

TECHNICAL REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARTER FOR CHANGE COMMITMENTS AND ITS EFFECT ON LOCALIZATION OF AID IN KENYA



Researchers:

¹ Denis Kioko Matheka & ² Brian Nzomo Kavuwa

¹ The lead researcher: Localisation Expert.

² The Co-researcher: MEAL Specialist-Specializing in Locally led/Locally Driven Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning.

November, 2023

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures	3
Abbreviations and Acronyms	4
Executive Summary	5
1. Background Information	6
1.1.Introduction	6
1.2.Problem statement	6
1.3.Scope of the study	6
1.4.Objectives of the study	7
2. The Research Methodology	7
2.1.Research Design	7
2.2.Description of Variables	7
2.3.The target population and sample size	7
2.4.Sampling technique	7
2.5.Data Collection Techniques	8
2.6.Data analysis and presentation	8
3. Data Analysis, Presentation, and Interpretation of Findings.	8
3.1.Response Rate	8
3.2.Demographic information and Respondents' Organizational profiles.	8
3.3.Funding Models	10
3.4.Capacity Strengthening Approaches	12
3.5.Partnership Relationships	15
4. Conclusions	17
5. Recommendations	18
6. Suggestions for further studies	19
7. References	20

List of Tables and Figures

TABLES

Table 1: Target Population	6
Table 2: Response Rate	7
Table 3: Partnership Between Lnnos And The Ingo	16

FIGURES

Figure 1: Respondents' Designation	8
Figure 2: Nature Of Respondents' Organization	8
Figure 3: Endorsers Partnership With Ingo Signatories Of The C4c In Kenya.	8
Figure 4: Funds Disbursement From Ingo Signatory Partners In The Last 12 Months.	9
Figure 5: Ingo Signatory Partners' Contribution To Endorsers' Administrative Core Costs.	10
Figure 6: Ingo Unrestricted Funding To C4c Endorsers.	10
Figure 7: Ingo Signatory Introduction Of C4c Endorsers To Donors In The Last 12 Months (Jan-dec,2022).	11
Figure 8: Participation Of C4c Endorsers In Capacity-strengthening Initiatives Organized By Ingo Signatories In The Last 12 Months.	11
Figure 9: C4c Endorsers Capacity Needs Requirements For The Period Jan-dec, 2022.	12
Figure 10: Ingo Support The C4c Endorsers' Capacity Gaps Identified In The Capacity Needs Assessment Reports	12
Figure 11: Ingo Signatories' Coordination Of Capacity Strengthening Of Lnnos.	13
Figure 12: Ingo Capacity Strengthening Working Relationship With The C4c Endorsers	13
Figure 13: Nature Of Relations Between C4c Endorsers & Ingo	14
Figure 14: Respecting The Views Of The Endorsers By The Ingo.	14
Figure 15: C4c Endorsers Staff Risks Adequately Taken Care Of By Ingo Signatories	15
Figure 16: C4c Endorsers' Contributions To Project Designs With Ingo Signatories	15

Abbreviations and Acronyms

C4C	Charter for Change
CBO	Community Based Organization
CoA	Charter of Accountability
FBO	Faith Based Organization
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KC4CWG	Kenya Charter for Change Working Group
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNNGO	Local and National Non-Governmental Organization
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nation
UNPP	Unite Nations Partner Portal

Executive Summary

Global leaders and humanitarian actors agreed on a plan to restructure the aid system to ensure more leadership, representation, and participation of local and national actors in humanitarian coordination and decision-making. Donors, UN Agencies, INGOs, and Local and National NGOs have signed commitments such as the Grand Bargain, the Charter for Change (C4C), and Pledge for Change, demonstrating their willingness to actualize, take account, give account, and be held accountable in the implementation of a locally-led humanitarian action. This study aimed to analyse the status of C4C commitment implementation and its effects on aid localization in Kenya. The study's independent variables were funding models, capacity-strengthening approaches, and partnership relationships, while the dependent variable was aid localization in Kenya. The study was guided by Aldrich's resource dependence model.

The research design was appropriate for this study because it allowed for an in-depth analysis and description of the various phenomena under investigation. The study surveyed all 16 signatories and 36 endorsers in Kenya, and the response rate was 52%. Semi-structured questionnaires administered via Kobo toolbox and in-depth interview guides were used to collect primary data. In relation to the first objective which focused on funding model, 43% of the endorsers partnering with INGO signatories of the C4C Kenyan Chapter reported that funds disbursement from the INGOs for their programmatic support was always made on time, while a combined 29% of endorsers reported that funds disbursement was occasionally made on time. A similar 29% recorded funds disbursement was not made on time. On capacity strengthening, 71% of LNNGOs endorsers indicated they had participated in capacity strengthening initiatives organized by the INGOs signatories in the previous twelve (12) months. This included strengthening strategic planning capacity, mobilizing resources, and co-designing project proposals. On partnerships, 43% of LNNGOs reported collaborative partnerships with INGOs, and 50% reported inclusive partnerships with INGOs. No LNNGO reported having an accountable partnership with any of the INGOs.

The study provides 7 recommendations targeting different stakeholders. (1) **INGOs partnering with Local Partners are encouraged to disburse project funds at appropriate time.** While recognizing that only 43% of INGOs signatories disburse funds at the appropriate time, there is a need to increase this percentage in the future. (2) **Where feasible, INGO signatories need to strive and provide flexible, unrestricted/unearmarked funding to their local partners.** Appreciating the difficulties that arise from INGOs in enabling unearmarked funds, one way cited during the research is by providing a fair share of overhead costs to local partners. Another good practice shared is through providing project no-cost extensions or carry-over into the following year. (3) **There is an opportunity for INGO signatories to be intentional in introducing their local partners to donors.** As this is one of the C4C commitments, introducing local partners to donors increases their visibility as well as their chances of getting funds as directly as possible in the future. (4) **While recognizing the efforts in capacity strengthening, it is advised that these initiatives be tailored to the specific needs of local actors.** 71% of local actors reported that INGOs only occasionally support areas identified in their capacity needs assessments. (5) **There is a need for more harmonized capacity-strengthening initiatives from both signatories and endorsers.** Several INGOs have reported that the diverse methods employed by different INGOs complicate the process. A unified strategy, such as "due diligence passporting," is recommended. Additionally, insights from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) highlight the United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP) as another good practice approach. UNPP is a centralized online platform that streamlines the partnership selection process between UN Agencies and Civil Society Organizations by sharing organizational and project information and matching expertise with available opportunities. (6) **In order to strengthen equitable partnerships, both signatories and endorsers are encouraged to promote co-creation during program design** (7) **The C4C Working group to also facilitate a workshop on principled partnerships** including training on communication skills and other soft skills to enhance partnerships.

