can reinforce and strengthen **agency** across organisations in the Global South, alongside amplifying the importance of respecting **ways of being**.

- **Shifting quality funding to the Global South.**

Organisations or initiatives with a focus on shifting funding have the purpose of channelling far greater sums from North to South than the current status quo, either directly to locally embedded organisations or through ‘intermediaries’ that understand local priorities better than existing Global North bodies.

- With so few international **resources** reaching local actors in the Global South, even indirectly, mechanisms to shift funding (higher quantities and better quality) from the Global North are a critical, even if incomplete, part of the overall approach to supporting locally led practice.

- **Knowledge creation and sharing.**

Many initiatives, sometimes embedded within wider movements, aim to both produce and share knowledge about the benefits of ‘localising’ approaches to development, humanitarian and philanthropic practice, including through first-hand testimonials and stories, as well as comparative studies across the Global South.

- The equitable production and sharing of knowledge about localisation, particularly from the Global South, can enhance understanding of different **ways of being** and differing approaches to locally led practice in a variety of contexts.

- **Supporting proximate leadership.**

The examples included in this mapping are global and focus primarily on supporting community-embedded or proximate leaders of all different kinds by connecting them and in many cases providing funding to resource their time and initiatives.

- Supporting and connecting proximate leaders and other stakeholders can cultivate a greater sense of collective **agency** in pushing for locally led practice, as well as promote respect for **ways of being** when it comes to different leadership styles, approaches and priorities.

Alongside these four categories, we have identified several illustrative activities used to further the purpose of a given organisation or initiative, as summarised in Figure 7.

In our proposed understanding of localisation as the journey, and locally led practice as the destination, these approaches represent some of the many different routes that can be taken to arrive from one to the other. It is important to note that the examples do not necessarily fit neatly into one of these categories; in fact, most have different purposes and encompass a wide variety of activities. But this mapping demonstrates that there are many ways of fostering, owning, advocating for or contributing to greater locally led practice and shifting power from the Global North to the Global South, wherever one sits in the global system.

Figure 7 Summary of the primary purpose and activities of examples



4.4 Building on and reinforcing existing initiatives

This section highlights a few examples from each of the four identified categories in Figure 7. These are illustrative examples of approaches designed specifically to overcome one or several of the

barriers outlined in Section 3 – they have not been specifically evaluated as part of the research for this review, but they have been identified as examples seeking to address at least one of the key dimensions highlighted in this report (agency, resources and ways of being).

It is vital to acknowledge and respect existing initiatives around localisation and locally led practice – particularly from the Global South – and to not seek to ‘reinvent’ the wheel. As highlighted in the final section of this report, we recommend that all actors seeking to either commit to or further bolster their localisation and locally led development efforts review these initiatives to avoid duplication and to find ways of connecting efforts to achieve greater collective impact.

4.4.1 Movement-building and collective advocacy

Several specific advocacy and/or policy demands for greater locally led development already exist across several different sectors – humanitarian, development and philanthropic. Many of these organisations work to advocate for changes in practices, including redressing North–South power imbalances, which link to all three of the dimensions – resources, agency and ways of being.

NEAR (the Network for Empowered Aid Response) is a network and movement of local and national civil society organisations across the Global South. NEAR seeks to amplify the collective agency of Global South organisations in pushing for localisation through direct connections, active networking and shared learning, with influencing activities including agenda-setting in global policy processes and institutions, technical or operational settings, and in academic and policy settings (NEAR, 2021).

The **Charter for Change** (Charter for Change, 2019) on the localisation of humanitarian aid, led by Southern-based NGOs and Northern INGOs, asks its signatories (currently 38 INGOs) to commit to **eight principles**. These include: increase direct funding to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action, stop undermining local

capacity and emphasise the importance of national actors. Most recently, the Charter for Change has made to guide the Grand Bargain 2.0 process, including that the Facilitation Group ‘connect to a wider range of local and national NGOs (LNNGOs) and national NGO fora, including diverse forms of civil society **three recommendations** often marginalised by the mainstream international response’ (Charter for Change, 2021).

The **Movement for Community-led Development** (MCLD) has defined **eight tracks** for strategic and collective action, including finding and nurturing CLD (community-led development) champions within governments and other stakeholders, and improving laws, policies and programmes to bring CLD to scale (MCLD, 2021).

Similarly, the **Shift the Power** Manifesto for Change lists **nine ways** in which individuals and organisations can begin shifting power including: cast off the restrictive framework of ‘international development’, which is defined by money and power and which creates artificial barriers between communities and movements in the Global North and South; and ensure that external funding recognises, respects and builds on local resources and assets, rather than overlooks undermines or displaces (Shift the Power, 2019).

In 2021, the **Global Alliance for Communities** launched **three policy asks** at the World Communities Forum meeting, which are to (1) increase available funding (private and public philanthropy) to leaders of colour, push for greater accountability on racial equity among funders; (2) invest in and develop proximate leaders, valuing local knowledge and approaches; (3) rethink how we measure effective solutions and contribute research to the knowledge base and evidence base around the power of proximate leadership.

4.4.2 Shifting quality funding to the Global South

Many organisations and initiatives use and advocate for a range of different approaches and tools to increase the amount and improve the quality of funding that flows directly to ‘local’ actors in the Global South, whether that be to civil society organisations, grassroots businesses, social entrepreneurs or local governments. This connects mainly to the ‘resources’ dimension of our framework, and the levers on funding and delivery.

The **Radical Flexibility Fund** has put forward **10 radical actions** to turn promises of supporting locally led social change into action. Actions include: prioritising support to community-led funding and participatory programming approaches; funding people and partnerships, not projects; and confronting assumptions about risk (Radical Flexibility Fund, 2021).

Several existing initiatives are already shifting funding directly to organisations from the Global South. For example, **NEAR** has developed a **localised funding programme** that provides practical, progressive and authentic solutions, driven and designed by local and national actors.

The **Global Fund for Community Foundations** (GFCF) provides small grants and other support to foster the development of **community philanthropy organisations**. This has included immediate relief grants to respond to the effects of Covid-19.

Through its **partnership model** approach to grant-making, **Thousand Currents** partners with grassroots groups and movements led by women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in the Global South that are creating lasting solutions to shared global challenges. Once a partnership is formed,

Thousand Currents provides flexible, unrestricted and long-term support.

The **Start Network** operates the **Start Fund**, a multi-donor pooled fund managed exclusively by NGOs. Projects are chosen by local committees, made up of staff from Start Network members and their partners, within 72 hours of an alert (which is an early indication from Start members about a crisis needing financial assistance). Disbursements of £9,999,293 have been made from the global Start Fund, reaching almost 2.5 million people across 34 countries.

The **Grassroots Business Fund (GBF)** has operated a for-profit private investment fund to make equity and debt investments directly into grassroots businesses across the Global South. Alongside this investment, the non-profit arm of the GBF provides business advisory support to the Fund’s investee businesses.

The **Share Trust’s Local Coalition Accelerator (LCA)** is a new platform whose aim is to bridge the gap between bilaterals, multilaterals, philanthropic and local actors to change the way international assistance is designed and delivered. The LCA is seeking to provide intensive packages of financial and technical support over 2–3 years to local coalitions in the Global South. It will also provide financing for coalitions to develop, test and pilot strategies to better align and coordinate their services (The Share Trust, 2021).

The **African Visionary Fund** operates as a pooled fund to allow donors to fund African-led organisations directly without being hampered by logistical and financial hurdles – this is given in the form of unrestricted funding directly to local, community-embedded organisations. It has committed \$1 million in flexible funding to six organisations across five African countries. The Fund seeks to redress the overall imbalance

in philanthropic funding, where only 5.2% of \$9 billion in grants from US foundations directed to Africa went to local organisations (African Visionary Fund, 2021).