1. Background Information

1.1. Introduction

In 2016, during the World Humanitarian Summit, the persistent message from local and national NGOs (LNNGOs) was the unrecognition and undermining of their voices, agencies, structures, knowledge, capacities, and abilities during humanitarian response and recovery efforts. During the summit, eighteen donor nations and sixteen international aid organisations {United Nations (UN), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRCM)} agreed on a 'Grand Bargain' to advocate for localization as much as possible but to remain international as necessary as it needs. The agreement emanated from the recommendations to reduce needs, expand the resource base, and establishment of a Grand bargain by donors and aid organizations, by the UN High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing in 2016.

Another framework that was established prior to the summit and champions localization is the Charter for Change (C4C) Initiative which is led by 39 INGOs and over 420 Local and National NGOs (LNNGOs) globally. C4C in a bid to complement the Grand Bargain, provides specific and targeted actions on the localization of aid and donations. C4C has eight commitments, operates both locally and globally, and is endorsed by 36 operating in Kenya with another 16 signatories. C4C is committed to transparency, direct financing, recruitment, equality, advocacy, support, partnership, and promotion.

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite LNNGOs being a lot quicker, understanding the social, cultural, and political environment, generally cost-effective, and staying around even after disaster, there has been persistent unrecognition and undermining of their capabilities. There is a lack of systematic implementation, investment, or demonstrated long-term impact in capacity strengthening (Barbelet, 2019). Jayawickrama (2018) argues that the generalization of the existing gaps in capacity building in the global south serves self-interests, is paternalistic, and indeed a framing by the colonialists and advocated by the humanitarian systems dominated by the North.

Funding to Local and National NGOs remains strictly earmarked, restrictive, short-term, and rigid and does not sometimes cover project core costs nor indirect costs. Historically, LNNGOs have received quite a small percentage of total funding in the aid system, despite their continued presence and frontline work in communities at the centre of response and development activities. Direct funding to local and national actors stood at 1.2% of total humanitarian funding as of 2021. Ali (2020) notes that whilst local actors implement projects, they rarely receive unearmarked funding nor indirect costs from donors ending up affecting their growth.

In some cases, relations between LNNGOs, and INGOs / donors are largely transactional and contractual rather than mutual, accountable, and equitable. Some INGOs and UN agencies have been implementing directly and sub-contracting LNNGOs on a short-term basis. There is a need to ask how contracts are managed, what is permissible, what protection and privileges are there, and who gets what.

1.3. Scope of the Study

The study assessed the progress of three C4C commitments i.e.

(1) Increase direct funding to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action.

- a. INGO signatories commit that by 2020 at least 25% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to national and local NGOs.
- b. INGO signatories commit to introduce our NGO partners to our own direct donors with the aim of them accessing direct financing.

(2) Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership: Signatories endorse and have signed on to the Principles of Partnership, (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) introduced by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007.

(3) Robust organizational support and capacity strengthening: INGO signatories will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response. They undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by 2020 we will have allocated resources to support our partners in this. INGO signatories will publish the percentages of humanitarian budget which goes directly to partners for humanitarian capacity building by 2020.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate how funding models for local and national NGOs affect aid localization in Kenya.
2. To assess the effects of capacity-strengthening approaches on aid localization in Kenya.
3. To examine the extent to which partnership relationships influence aid localization in Kenya.

2. The Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design. Using this method, the study attempted to describe the current state of affairs in Kenya in terms of aid localisation, using in-depth analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, the study was guided by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) definition of descriptive research design, which involves a process of collecting data to respond to queries about the status of subjects under investigation.

2.2. Description of Variables

Aid localization in Kenya was the dependent variable because it was influenced by independent variables i.e. funding models, capacity-strengthening approaches, and partnership relationships. The three independent variables were the characters that were changed to investigate how they affected aid localization in Kenya. It was also possible to predict how much the dependent variable would change as a result of the independent variable changing.

2.3. The Target Population and Sample Size

The study conducted a census of all local and national NGOs and INGOs that have signed the Charter for Change and are members of the Kenya Chapter. In Kenya, there are currently 36 and 16 endorsers and signatories, respectively.

Category of respondent	Target Population (N)	Percentage
Endorsers	36	69%
Signatories	16	31%
Total	52	100%

Table 1: Target Population

2.4. Sampling Technique

The researchers deployed stratified and purposive sampling techniques to identify key stakeholders as respondents for key informant interviews. Using these methods, they were able to obtain references on endorsers and signatories who had been active in Kenya.

2.5. Data Collection Techniques

To collect primary data from study participants, semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interview schedules/guides were used. The semi-structured questionnaire (for signatories and endorsers), which was primarily used to collect qualitative data with some quantitative aspects, was appropriate since it generated uniform data and was more appropriate due to its ability to be deployed via kobo toolbox (an online data collection platform) and also due to the respondents' diverse geographical locations. The in-depth interviews were very insightful in delving into the respondents' perspectives on aid localization in Kenya, from the leadership level to the operational level of the organizations. This provided a personal interaction between the researchers and the respondents, which was useful in seeking clarifications where a deeper understanding of issues was required.

2.6. Data Analysis and Presentation

The qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews was verbatim transcribed and typed in Word. The data was analysed with Nvivo11 (QSR International). The analysis encompassed open coding and progressive categorization of issues using inductive and deductive reasoning. Themes were modified further as new issues emerged from the data analysis. Frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts were used to reproduce and communicate the emerging data categories.

3. Data Analysis, Presentation, and Interpretation of Findings.

3.1. Response Rate

Out of the targeted 52 respondents (16 signatories and 36 endorsers), 27 respondents (7 signatories and 20 endorsers) participated in this study. This represents 31% and 85% of the signatories and endorsers, respectively who participated in the survey.

Questionnaire & In-depth interviews	Frequency	Response Rate
Signatories	16	44%
Endorsers	36	56%
Total	52	100%