The newly created **Racial Equity 2030 Challenge**, launched by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is seeking to award \$90 million to organisations with ideas for transformative change in systems and institutions that challenge racial inequities. The criterion for the grant is that the organisation is led by teams that have the leadership, lived experience and relationships with local communities to meet their goals, and that they centre communities most impacted by the issue and foster equal collaboration.

4.4.3 Knowledge creation and sharing

The third ‘purpose’ we examine in this section relates to knowledge creation and sharing. These kinds of models have the potential to link to the framework in terms of ways of being and agency, and the levers on knowledge and relationships.

NEAR’s South-to-South Platform is an online platform that promotes communication, sharing, exchange and learning among local and national actors from the Global South.

Local2030 is an **online hub** for sharing tools, experiences and resources through an open online UN platform. This includes: a toolbox to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among local and national actors and provide practical support for local actors, particularly local and regional governments, by highlighting best practices in designing, implementing and monitoring policies in line with the SDGs and posting of Voluntary Local Reviews from local/regional government actors across the Global South and North (Local2030, 2021).

The **MCLD** convenes several **research groups** that operate across the network, including an Advisory Group, a Scoping Group, an Impact Group and an Evaluation Group. In 2019, the MCLD began a collaborative research study to better understand the impact of CLD practices, and the complex relationship between CLD and development outcomes (MCLD, 2020a).

The **Global Fund for Community Foundations** operates an online **Knowledge Centre** sharing a wide range of resources, produced both by GFCF and other actors promoting community philanthropy and other people-led development approaches (GFCF, 2021).

From 2017 to 2021, Peace Direct, Search for Common Ground and CDA Collaborative Learning delivered the **Stopping As Success** (SAS) collaborative learning project, funded by USAID Local Works. The aim of the programme was to provide positive examples and guidance for how INGOs, local and national organisations and Northern donors can foster locally led development through successful and responsible transitions out of projects or relationships with partners. SAS produced 20 case studies of transition in 13 countries, and over 20 resources and practical tools to inform transition processes for INGOs, NGOs/CSOs and donors. A synthesis report produced in January 2020 summarises eight key lessons learned from transitions towards locally led development (Stopping As Success, 2020).

4.4.4 Supporting proximate leaders

Leadership programmes and networks that focus on supporting national, local and proximate leaders, particularly in the Global South, tend to have either a stipend or seed funding component (or a combination of the two). Convening efforts

aim to create space for proximate leaders to connect and build relationships with others in the domestic context, including with government actors, with the aim of co-creating and influencing decisions. Localisation efforts under this purpose connect to questions of agency and ‘who is local’ in our framework.

Ashoka and **Echoing Green** both operate international Fellowship programmes. Ashoka Fellows are invited into a life-long Fellowship and a global community. Some receive financial support through an unrestricted, needs-assessed stipend, and all Fellows can access support throughout their entrepreneurial journeys, for example through pro-bono legal advice, coaching and leadership development (Ashoka, 2021). Echoing Green seeks to equip leaders with resources needed to launch sustainable social enterprises. This includes the capital, networks and knowledge they need to create system-wide change, and making the funding field more inclusive and supportive of these leaders and their impact. \$2.7 million is offered in seed-fund investment annually.

The **Ibrahim Leadership Fellowships** are a 12-month programme during which Fellows gain technical and leadership skills, as well as receiving direct mentorship from the heads of the host organisations. Fellows are provided a \$100,000 stipend as part of the Fellowship. All Fellows join the Now Generation Network, in addition to scholars and the participants of the annual Now Generation Forum. The Network is pan-African, comprising members from 43 African countries (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2021).

The **Open Government Partnership** (OGP) operates a partnership of 78 countries and 76 local government members, working with thousands of civil society organisations to change the way government serves its citizens, including at the

most local level. Countries must sign the **Open Government Declaration** to join, which includes a commitment to supporting civic participation and making government more transparent, responsive, accountable and effective (Open Government Partnership, 2021a). Through the OGP, leaders from across governments and civil society work together collaboratively to co-create two-year action plans with concrete steps – commitments – across a broad range of issues. This model seeks to promote direct citizen engagement in shaping the role of governments – to date, more than 4,500 open government commitments have been made globally, with many directly in response to demands from local civil society coalitions (Open Government Partnership, 2021b).

Catalyst 2030 is a global movement of social entrepreneurs and social innovators from all sectors who share the common goal of creating innovative, people-centric approaches to attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including through creating a more equitable balance of power. Its work is driven by **seven core principles**, which include convening as an honest broker and co-creating strategy and direction through a collaborative system.

People-First is a new forum that brings together a cross-sectoral community of practitioners, academics and public and private sector actors who believe that investing in local leadership in the Global South must be the primary focus of the development community (People-First, 2021).

4.5 Approaches to measurement and evaluation

Multiple measurement and evaluation frameworks and approaches have been created to measure different aspects of localisation. Below we provide short summaries of a few examples.

NEAR has created a **Localisation Performance Measurement Framework**, launched in 2019 (NEAR, 2019). Each component has a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) which have been grouped thematically. There are six localisation components: (1) partnerships, (2) funding, (3) capacity, (4) coordination and complementarity, (5) policy, influence and visibility, and (6) participation.

NEAR notes that ‘the purpose of this Localization Performance Measurement System (LPMF) is to evidence progress towards achieving localisation commitments. While its focus is on local and national actors, it is anticipated that it will also be relevant to international NGOs, UN agencies and donors as well as research and academic institutions that are evaluating localisation’ (NEAR, 2019: 1).

In 2017, the Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI) developed the ‘**seven dimensions’ framework** for localisation during its work with the Start Fund of the Start Network (outlined above). The seven dimensions framework draws on Grand Bargain commitment 2 to localisation and commitment 6 to a participation revolution, Charter4Change commitments, and consultations with local, national and international actors (Global Mentoring Initiative, 2020). The seven dimensions are:

- Relationship quality (respectful and equitable; reciprocal transparency and accountability)
- Participation revolution (deeper participation of at-risk and affected populations)
- Funding and financing (better quality and greater quantity)
- Capacity (sustainable organisations and collaborative capacities; stop undermining capacities)
- Coordination mechanisms (national actors’ greater presence and influence)

- Visibility (roles, results and innovations by national actors are visible and reported on)
- Policy/standards.

GlobalGiving and GFCF partnered to create the **Community Led Assessment tool** with the goal of designing a tool that could provide consistent and standardised data for a discrete set of indicators as one lens through which to understand the practice of being community-led (GlobalGiving and GFCF, 2021).

The tool outlines essential features of community-led approaches, defined through nine essential characteristics of community-led efforts that users rank based on the frequency with which these characteristics are present in their work. These are: (1) cultivates community ownership; (2) garners community trust; (3) understands and respects community context; (4) prioritises community needs/aspirations; (5) facilitates a change in community beliefs or outlook; (6) fosters voluntary community engagement; (7) is relationship-oriented; (8) models transparency; (9) is flexible in its approach.

The tool also comprises two further sections:

- Other important features of community-led approaches to change (17 additional characteristics, of which users select up to five that are most important to their work).
- Enhancing community-led approaches to change: an optional section for users to further reflect on their work and identify necessary resources.

The **MCLD** has created a **CLD Assessment Tool** for self, peer or participatory review and developed a landscape of CLD practice based on 176 programmes across 65 countries (MCLD, 2020b). The tool has two key segments:

- **Segment 1:** Reflects particular CLD characteristics, categorised into different dimensions
 - Dimension A: participation, inclusion, voice
 - Dimension B: local resources and knowledge
 - Dimension C: exit strategy linked to sustainability
 - Dimension D: accountability mechanisms
 - Dimension E: responsiveness to context-specific dynamics
 - Dimension F: collaboration within and among communities
 - Dimension G: CLD linked to sub-national governments.
- **Segment 2:** Pertains to processes that are not restricted to any specific characteristic but integral to the CLD approach
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Facilitation investment and intensity.

Keystone Accountability and Root Change

produced a white paper paper, *Mutual accountability in international development: the Pando Localization Learning system*, in 2020 (Root Change and Keystone Accountability, 2020). The new aid accountability tool described in this paper, **Pando Localization Learning System (Pando LLS)**, is the result of the work of both organisations, using innovation funding from USAID. Pando LLS combines data drawn from two sources: network mapping and feedback loops. The Localization Learning System comprises the following measurement criteria:

- **Leadership:** Leadership measures the degree to which local actors are able to set priorities, influence direction, lead decision-making, define success, adapt activities and strategies based on local learning, and receive recognition as subject matter experts by outside donors and larger international institutions or organisations.

- **Mutuality:** Evaluates the degree to which there is mutual trust, 'good faith', respect, openness, voice and responsiveness across all spheres of a local development system.
- **Connectivity:** Measures the degree to which external programmes foster increased collaboration and cohesion among local development actors.
- **Finance:** Measures the degree to which the dependence of local system actors on external (international) financial resources is decreasing, and whether connections to local funding opportunities are improving.

The Equity Index, a UK-based social enterprise, published a pilot **Indicator Assessment Framework** in June 2021 (The Equity Index, 2021) containing a series of internal and external indicators focused on various components of equity. The index tested several external equity indicators that relate to the sharing of power and resources between UK and Global South partners on consultancy projects:

- Number of Global South partners
- Meaningful engagement of partners in design, co-creation, management, decision-making and implementation of a project
- Mechanisms to regularly collect feedback data from partner organisations
- Percentage of total project(s) value given to Global South partners in last 12 months
- Representation of Global South partners in donor meetings.

The **Racial Equity Index** is producing an index and advocacy tool to provide greater accountability for racial equity within and across the global development sector in order to dismantle structural racism and create a more equitable system and culture, with justice and dignity at its core. In 2020, the Racial Equity Index released

a global mapping survey highlighting a series of **indicator areas** related to various aspects of racial equity (Racial Equity Index, 2020). These are: mission; programming design to implementation through monitoring and evaluation; fund allocations and grant-making principles; sources of funding; external partnerships/relationships; communications; workplace culture; leadership; human resources management; salary; and compensation.

4.6 Donor interventions and locally led practices

Many of the examples listed in the previous section (though not all) are initiatives rooted in civil society and philanthropic spaces (some of which receive funding from governments). Given the high levels of funding that bilateral and multilateral donors put into the system, it is also important to examine their approaches to supporting locally led practice. Commitments to localisation – and, relatedly, ‘ownership’ and ‘using country systems’ – are embedded in several different policy commitments signed by donors. These include:

- Good Humanitarian Donorship, Principle 8 (2003)
- Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (2005)
- Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011)
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)
- Grand Bargain, Commitment 2 (2016).

According to recent data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), ‘total [Official Development Assistance, ODA] provided by DAC countries increased by 3.5% [in real terms] to reach USD 161.2 billion in 2020’ (OECD, 2021: 2) – the highest level of ODA ever provided. Meanwhile, private philanthropic

foundations that report their development flows to the OECD, including large organisations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provided \$9 billion (ibid.: 4). This means that shifts in funding will be even more meaningful if Northern bilateral donors act urgently to increase the percentage of ODA that goes directly to Global South actors.

It is difficult to gauge how ODA flows to different actors and who has agency over how resources are used. The OECD-DAC’s (Development Assistance Committee’s) statistical system does include a measure of ‘Country programmable aid’ (CPA) that tries to measure the proportion of aid that recipient governments are able to ‘programme’. In 2019, CPA totalled \$56.4 billion, which has barely shifted over the previous decade (it was \$55.4 billion in 2010, in constant 2019 USD). By definition, this metric excludes the flows that go to non-government actors.

In accordance with some of the above policy frameworks, some bilateral Northern donors and multilateral donors are already engaged in activities to ‘localise’ their funding. However, these focus entirely or almost entirely on providing resources more directly to Global South actors – and even then, the resources are minuscule compared to the funding going to Global North actors. And progress has been remarkably slow. With levels of tied aid increasing across several Northern donors (ibid.: 5), accompanied by high levels of informally tied aid, funding that goes directly to a range of local actors in the Global South remains extremely limited. In fact, ‘despite a small increase, developing country-based CSOs continued to receive the lowest share of support among all categories of CSOs (6.1% in 2019 up from 5.4% in 2018)’ (ibid.: 7). As shown in Section 3, as well as the level of funding, there are issues with quality, including a lack of core funding.

Box 3 A selection of donor approaches to localisation of funding

Broadly speaking, it is difficult to find publicly available information about many bilateral donors' policy commitments on and approaches towards localisation, particularly outside the humanitarian sector. This section provides a brief overview of the approaches of a few bilateral donors to localisation, particularly in shifting funding, as non-exhaustive illustrations of how government donors address this agenda.

USAID/US government

USAID is the largest Northern bilateral donor agency to have introduced both a funding target and initiatives to 'localise' its operations.

The **USAID Forward** reform initiative, which ran from 2010 to 2016, included a focus on promoting 'sustainable development through high-impact partnerships and local solutions' (USAID, 2017). As part of this, USAID launched the Local Solutions initiative (previously known as Implementation and Procurement Reform), which 'aims to shift program implementation from U.S.- based and international organizations to partner-country organizations, including governments and for-profit and non-profit organizations' (GAO, 2014). The initiative also set a 30% target of direct funding from Missions to local institutions by 2015; indeed, this was the sole indicator used to measure progress on Local Solutions. Although the 30% target was not achieved, USAID nearly doubled its programme funds directed to local governments, civil society and the private sector, from 9.7% in fiscal year (FY) 2010 to 18.6% in FY 2015 (Dunning, 2016). Several initiatives evaluating USAID Forward have been published, but we do not have space to elaborate on these here.

In addition to USAID Forward, the agency created **Local Works** in 2015, a programme providing five-year discretionary funding for USAID Missions to work directly with local and non-traditional partners. There are 32 USAID Missions with Local Works programmes across the Global South.

As part of this work, USAID defines locally led development as the 'process in which local actors – encompassing individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments – set their own agendas' (USAID, 2021a). In 2017, Save the Children and Oxfam developed the Local Engagement Assessment Framework (LEAF), which assesses 'who among the host country government, civil society, and the private sector engaged with US-supported projects, how that engagement empowered local stakeholders, and during what parts of the project cycle the engagement took place' (Save the Children and Oxfam, 2017: 6). Building on this work, USAID created a spectrum of locally led development approaches, with an ambition to move from less locally led approaches, such as informing local actors about information on a specific project, to more locally led approaches, wherein USAID supports an initiative that originates with and is managed by host country actors (USAID, 2021a).

USAID launched the **New Partnership Initiative** in 2019, which aims to diversify USAID's partner base by removing barriers to engagement and creating new avenues for partners to engage. USAID's stated purpose is to tap into the 'ingenuity and knowledge of organizations that are deeply connected to the people and the communities we serve. In doing so, we ensure that our partner countries become agents of their own growth and prosperity for generations to come' (USAID, 2021b). This feeds into USAID's overall Journey to Self Reliance, articulated in its overarching policy framework.