Table 2: Response Rate

3.2. Demographic Information and Respondents' Organizational Profiles.

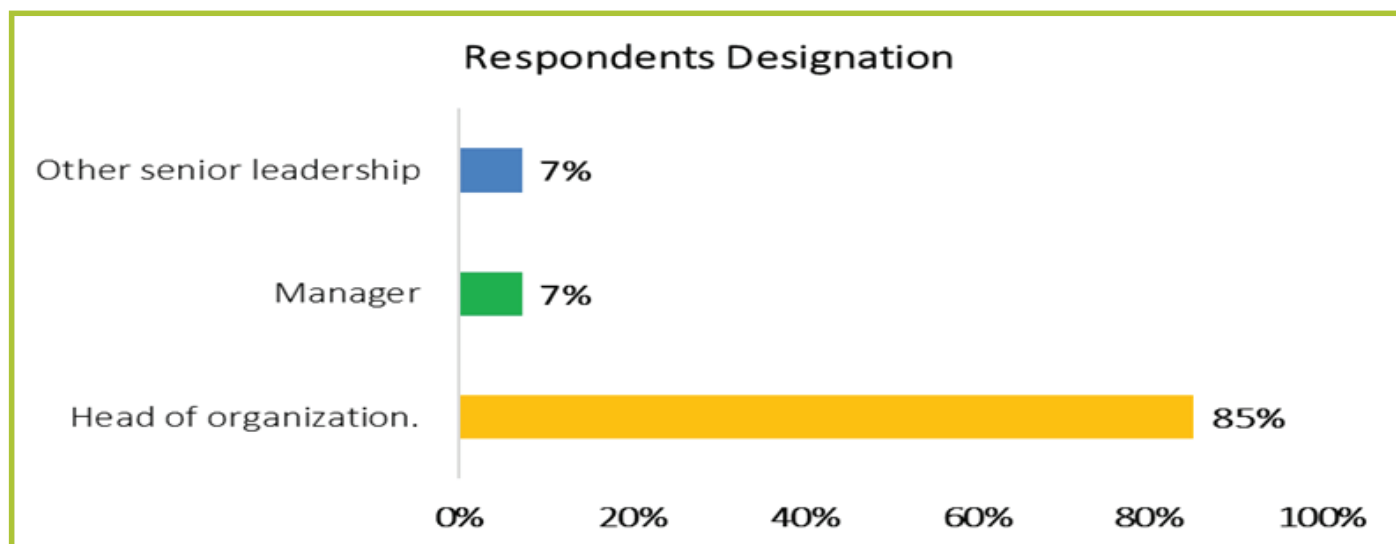


Figure 1: Respondents' Designation

The majority of respondents in the study, 85%, were heads of the respective organizations, while others held managerial positions.

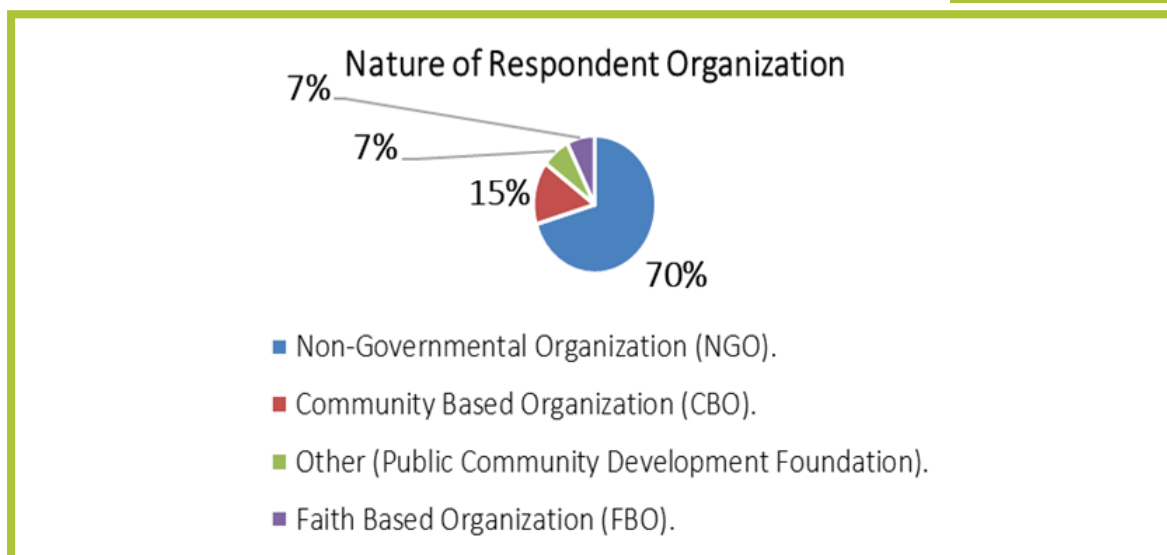


Figure 2: Nature of Respondents' organization

From Figure 2 above, the majority of respondents, (70.4%) were from NGOs, while 14.8%, 7.4%, and 7.4% were from CBOs, Public Community Development Foundation & FBOs respectively.



Figure 3: Endorsers partnership with INGOs signatories of the C4C in Kenya.

As indicated in figure 3 above, only 26% of the endorsers indicated that they had working partnerships with INGOs signatories of the C4C in Kenya during the period January to December 2022. 74% of the endorsers reported that they did not have any sort of partnership existing.

3.3. Funding Models

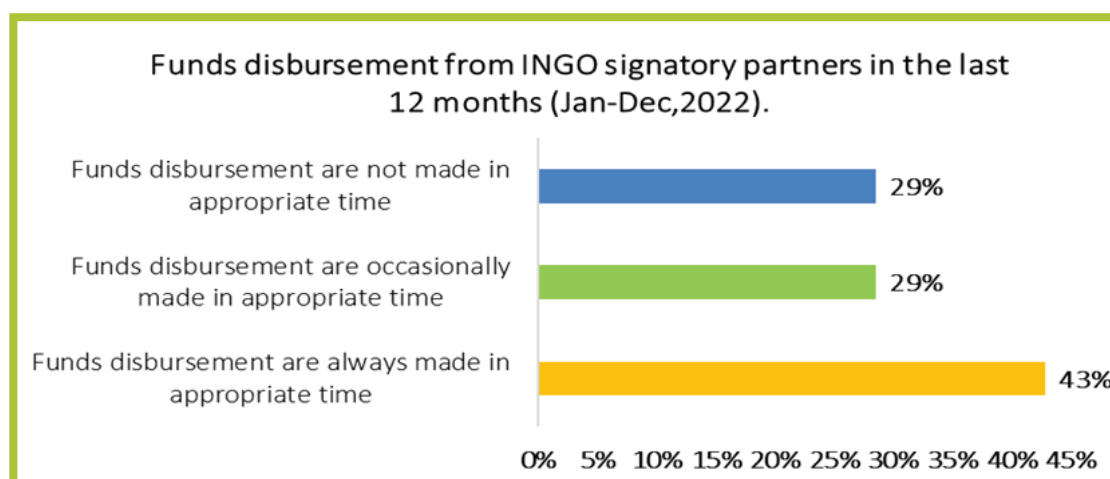


Figure 4: Funds disbursement from INGO signatory partners in the last 12 months.

As earlier indicated in Figure 3 above, 26% of the endorsers had reported having existing partnerships with INGOs' signatories to the C4C Kenyan chapter. 43% of the endorsers partnering with INGO signatories to the C4C Kenyan Chapter expressed those funds disbursement was always made at the appropriate time, while (29% of endorsers reported that funds disbursement is occasionally made at the appropriate time as indicated in figure 4 above. A similar percentage (29%) indicated funds disbursement is not made at the appropriate time. The inconsistency in funding disbursement has significant implications for project planning and implementation. Insights from in-depth conversations with endorsers reveal that delayed disbursements disrupt scheduled activities, result in postponed deliverables, and often extend reporting timelines, creating operational challenges and affecting program credibility. Furthermore, these delays strain the working relationships between INGOs and LNNGOs, contributing to a lack of alignment and trust, which can ultimately hinder the collaborative potential of these partnerships. Addressing timely and predictable funding disbursements is essential to building stronger, more effective partnerships that allow local organizations to meet community needs reliably.