DFID/FCDO

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) does not have an official policy statement or overarching approach to localisation across its work.

In the humanitarian sector, the UK is a signatory and active player in the **Grand Bargain**. It co-convenes Workstream 3 with the World Food Programme (WFP) on increasing the use and coordination of cash assistance, and it has been a member of the Facilitation Group since 2019. As part of this, the UK reported an increase in the volume of funding programmed as cash and voucher assistance in 2020 (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2021: 66). The UK provides more than 90% of its humanitarian aid as multi-year funding, the highest of all the Grand Bargain signatories. Until 2019, the UK was also the largest donor to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Country-based Pooled Funds, described in more detail below (UN OCHA, 2021). Most recently, the UK introduced a Rapid Response Facility allocation of £18 million for the Covid-19 response, which required INGO partners to pass the same percentage of indirect costs they received to their downstream local partners in country (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2021: 51). INGOs were also asked to track and report on the level of funding received by local NGOs. Beyond the Grand Bargain, the Department for International Development (DFID) had also provided seed funding for initiatives focused on localisation, including The Start Network.

More broadly, DFID and now FCDO make regular use of '**challenge funds**', a financing mechanism that uses competition among organisations to allocate funds for specific purposes (or to respond to specific challenges) through open calls for proposals. DFID operated its first challenge fund – the Financial Deepening Challenge Fund – between 1999 and 2007, disbursing £18.5 million through this mechanism. The aim was to widen and deepen the range of financial services available in Africa and South Asia. Twenty-eight projects were funded in 12 countries, including the early stages of developing M-Pesa in Kenya (a mobile phone-based money transfer service). Other DFID-funded examples include the Civil Society Challenge Fund, the Girls Education Challenge and the Mobile Enabled Community Services (MECS) Innovation Fund (Brain et al, 2014). In theory, challenge funds, particularly those focused on civil society, may be better able than other forms of proposal solicitation to fund and support locally led initiatives, but barriers still exist for local organisations in the Global South. In addition, no easily accessible data on how much funding goes indirectly or directly to local and national organisations in the Global South exists. To address some of these barriers, DFID created the Amplify Challenge Fund with a focus on developing ideas from small community-based grantees who do not usually have access to funding from government donors. Each grantee was awarded £100,000 and 18 months of technical support: £10.1 million was disbursed over the six years of the fund (Yaron et al., 2019: 27).

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

The MFA does not currently have an overarching policy framework for localisation, but it is involved in several localisation activities in the humanitarian sector. Although its development cooperation policy does not mention localisation, in March 2019 it released a **policy letter** entitled ‘People First: The Netherlands’ course towards humanitarian aid and diplomacy’, which sets the objective of ‘strengthening the position and capacity of local humanitarian workers’ (MFA, 2019a: 3), in addition to upholding its Grand Bargain commitments.

The Netherlands is an active participant in the **Grand Bargain**, co-convening with the World Bank Workstream 1 on Greater Transparency. Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag served as the Grand Bargain Eminent Person until 2021. The Netherlands also established a high-level dialogue alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2018 on managing financial, reputational and operational risks. The aim of this dialogue was to address how different levels of risk tolerance across Grand Bargain signatories affect local responders.

In 2019, the MFA reported that it had spent 25% of its budget on funding to local and national organisations through country-based pooled funds (MFA, 2019b). The MFA is also a funder and partner of the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), which focuses on four pillars of work in the humanitarian sector: innovation, localisation (which has an accompanying working group), accountability and collaboration (Dutch Relief Alliance, 2018). The MFA reported that the DRA, which it funds directly, allocated 21% of its funding to national and local actors (MFA, 2019b). The review of the Grand Bargain in 2021 also found that the Netherlands provided 99% of its humanitarian funding as flexible (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2021: 105).

The MFA recently commissioned a study by the Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI (Barbelet et al., 2021) looking at what added value localisation brings in the pursuit of Dutch policy objectives, and how the Netherlands as a donor and diplomatic actor can effectively promote localisation. We have drawn from the findings of this research across this report.

OCHA Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs)

UN OCHA operates a series of CBPFs, established under new emergencies, that allow donors to pool their contributions into single and unearmarked funds in support of local humanitarian efforts. A five-year evaluation of the Grand Bargain found that, in 2020, ‘CBPFs were the largest channel of international [humanitarian] funding to local actors’ (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2021: 55). A 2019 evaluation found that most CBPFs had ‘increased the funding share going to local actors, by two-thirds on average, since 2015’. However, it recommended that the role of national NGOs on advisory boards in humanitarian contexts should be strengthened, with advisory board seats for non-donors shared equally between UN agencies, INGOs and national NGOs (Els, 2019: 7).

There are also cases where the interventions of external actors can provide resources but encroach on agency. For example, projects or programmes that transfer resources to Global South actors for implementation, can at the same time be very restrictive in terms of their design and objectives. And the most recent report of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation found that the alignment is declining between development partner projects and partner country objectives (OECD and UNDP, 2019).

The flagship aid instrument for enabling ownership and using country systems was general or sector budget support, used by many donors in the years after the Paris Declaration (Box 4). However, while budget support does deliver on the ‘resources’ dimension of the localisation framework, its performance on the ‘agency’ dimension is the opposite. Donors used policy conditionality attached to budget support agreements to try and induce donors’ preferred domestic policy reforms. As such, by definition, policy conditionality encroaches on agency, as discussed in Section 2.

The recent issuance of special drawing rights (SDRs) is an example of a globally agreed policy intervention where reserves accrue directly to sovereigns without conditions imposed. The resources accrue to governments according to IMF quotas (and therefore disproportionately benefit the richest countries), but they do not impose the same constraints on agency. Governments have full agency over whether to keep SDRs in their reserves, or pay down debt from various creditors, or fund vaccines, for example.

This differs from current debates over how to ‘recycle SDRs’. Options to donate SDR allocations without conditions are not being considered.

Instead, G20 finance ministers have agreed that the IMF and multilateral development bank should explore options for reallocation of SDRs. Any reallocations will likely thus be mediated through international financial institutions as part of an agreed programme with associated conditions (G20, 2021).

The Covid-19 crisis has also revealed the reluctance of donors to depart from standard instruments and conditionalities despite the unprecedented need for financing of domestic relief efforts. Landers and Aboneaj (2021) show that World Bank finance has still been linked to long-term policy reforms, despite the intense demands of crafting a crisis response. Miller et al. (2021) also show how there has been no relative shift towards more flexible policy-based lending, pointing to the reluctance to cede agency over the use of funds.

More broadly, the inherent risk that external interventions could encroach on the agency and ways of being of local actors implies that care must be taken to deliberately mitigate these risks. There are many different ways to do this, including supporting the activities and purposes highlighted in the ‘wheel’ in Figure 7. Donors could also draw on the monitoring, measurement and evaluation frameworks in Section 4.5 to check whether their practices meet their commitments and aspirations for localisation.

One key area of donor practice relates to the transfer of knowledge, which refers to the issues of knowledge hierarchies and power imbalances. Despite its name, technical assistance is often delivered in ways that can encroach on agency. For example, technical advice which does not contain options to choose from, can carry the implicit message: ‘take it or leave it’. A clear improvement in terms of agency would be for technical advice

to always include several options and an outline of potential trade-offs (King, 2020). Not encroaching on agency can also involve supporting, enabling, and creating space for local policymakers' roles in leading on defining problems and solutions (Booth, 2013; Andrews et al., 2017; King et al., 2021), for example the initiative of the Mayor's Dialogues (Foresti, 2020). Other approaches such as peer learning (for example, CABRI) and South–South knowledge transfer, or even supply chain integration, may also be ways of localising knowledge creation and learning.

More broadly, providing support to the 'policy ecosystem' of local actors who produce and use knowledge, evidence and data in policy debates could provide a more localised way to connect policy-making and knowledge without encroaching on agency (King, 2020). Actors in a domestic policy ecosystem include: government policymakers (ministers and bureaucrats); CSOs, campaigners and lobby groups involved in public policy debates; organisations that produce data including national statistics, polls and surveys (for example, Afrobarometer); as well as sources of analysis and evidence such as think tanks, academics and universities. Supporting these actors could help to improve the conditions for locally led technical analysis and advice to be produced and used, and would be an example of a more 'oblique' or indirect method (Roche and Denney, 2019) of supporting the policy process while not encroaching on agency.

Ideas of 'capacity' as well as knowledge transfer and learning are key aspects in relation to resources, agency and ways of being. Donors may define knowledge or capacity in relation to donor norms, rather than local assets and capabilities. In recent years, 'adaptive' approaches that recognise the complexity of development problems and the emergent nature of change have attempted

to overcome the problems associated with top-down planning and the transfer of universal 'best practice'. While these approaches emphasise locally led practice, the value of contextual knowledge and adaptive learning, they often come into conflict with pre-existing institutional logics within aid bureaucracies, including the pull towards standardisation. Green and Guijt have observed that the logics of codification create a blueprint 'outside the context of political time and place', resulting in the loss of some of the features most likely to make adaptive learning effective in the first place (2019: 39). These include the 'emphasis on localizing programme design' and 'leadership in the local context' (ibid.).

Also in relation to MEL, one of the SDG indicators (17.15.1) relates to the 'extent of use of country-owned results frameworks'. In this vein, a key part of the policy ecosystem is evaluation, which could play a role in prioritising local knowledge, cultural understandings, and transformation of societies (Ofir, 2018; Chilisa and Mertens, 2021). New approaches to evaluation also bring in insights from complexity theory and take a more system-wide view (Vidueira, 2019; Chaplowe et al., 2021; Richardson and Patton, 2021), and could thereby draw more effectively on local knowledge. Another related and interesting example is that of Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs) (Danert, 2017; Global Partnership for Education, 2018; WaterAid, 2020). JSRs, and other types of sector-wide MEL, could potentially help to facilitate decision-making which is more grounded in local realities. Pooled funding for shared sector evaluations – carried out by local actors – is one proposed means to support this part of the policy ecosystem in a localised way (King, 2020). Sector-wide evaluations could also help to build evidence of the relative performance of different actors, to mitigate perception-based risk concerns of external actors. As such, they could support localisation in different ways.

Box 4 Examples of cross-government initiatives: the Grand Bargain and the Aid Effectiveness/Development Cooperation Effectiveness commitments

The Grand Bargain

Launched during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain is an agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations who have committed to get more resources into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. The Grand Bargain sets out 51 commitments distilled in nine thematic workstreams and one cross-cutting commitment. The signatories are:

- Bilateral government signatories: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States.
- Multilateral signatories: European Commission – ECHO, FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, OECD, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP, WHO, World Bank.

Workstream 2 focuses on the provision of more support and funding tools for local and national responders. According to an evaluation of the Grand Bargain at five years, by 2020 ‘13 out of 53 grant-giving signatories reported that they met or exceeded the target of providing 25% of their humanitarian funding to local and national responders in 2020’ (Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2021: 52). The 13 are Christian Aid, CAFOD (exceeded the target) and ActionAid, the Czech Republic, IFRC, New Zealand, OCHA (for Country-Based Pooled Funds), Slovenia, Spain, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.

In February 2021, the Grand Bargain 2.0 was introduced, which ‘reframes the overall objective to achieving “Better humanitarian outcomes for affected populations through enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, and greater accountability”’ (Grand Bargain, 2021).

Paris, Busan and Nairobi

The series of international high-level meetings on aid effectiveness and development cooperation effectiveness included many commitments that are relevant for locally led international development practice. Commitments at the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 included the following:

‘14. Partner countries commit to: ● Exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies through broad consultative processes. ● Translate these national development strategies into prioritised results-oriented operational programmes as expressed in medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets (Indicator 1). ● Take the lead in co-ordinating aid at all levels in conjunction with other development resources in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector.

15. Donors commit to: ● Respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it.

21. Donors commit to: ● Use country systems and procedures to the maximum extent possible. Where use of country systems is not feasible, establish additional safeguards and measures in ways that strengthen rather than undermine country systems and procedures (Indicator 5). ● Avoid, to the maximum extent possible, creating dedicated structures for day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects and programmes (Indicator 6).'

The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action which followed it were endorsed by 137 countries and 29 multilateral and bilateral development institutions. Six years later, in 2011, The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation espoused the following four principles, which were reaffirmed at Nairobi in 2016.

- Ownership of development priorities by developing countries: countries should define the development model that they want to implement.
- A focus on results: having a sustainable impact should be the driving force behind investments and efforts in development policy-making.
- Partnerships for development: development depends on the participation of all actors, and recognises the diversity and complementarity of their functions.
- Transparency and shared responsibility: development co-operation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens.

The Busan Partnership was endorsed by 162 countries and 52 organisations. It included commitments to: 'Use country systems as the default approach for development co-operation in support of activities managed by the public sector, working with and respecting the governance structures of both the provider of development co-operation and the developing country' (19a). It also stated that:

'22. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation. They also provide services in areas that are complementary to those provided by states. Recognising this, we will: a) Implement fully our respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development. b) Encourage CSOs to implement practices that strengthen their accountability and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness.'

4.6.1 Proposed funding models and approaches

In addition to the examples listed above, several proposed frameworks for shifting funding to Global South organisations also exist. These frameworks can serve as inspiration for Global North actors, including bilateral and multilateral government donors, when seeking to implement funding for ‘localisation’ efforts.

Models of direct funding for humanitarian response

Research by the OECD identifies several ways of funding ‘local actors’ as directly as possible, called for under the Grand Bargain (OECD, 2017). These include:

- Pooled funds (minimising the need for actors to apply for funding across multiple donors).
- Funding to a network (national, regional or international).
- Partner funding (only one layer of transactions between the donor and local actor, predicated on a fair partnership between the initial funding recipient and the local actor).
- Delegated cooperation (a donor delegates authority to a lead donor to act on its behalf to administer funds).

In many cases, more direct funding for humanitarian response is still channelled through one or more intermediaries between a donor organisation and the local or national actor. A study commissioned by the Swiss government for the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream on the future role of intermediaries in humanitarian contexts notes that substantial changes are needed to the current status quo in order to bridge the gap from intention to action in supporting locally led humanitarian action (Lees et al., 2021). The proposed future

role is that ‘intermediaries empower local and national organisations to drive, define and deliver principled humanitarian responses to needs in their communities’ (ibid.: 6).

Channelling bilateral financial aid to Southern organisations

The SPACE framework provides a range of possible delivery models that can help to transition bilateral programmes from a hierarchical structure grounded in the Global North to a more democratised structure that shifts power and funding to the Global South. This would occur via coalitions of LNOs, supported by UN or INGO actors. One option includes a ‘locally led model’, illustrated below, whereby a Northern donor channels funding to a LNO ‘anchor’ that channels further funding to other LNOs, and coalitions between INGOs and LNOs (Cabot Venton and Pongracz, 2021: 10).