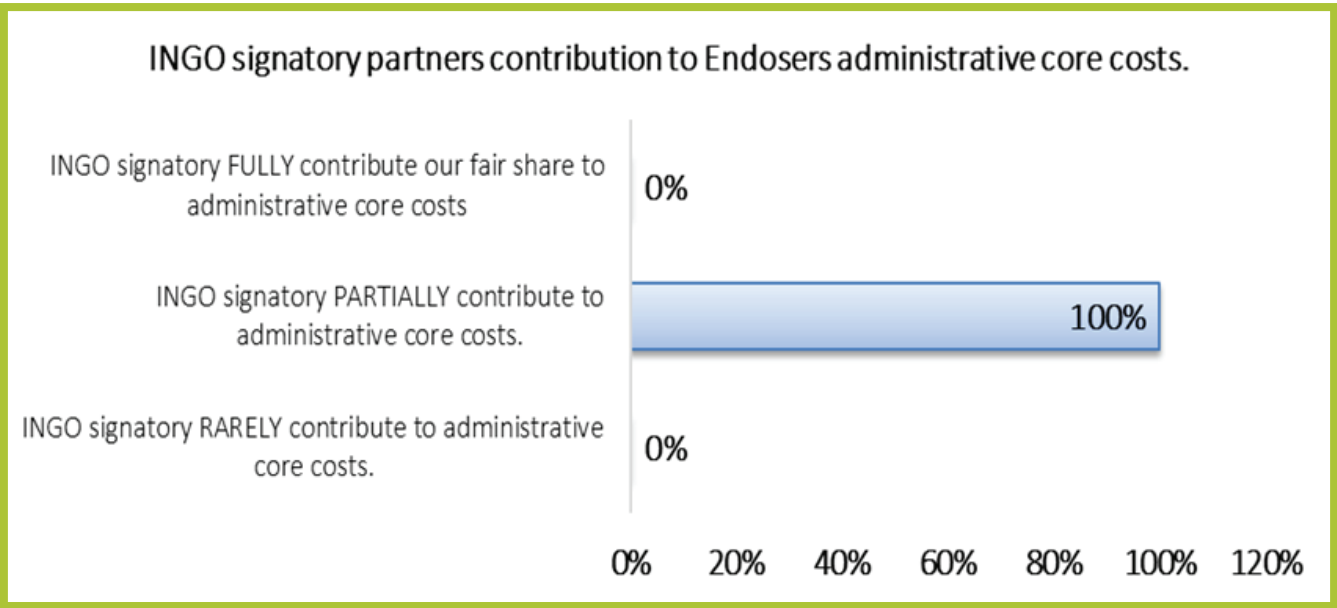


Figure 5: INGO Signatory partners' contribution to endorsers' administrative core costs.

From Figure 5 above, 100% of the endorsers admitted that the INGO signatories they are partnering with, contribute partially to the organizational administrative core costs. The endorsers indicated that lack of sufficient administrative support inhibits their humanitarian response capabilities due to the inability to attract a talented workforce, and challenges in paying for direct operational costs like office rent, electricity et al. Without adequate investment in administrativ infrastructure, local organizations are left to navigate operational complexities with limited resources, hindering their ability to scale and deliver timely and effective responses in crisis situations.

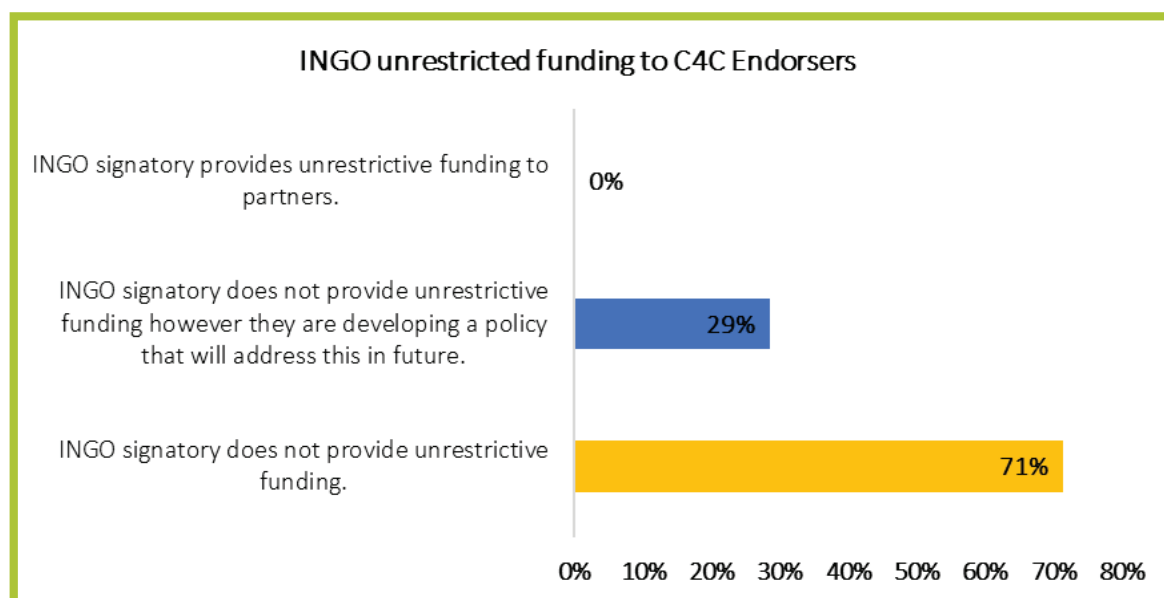


Figure 6: INGO unrestricted funding to C4C endorsers.

71% of the endorsers indicated that the INGO signatories to the C4C Kenyan chapter that they have an existing working partnership with, do not provide unrestricted funding. 29% reported that the INGO signatories they are partnering with do not provide unrestricted funding to them, however they are in the process of developing a policy that will address this in the near future.

Humentum (Breaking the Starvation Cycles, 2022) revealed that “unless funders start providing a portion of their grants as unrestricted, most national NGOs will remain unable to generate the unrestricted reserves necessary to mitigate the financial risks they face”.