Transforming the international funding landscape

Global Public Investment (GPI) is a new proposed approach to concessional international public finance for sustainable development. GPI presents an alternative to the current model of Northern donors providing ODA to recipient countries in the Global South. This approach includes universal contributions from all countries, as well as ongoing commitments. It also seeks to widen the current narrow focus on reducing poverty to meeting broader challenges of inequality and sustainability (Expert Working Group on Global Public Investment, 2021).

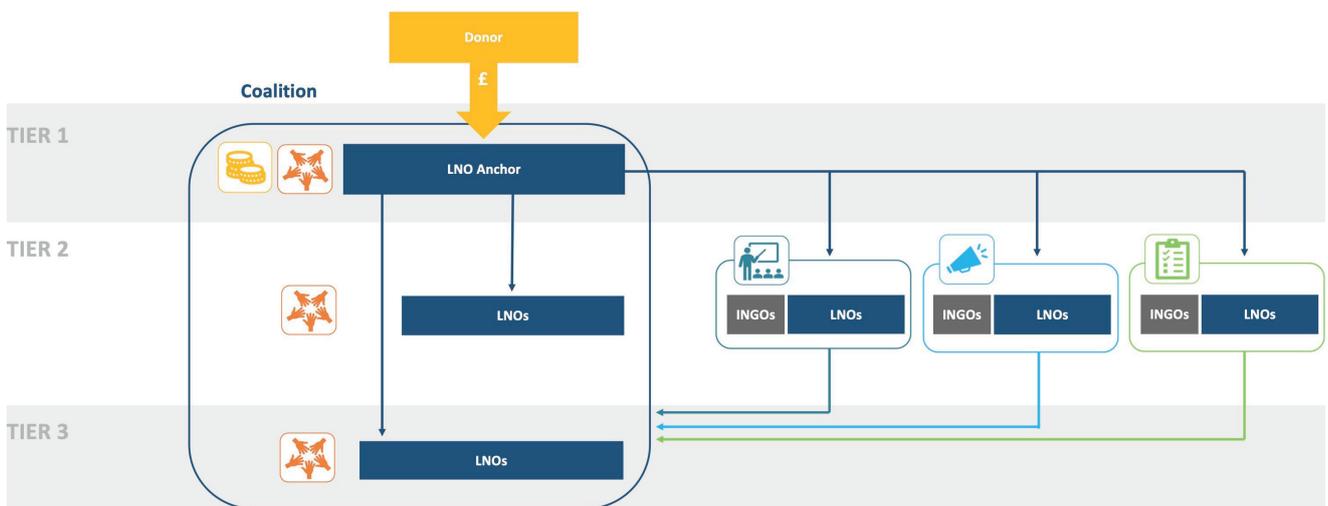
Participatory grant-making

Although participatory grant-making is not solely used as a funding mechanism for shifting resources from Global North to South, it is an approach that seeks to break down traditional power dynamics between funders and grantees.

While there is no formal definition of participatory grant-making, practitioners note that it is an approach that ‘cedes decision-making power about funding – including the strategy and criteria behind those decisions – to the very communities

that funders aim to serve’ (Gibson and Bokoff, 2018: 7). Participatory grant-making emphasises the importance of ‘nothing about us without us’, and seeks to give agency to people and communities in determining their own priorities.

Figure 8 Locally led model in the SPACE framework



Source: Cabot Venton and Pongracz (2021)

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Concluding observations

The purpose of this paper is to understand the issues surrounding localisation. In particular, it reviews evidence and concepts related to localisation to form a framework that could highlight issues and disparities; reviews localisation models and approaches; and outlines the challenges and barriers that have stalled localisation and the shifting of power to local actors. Given these, we make the following key observations.

1. Power shapes the journey. It determines whether or not localisation – as the journey – can actually lead to locally led practice. Just because an effort is labelled as localisation does not mean that it actually shifts power to local actors. At the same time, many barriers and challenges to localisation are related to power. For instance, if local actors had more bargaining power and were able to say ‘no’ to models and approaches that did not meet their needs, the ‘barriers’ to localisation would be seen in a different light, and the perspective of local actors on these barriers would be more salient to decisions about models and approaches. Power even shapes the issue of ‘who is local?’ – those who have it get to define who counts as local. As such, there is no objectively correct answer to the question ‘who is local’: the context and system that actors inhabit are inherently complex and contested. Achieving the goal of locally led practice requires careful attention to these questions.

2. Power also shapes the destination. Through our framework, we see the goal of localisation as the shift of power to local actors. The goal informs which localisation model or approach suits best. If the goal is narrowly defined in terms of aid effectiveness, then a more limited set of tools

will be used. This will then reinforce a mindset where Global North actors are the protagonist as harbingers of effectiveness, while local actors are risky, corrupt and ‘low capacity’ subcontractors. Localisation must be transformative, where the goal is for local actors to be the shapers of their own destinies, and with external actors providing support in different ways that enable this.

3. Resource transfer remains extremely low.

This exposes a huge gap between ambition and action – even when ambition is only measured in terms of funding, and not also about agency and ways of being. Targets and metrics (such as the Grand Bargain or ‘country programmable aid’) have been continually missed. If the international aid and development sector is sincere in shifting power, this needs to be addressed. More attention should also be given to the transfer of other non-financial resources, such as knowledge and technology.

4. Agency and ways of being are neglected.

Many of the methods that do deliver on resource transfer often fall short on agency and ways of being. This can lead to a situation where localisation becomes instrumental (e.g. the end goal is effectiveness at the cost of encroaching on local actors’ agency and disrespecting their ways of being). This type of approach does not deliver the full potential of localisation. Meanwhile, providing donor resources while also respecting ways of being and not encroaching on agency can sometimes, or even oftentimes, involve donors working in new or different ways that call for stepping back, letting go or creating space.

5. Good models already exist. More encouragingly, there are many flourishing localisation models and approaches which can be transformative, and which

go beyond a narrow focus on resources to also deliver on agency and ways of being. Many of these models and approaches originate from the Global South, often via networks of actors. These models, particularly from the Global South, need to be accelerated. There is also a lot to learn from them in the wider effort to promote localisation and locally led practice.

6. Data and evidence are needed. While there are now many models/approaches that can inform how localisation efforts could be done, there remains a gap in terms of collecting data and evidencing the progress of such efforts. Current tools that collect data on resource transfers do not give a full and clear picture of how much – and what kind of – funding actually goes to Global South actors. It is also very difficult to get data on funding flows from donors showing the final recipients in the delivery chain. Meanwhile, good measurements for encroachment of agency and respect for ways of being have yet to be developed.

Many of these observations are not new and, indeed, one prevailing feeling from many participants in our consultations was that these issues have been discussed repeatedly for a long time, but without enough change. But now, the critical juncture that we currently face, due to tumultuous political, cultural, social and economic changes in the last year and a half, may provide an opportunity to finally bring about change on this agenda.

5.2 Recommendations

There are four broad recommendations from our work. Again these are not new but draw on the evidence, literature and examples discussed in the paper as well as the responses to the consultations presented in Figure 9. These are four broad headings of recommendations, and we then drill down further into more specific actions below.

Recommendation 1: Learn from, and accelerate, localisation models that already exist – especially from the Global South

While in the past the question of ‘How should we implement localisation?’ may have been a valid excuse to delay action, there are now answers to this that can be derived from existing models and approaches. And those who are sincere in championing localisation can support in the acceleration of, or learn from, these models and approaches. As shown in our review of localisation efforts, there are already numerous initiatives showing promise in genuinely shifting power to local actors. There are also already good resources including from donors themselves, such as USAID, who have, over the last few years, undertaken efforts to promote locally led practices (such as their Local Works programme). In particular, initiatives stemming from the Global South – such as the Global Fund for Community Foundations, NEAR Network and Global Alliance for Communities – are advocating for change towards more localised models and approaches. There are also now multiple frameworks that aim to measure different dimensions of localisation, which can be used to provide the data to make a stronger case for localisation.