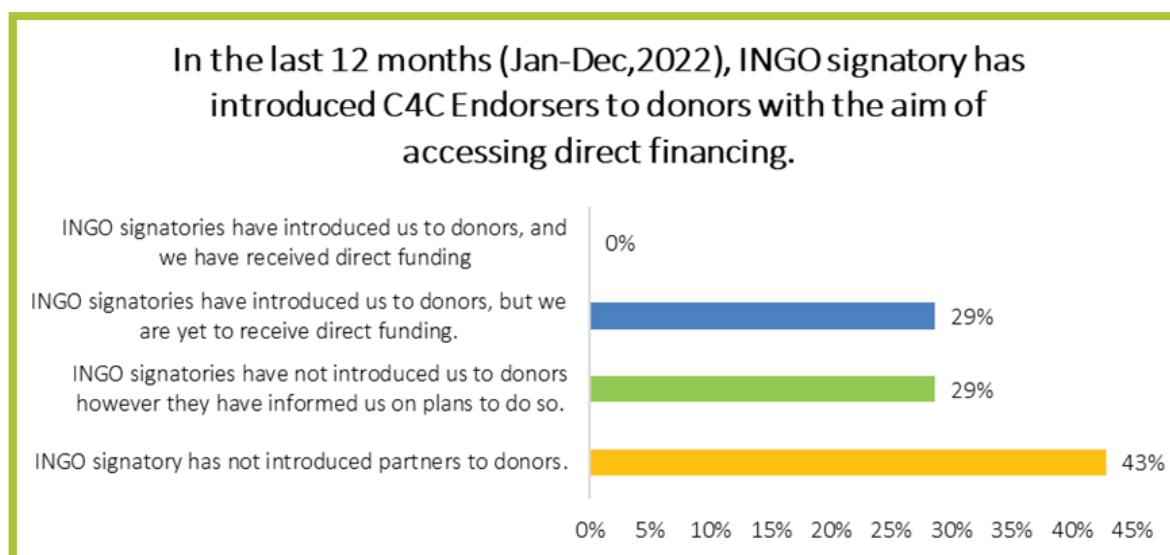


Figure 7: INGO signatory introduction of C4C endorsers to donors in the last 12 months (Jan-Dec,2022).

Figure 7 above reveals that, 43% of the endorsers highlighted that the signatories they are working with have not introduced them to any donors in the last 12 months. 29% revealed that the signatories have not introduced them to any potential donors in the last 12 months, but they have been informed of the plans to do the same. A similar 29% of the respondents (endorsers) explained that the signatories they are currently working with had introduced them to donors with whom they are engaging on possible areas of collaboration and possible direct funding.

3.4. Capacity Strengthening Approaches

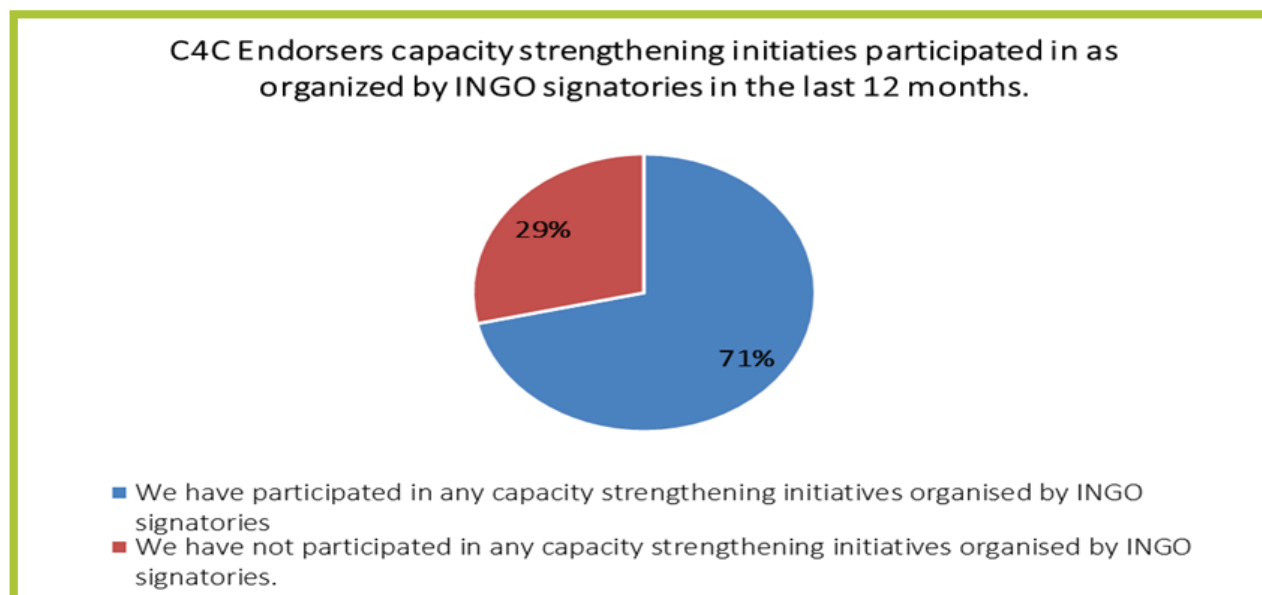


Figure 8: Participation of C4C endorsers in capacity-strengthening initiatives organized by INGO signatories in the last 12 months.

The study shows that a majority (71%) of LNNGOs have engaged in capacity-strengthening initiatives led by INGO partners in the past year (January–December 2022). These initiatives covered strategic areas such as strategic planning, resource mobilization, and collaborative project proposal development, which are crucial for strengthening LNNGOs sustainability and autonomy. However, 28.6% of LNNGOs reported not participating in any such initiatives, pointing to gaps in outreach or accessibility to capacity-strengthening opportunities. These findings highlight the positive impact of current efforts while underscoring the need to expand and make capacity-building support more inclusive and accessible to all local partners.

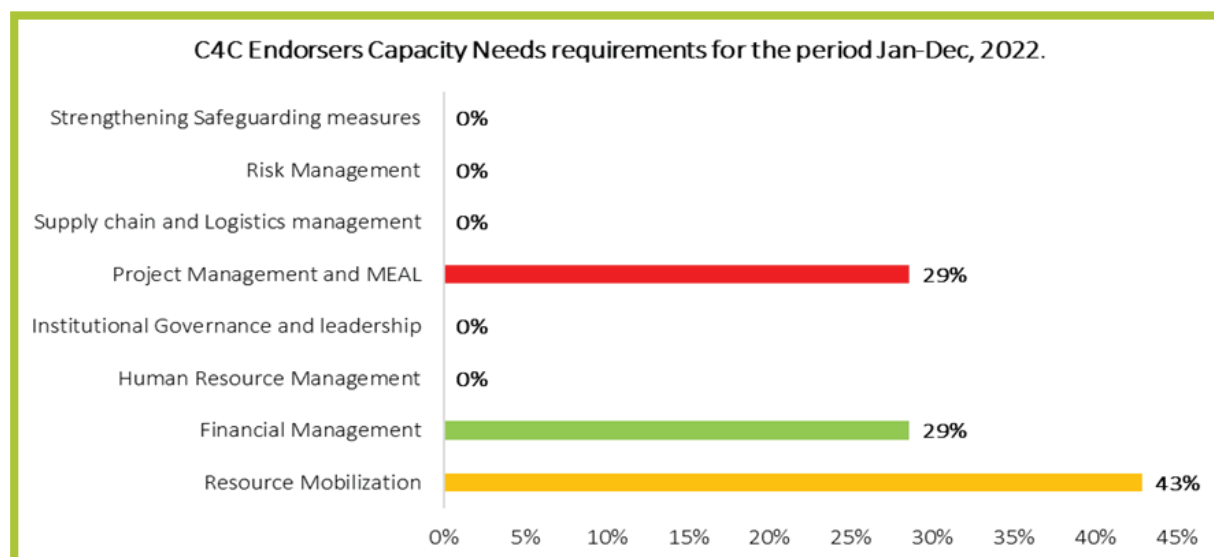


Figure 9: C4C endorsers capacity needs requirements for the period Jan-Dec, 2022.