International actors can support these existing models/approaches, and refrain from starting from scratch. There is also a risk of ‘projectising’ localisation (i.e., trying to achieve it by starting projects), instead of seeing it as a process that requires systematic change (more on this in Recommendation 3). International actors can also support the acceleration of existing initiatives and of localisation efforts more widely. Beyond providing funding (see Recommendation 2), international actors can support in raising the bargaining power of local actors, as well as investing in more data and evidence, including data on localisation progress.

Table 5 Actions under Recommendation 1

Actors	Action
All international actors in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refrain from starting projects from scratch without learning first, and instead seek out existing initiatives (as well as measurement frameworks) particularly from the Global South to learn from, support and invest in ● Invest in knowledge, evidence and learning (ideally via Global South-led processes) around existing localisation efforts and cases of locally led development ● Strengthen the bargaining power of local actors, for instance through supporting local/national umbrella organisations/networks of Global South CSOs, connecting Global South/local leaders and practitioners in a wider network-of-networks
Bilateral and multilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a common vision and collective approaches that can lead to system-wide reforms and support the acceleration of existing localisation efforts (instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated projects that have limited impact) ● Invest in data and evidence, utilise existing research produced by bilateral/multilateral donors themselves (e.g. USAID's Local Works), and continue to generate such research and evidence, especially by Global South/local academics/policymakers ● Be transparent about – and enable easier, public access to – relevant data (such as funding flows) on localisation, for example via tracker on funding flows to local actors.
Intermediaries (including international NGOs/for-profit organisations, UN and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refrain from 'projectising' localisation efforts (i.e. setting up another localisation project) – instead, work on the necessary systemic and organisational changes and process required to accelerate localisation ● Hold bilateral/multilateral donors as well as intermediary peers to account in their commitment to invest, learn from and accelerate localisation efforts especially those from the Global South; and, on the flipside, recognise best practice ● Broker knowledge and relationships between Global North decision-makers and Global South/local actors that can build solidarity, as well as facilitate the learning, acceleration and innovation of localisation initiatives
Philanthropic actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to support and accelerate the efforts of Global South/local actors that may be overlooked by larger agencies and international intermediaries

Source: Authors

Recommendation 2: Transfer greater resources, including by tackling root causes of risk aversion and redesigning funding flows

There are many reasons why a greater transfer of resources to local actors has not happened, despite commitments to do so. One reason is risk aversion among international actors, another funding practices that constrain local actors' access to funding. In turn, risk aversion and constraining funding flows are

reinforced by, among other things, unhelpful risk perceptions, lack of trust between international and local actors, and a challenging domestic political environment.

Of course, some of these (for example, challenging domestic political environments) are influenced by factors beyond the control of, say, donors and international actors. But there are things that international actors can concretely do in tackling risk aversion and redesigning funding flows. This includes reflecting on the basis of risk thresholds and

ensuring that risk thresholds are well informed using available evidence; building trust through better relationships with local actors; and strategically countering narratives that feed the challenging domestic political environment (e.g. campaigning for protection of aid budgets; not perpetuating white saviour narratives in fundraising). International actors can also redesign their funding practices

in a way that primarily favours local actors over intermediaries (both non-profit and for-profit), as well as support existing funding models/innovations from the Global South that respect local actors' agency and ways of being (see Recommendation 3), and which are directly transferred, multi-year, flexible, provide requisite core costs and are not onerous on the part of local actors.

Table 6 Actions under Recommendation 2

Actors	Action
All international actors in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set higher targets of quality (i.e. multi-year, flexible, covers core costs) funding to be transferred directly to local actors, and deliver on these targets, and recommit to existing targets where appropriate (e.g. Grand Bargain 2.0) ● Review contracting/granting practices and redesign these so that they primarily favour local actors. If intermediaries are absolutely necessary, then they should have progressive funding practices (e.g. multi-year, flexible, not onerous) ● Coordinate to tackle risk aversion and its root causes, especially in challenging domestic political environments (e.g., through campaigning and review of fundraising/comms practices) ● Support innovations for progressive funding approaches ● Open up spaces for local actors to lead/participate in priority-setting and decision-making when it comes to funding ● Pursue knowledge and technology sharing between international and local actors (e.g. via peer learning), including ways to measure these, and in an equitable manner that does not entrench knowledge hierarchies
Bilateral and multilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appoint independent body (e.g. ICAI in the UK) to hold relevant ministries/departments to account for meeting commitments to transfer quality funding to local actors ● Identify and aim to meet bureaucratic requirements that can enable greater transfer of funding as directly as possible to local actors, and in transferring funding to support localisation efforts
Intermediaries (including international NGOs/for-profit organisations, UN, and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflect on the role of these actors as funding intermediaries (see Recommendation 4) and redesign existing funding mechanisms to expand access and reduce constraints on local actors – for example by rethinking the model of sub-contracting/sub-granting ● Transfer quality funding more directly towards local actors (e.g. to actors that are not affiliates/sub-offices of international organisations) ● Review fundraising, communication and campaign work so that it does not perpetuate unhelpful narratives such as white saviourism ● Hold donor governments to account in their commitment to transfer greater, quality resources to local actors
Philanthropic actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transfer quality funding more directly to local actors, particularly ones that may be overlooked by donors and international intermediaries ● Support innovations on progressive funding mechanisms ● Engage philanthropic donors to demonstrate the value of greater, higher-quality funding transferred to local actors, and encourage more donors to support this

Source: Authors

Finally, more attention needs to be given to transfer of non-financial resources, such as knowledge and technology. Local actors can also better lead development practice if there is equitable resource and technology sharing between Global North and South. This raises questions around how this can be measured, and how to do this in an equitable manner (e.g. knowledge sharing without imposing a hierarchy of knowledge with a bias towards the Global North).

Recommendation 3: Reduce encroachment of local actors' agency and respect their ways of being by rethinking organisational roles (and stepping back if appropriate) and shifting one's mindset

Transferring resources alone is not enough to deliver change. Both agency and ways of being need to be added to the overall ambition in order to deliver on the potential for transformative localisation and to meet the aspirations of Global South actors. Funding, decision-making and implementation practices can recognise the agency and respect the ways of being of local actors. As shown in Section 4, there are already existing initiatives and innovations that try to do this, especially from the Global South.

But truly reducing encroachment on agency and demonstrating respect for ways of being requires a more radical change. International actors need to rethink their roles (and, in some cases, even take a step back) so that local actors can pursue genuine locally led development. For example, this might mean reduced funding channelled through intermediaries – this will mean a change in the contracting practices of donors, and will pose a challenge for for-profit entities. Doing this will not be easy and may indeed be painful. It requires deep institutional reflection among international actors on the role that they play now and in the future. It may necessitate a change in organisational structures, performance metrics, ways of working, mandates and staffing.

However, these changes at an institutional and systemic level can only happen if there is a mindset change at an individual level – for instance, through engaging in the anti-racist and decolonial work that exists within – and beyond – the development sector that challenges international actors' self-image of being the 'expert' or 'saviour' and sees local actors as the protagonists who can shape their own destinies.