The findings reveal that resource mobilization remains the top priority for LNNGOs, with 43% identifying it as their greatest need. This underscores the importance of funding access and sustainability for local organizations. Financial management, along with project management and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL), ranked as the second-highest needs. These areas are critical for organizational growth, accountability, and effective implementation, reflecting a strong demand for skills that can help LNNGOs manage resources efficiently and deliver impactful programs. The emphasis on these areas suggests a need for targeted capacity-strengthening efforts to support local organizations in becoming more resilient and self-sustaining.

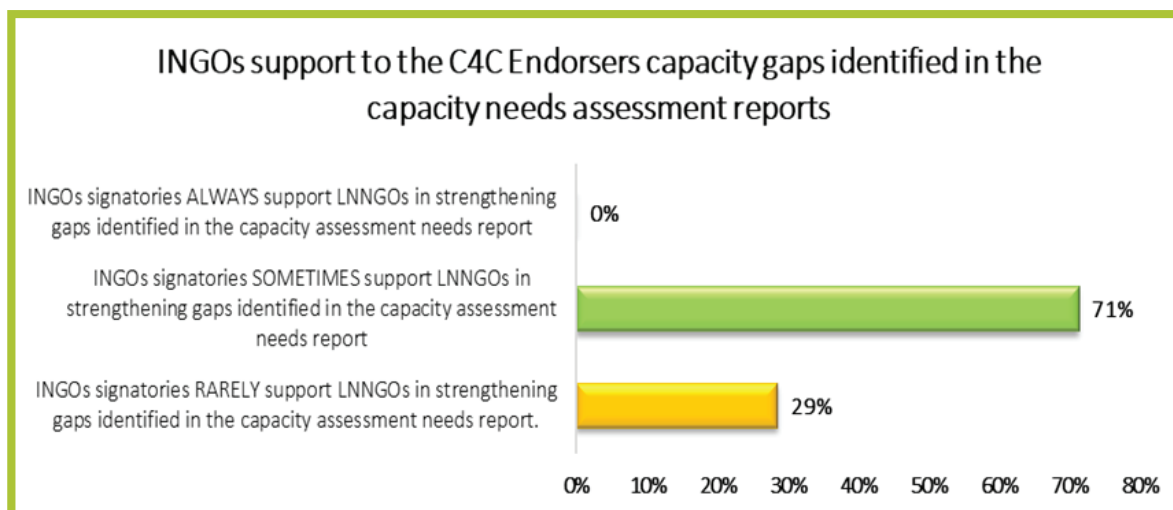


Figure 10: INGOs support the C4C endorsers' capacity gaps identified in the capacity needs assessment reports

Figure 10 above highlights the extent to which the INGO provide capacity strengthening support towards addressing the capacity gaps identified by the endorsers during the capacity needs assessments conducted in the last 12 months (Jan-Dec, 2022). 71% of the endorsers indicated that the INGO signatories sometimes support LNNGOs in strengthening gaps identified in the capacity assessment needs reports, while 29% of the endorsers reported that the INGO signatories rarely support LNNGOs in strengthening gaps identified in the capacity assessment needs reports.

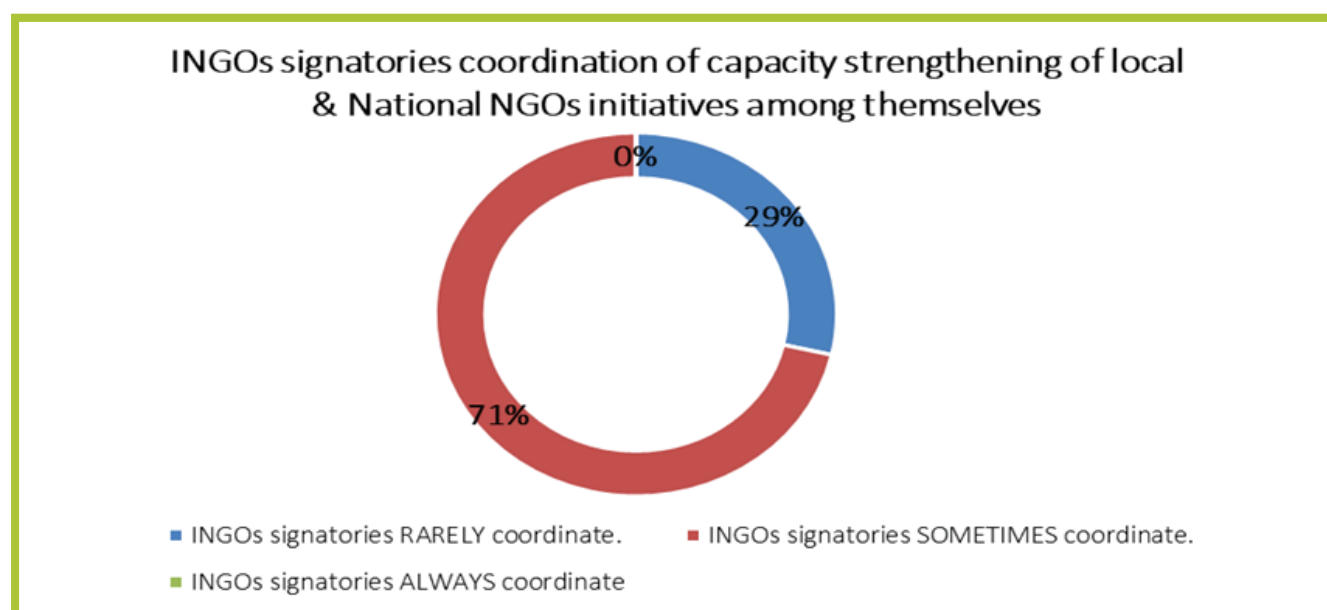


Figure 11: INGOs signatories' coordination of capacity strengthening of LNNGOs.

Coordinating capacity strengthening has reduced duplication of efforts and resources. The research sought to find out the extent of capacity-strengthening coordination among the INGO signatories. 71.4% of the endorsers reported that the INGOs sometimes coordinate capacity-strengthening efforts among themselves, while 28.6 % rarely coordinate.

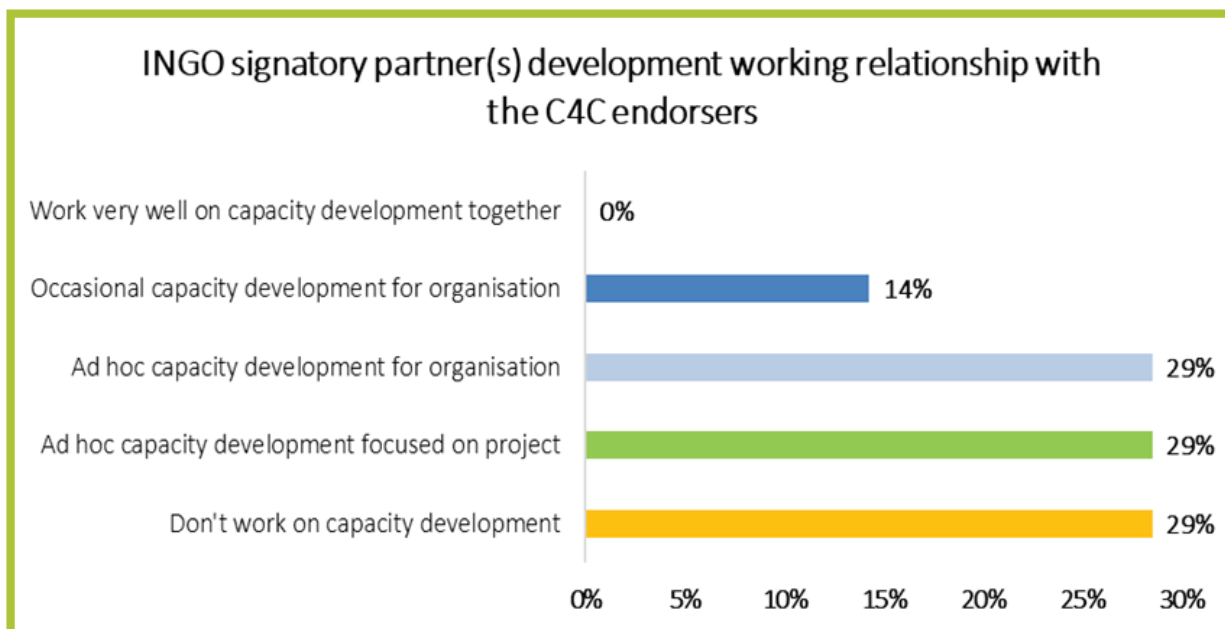


Figure 12: INGO capacity strengthening working relationship with the C4C endorsers

14% of the C4C Kenyan chapter endorsers reported having a good working relationship with the INGO signatories on capacity strengthening. 58% of the endorsers reported that they had ad hoc capacity development for the organization and ad hoc capacity strengthening focused on the projects, while 29% of the respondents indicated that they did not have any working relations with the INGOs on capacity strengthening.

3.5. Partnership Relationships

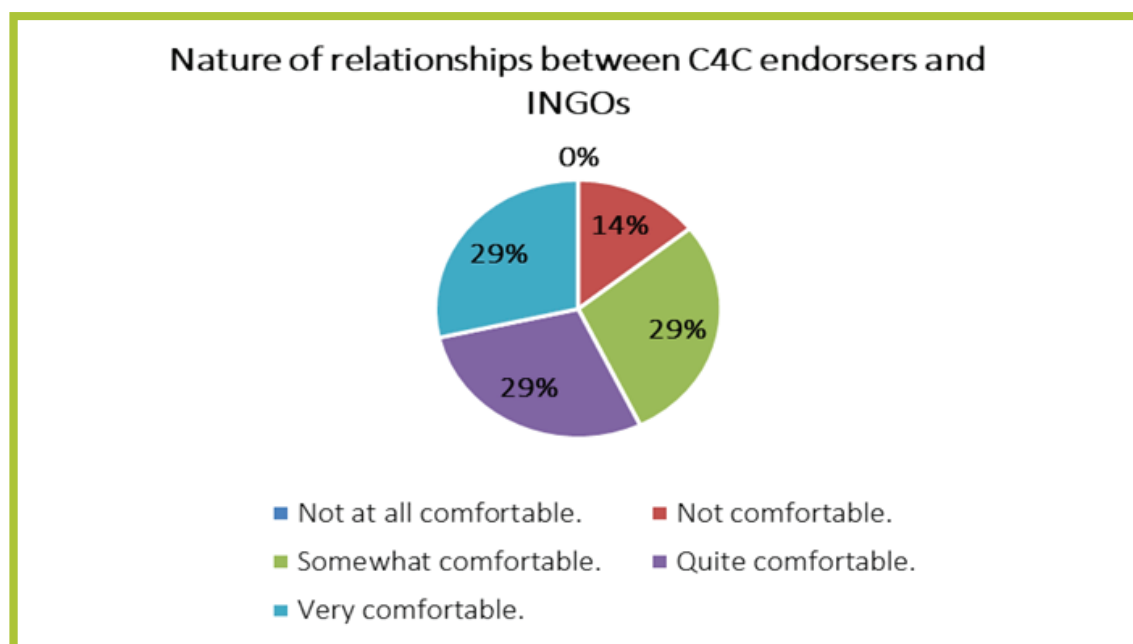


Figure 13: Nature of relations between C4C endorsers & INGOs

The study also explored the quality of relationships between LNNGOs and their INGO partners. Findings show that 29% of LNNGOs feel "very comfortable" in their relationships with INGOs, while another 29% describe these relationships as "somewhat comfortable." Notably, no respondents indicated feeling "not comfortable at all," with only 14% expressing discomfort in their partnerships with INGOs. This generally positive feedback suggests that INGOs and LNNGOs are experiencing a relatively high degree of mutual understanding and ease in their interactions.

However, the presence of some discomfort among 14% of respondents highlights areas where relationship dynamics could be further improved to foster trust, inclusivity, and a stronger sense of partnership. Strengthening these connections is essential for enhancing collaboration and supporting the localisation agenda.

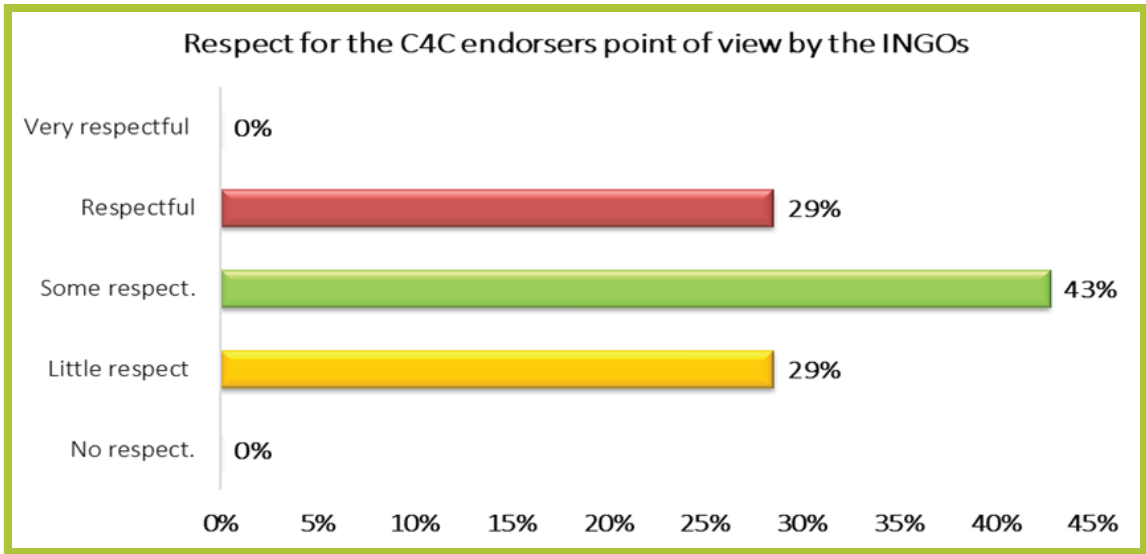


Figure 14: Respecting the views of the endorsers by the INGOs.