Table 7 Actions under Recommendation 3

Actors	Action
All international actors in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in sector-wide reflection and build consensus and commitment to systematically rethink roles (and even step back) to align with the vision of localisation and locally led development • Support collective and coordinated efforts to change ways of working, especially in changing performance metrics/benchmarks that facilitate gracefully stepping back and accelerating localisation and locally led development, and explore indicators that emphasise the process of localisation efforts including trust and flexibility, as well as the outputs of projects • Understand and map the capabilities that already exist within the Global South (in a way that does not impose a Northern-centric threshold of 'capability' among local actors) • Invest and support anti-racism and decolonial efforts (e.g. research and learning, best practices) that aim to change institutional ways of working and shift mindsets (e.g. recognising Global South/local capacities, knowledge production)

Table 7 Actions under Recommendation 3 continued

Actors	Action
Bilateral and multilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the integrity of international development objectives (including for localisation and locally led development) • Be held accountable by an independent body (e.g. ICAI in the UK) as well by civil society on commitments to reduce encroachment on agency and to respect ways of being of local actors • Establish ways in which Global South actors can participate in setting the agenda and priorities of international development departments/ministries • Create more spaces where Global South actors and leaders can directly engage and co-create with each other and government officials in their domestic contexts, including by external actors stepping back from their own relationships with local actors, in order to avoid crowding out local relationships
Intermediaries (including international NGOs/for-profit organisations, UN, and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the future of the role of intermediaries and develop concrete plans to adapt to the realities of a different way of working that steps back in some areas, while scaling up localisation and locally led development – for example by rethinking performance metrics/benchmarks (e.g. higher incomes; bigger organisations) • Set up or work within peer networks among other intermediaries that can foster gracefully stepping back and promote best practices of not encroaching on agency and respecting ways of being • Support the generation of knowledge, evidence and learning on how to reduce encroachment of agency and achieve greater respect for ways of being of local actors • Engage and hold bilateral donors to account in their commitment to truly shift power to local actors
Philanthropic actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model to bilateral/multilateral donors and intermediaries progressive funding practices that do not encroach on agency and respect ways of being • Invest and support locally led initiatives overlooked by bilateral/multilateral donors and intermediaries that promote anti-racist and decolonial practices within the development sector

Source: Authors

Recommendation 4: Let Global South actors lead the campaign to promote localisation and locally led development

The campaign to promote localisation and locally led development must be led by Global South actors, and must amplify and elevate Global South voices and perspectives. Localisation efforts that do not demonstrate this cannot embody the principles of locally led development; in other words, the journey – if not being driven by Global South actors – risks not arriving at the destination. This can be seen as ‘localising’ the localisation efforts.

Of course, as demonstrated by Sections 3 and 4, Global South and local actors themselves are diverse and are not a monolith – there are different perspectives and even power dynamics among them. But the point is that whatever discourse and processes are necessary to effect the campaign – and the wider localisation movement – they must be led by the full diversity of Global South actors. The finding in Section 3 that, often, only Global South elites are able to participate in these processes is not an excuse not to listen to Global South actors, but rather for Global North actors who inadvertently serve as gatekeepers to take a step back and open the door wider so that marginalised voices and

perspectives are also included, and their agency and ways of being recognised.

That is not to say that there is no role for Global North actors – on the contrary, international actors have an important role to play in campaigning for, supporting and delivering localisation and locally led development, as outlined in the previous recommendations.

In particular, donor governments could have a clearer policy on localisation – one that is informed by Global South perspectives, and one that speaks to the three dimensions of localisation. Moving forward, the campaign process needs to be open, diverse, inclusive, respectful and participatory – one in which Global North and South actors can learn from each other, and where local actors are at the helm.

Table 8 Actions under Recommendation 4

Actors	Action
All international actors in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open up space so that the full diversity of Global South/local actors – not only elites, but also marginalised groups – can participate in the campaign process and wider localisation movement ● Open up leadership positions to Global South/local actors, and be represented by Global South/local actor partners and counterparts, particularly in high-level and decision-making forums ● Amplify existing campaigning and communication initiatives and efforts led by Global South and local actors
Bilateral and multilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop consistent and clear policy on localisation informed by Global South realities/priorities, and that speaks to the three dimensions (resources, agency, ways of being) ● Invite Global South/local actors to engage with staff, including at the minister/secretary or equivalent level ● Identify internal champions within bureaucracies – including at high/senior levels – who can support the campaign and the wider movement ● Formalise, institutionalise and publicise commitments to delivering the demands for localisation and locally led development
Intermediaries (including international NGOs/for-profit organisations, UN, and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amplify and elevate Global South/local partners in relevant forums/platforms, especially those who may be overlooked because they are not affiliates of international organisations/networks ● Create and maintain spaces for Global South/local actor leadership and participation beyond this campaign
Philanthropic actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring in and invest in Global South/local actors in international campaigns that may be overlooked by donors and intermediaries ● Demonstrate that alternative systems are possible within the international development sector, drawing from the existing progressive initiatives within the philanthropy space

Source: Authors

Figure 9 Responses during the August consultations to the question, ‘what barriers might we face and how do we overcome them to build a bigger movement?’

CHANGING INCENTIVES	INSTITUTIONAL RACISM	ACCOUNTABILITY	CHANGING MINDSETS	HARM & VALUES	NETWORKS & SOLIDARITY
Changing the development paradigm is extremely difficult – not just an academic exercise – what incentives can we give those who hold the purse strings so that they give up power?	Looking at institutional barriers including racism	No-one denies accountability matters, how can we be more creative about this and all the different accountabilities	Change in mindset – we have a system that has worked for people for a long time, how can we have a mindset for new system?	Raise awareness of the harm of traditional aid	Solidarity between local South and local North
What breadcrumbs can there be for donors to change?	Change perspective on expertise and on who we can trust	Start shifting accountability to people - instead of donor led	Mindshifts on our work	Rethinking values and principles – like neutrality and impartiality	Building and deepening local networks
Create a FOMO effect to encourage people to join - but might feel ‘them’ vs ‘us’			Start thinking differently about shifting the power	Start considering research ethics	Need to work together to overcome the barriers
			Plant the seeds within community to avoid colonial thinking		Creating local advocacy groups to promote local voices
			Try to change perception of CSOs		Build community cohesion – common purpose
			Demonstration effect		Clear roles and action points for different stakeholders
					Document what is happening, share it and learn from each other so we can be the change that we want to see

ALLYSHIP	‘LOCAL’ LEADERSHIP	ROLE OF GOVS	DEEPER ENGAGEMENT	METRICS & INDICATORS
Allies – INGOs must be allies – need to fully buy the idea of localisation – those in this intermediary role must open up	Investing/supporting real movement builders whether they be individual activists or orgs!	Collective advocacy to also challenge governments when they are unhelpful – e.g, militarizing	Shift to long-term not short-term projects	Need to continue the conversation and talk to the key questions e.g. indicators – flexible funding, opening intl spaces
Donor agencies are also intermediaries between ‘upstream’ – donor legislators – who have own ideas about what success looks like – need to fundamentally change that idea - current view has cognitive dissonance and change is bubbling up	Proximate leaders	Continue challenging government if they think we are the enemies	Replacing field visits with 1-2-1 zoom meetings for deeper engagement?	Trust – metrics of trust
Consortiums/ families of community-based actors to break up culture of competition and reach scale	Localise these conversations about localisation	Continue to see government as an actor that can help us	Tailor-making solutions on a specific context	Trying to communicate it more effectively to explain what is community-led and measure what is relevant
A smaller posse to move first? Good allies with secure funding. Then tackling the more system-wide issues that relate to political narratives		Is there civic space and who is participating?		

Source: Anonymous participants in the August 2021 consultations

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