The study also investigated the level of respect INGOs showed for the perspectives of LNNGOs. According to the findings, 29% of LNNGOs felt that INGOs respected their viewpoints, while 43% felt their views were only "somewhat respected." Meanwhile, 29% of respondents perceived that INGOs showed minimal respect for their perspectives. These responses suggest that while some INGOs value the insights of local partners, respect for LNNGOs' viewpoints is inconsistent, indicating an area for improvement. Fostering greater respect and inclusivity in decision-making can enhance the quality of partnerships and contribute to more equitable and effective collaboration.



Figure 14: Respecting the views of the endorsers by the INGOs.

The data reveals varying perceptions among LNNGOs regarding INGO management of risk for local staff. While 43% of LNNGOs feel that INGOs provide moderate risk coverage for their employees, only 29% believe that INGOs substantially mitigate these risks. Another 29% of respondents indicate that INGO risk coverage is minimal, leaving employees with limited protection while on duty. These findings highlight the inconsistent levels of support and risk management provided by INGOs to local partners' employees, underscoring a need for more consistent and comprehensive risk mitigation practices to protect local staff adequately in the field.

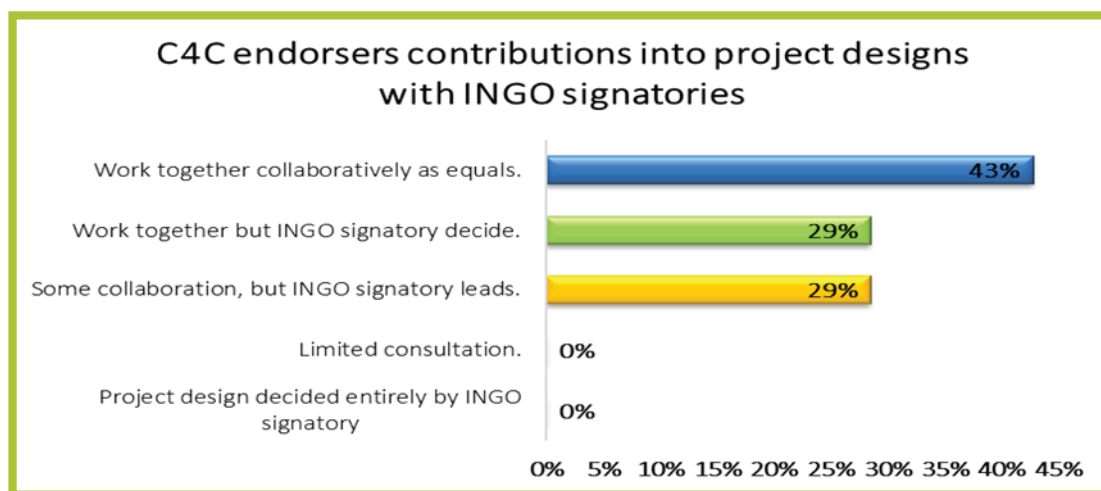


Figure 16: C4C endorsers' contributions to project designs with INGO signatories

This research highlights the nuanced dynamics of collaboration between local/national non-governmental organizations (LNNGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). While 43% of LNNGOs report working collaboratively as equals with INGOs, a significant portion—29%—indicates that, although involved in project design, INGOs often retain the final decision-making authority. Another 29% of respondents note that INGOs typically lead project design processes, with LNNGOs having a more consultative role. These findings suggest that while efforts toward equal partnerships are evident, there is still a tendency for INGOs to maintain control over critical project decisions, underscoring a need to deepen equitable partnerships in line with localisation commitments.

Nature of Partnership	Rate
Fragmented. (There lacks a clear blueprint and commonalities or exit ways in the partnership; Zero commitments to the partnership; the control and imparting of information are ad-hoc; Knowledge is held in non-formal ways and passed along throughout the partnership dissipatedly).	25%
Top-down. (There exists one controlling partner; Undertaking, vision, and exit blueprint are all held by the dominant partner and undisputed by the other partner(s); Imparting of information is one way, from the controlling partner to the rest; Risk aversion culture is very common where each of the staff presents the attitude of, I am just doing my job and that happens to be their bare minimum.	25%
Inclusive. (Power is shared, often uneven; the blueprint exit strategy is shared and aligned with the organizational reality and associated tasks; Partners listen and respond to each other; Access to information is when requested and not readily accessed by every partner).	50%
Accountable. (Power and decision-making are shared; Both organizations put in substantial efforts (financially and technically) into the engagement, the blueprint and the action plans are shared among the organizations, and priorities are highlighted and shared; a culture of reasonableness exists including teamwork, mutual respect, and trust; Every party to the partnership has access to information they need to make informed decisions within a reasonable amount of time).	0%
Total	100%

Table 3: Partnership between LNNGOs and the INGOs

Half (50%) of the LNNGOs perceive their partnerships with INGOs as inclusive, involving shared but often uneven power, an exit strategy that aligns somewhat with local realities, responsive communication, and limited access to information that is available upon request. Another 25% describe their relationships as top-down, dominated by a single controlling INGO partner, with unilateral decision-making, limited information sharing, and a risk-averse culture where staff fulfil only minimal responsibilities. The remaining 25% characterize their partnerships as fragmented, lacking a clear framework, mutual commitment, or standardized information-sharing practices, with knowledge passed informally. Notably, none of the LNNGOs reported experiencing an accountable partnership, indicating significant room for improvement in establishing balanced, transparent, and committed collaborations.

4. Conclusions

The study reveals a complex landscape of partnership dynamics, funding practices, capacity strengthening, and mutual respect between INGOs and local/national non-governmental organizations (LNNGOs) in Kenya. Despite progress in some areas, several findings highlight the challenges faced by LNNGOs in achieving fully equitable and supportive partnerships.

The data shows that only 26% of endorsers had active partnerships with INGOs, suggesting limited collaboration and engagement. Even within existing partnerships, funding disbursements are not consistently timely, with only 43% reporting funds were disbursed on time. Delays have significantly impacted project planning and strained relationships, underscoring the need for INGOs to streamline funding processes and reduce barriers to timely disbursement. Additionally, most LNNGOs lack unrestricted funding and have limited support for administrative costs, inhibiting their ability to sustain operations and respond flexibly to community needs. These findings align with broader research indicating that restricted funding structures create dependency and risk for local organizations, which would benefit greatly from more flexible, direct funding.

Capacity strengthening efforts led by INGOs have been positive for the majority of LNNGOs (71%), addressing essential skills such as strategic planning and resource mobilization. However, gaps persist, with a significant number of LNNGOs not accessing such opportunities, suggesting a need for more inclusive and coordinated approaches. Furthermore, the findings indicate that although resource mobilization is the top priority for LNNGOs, capacity support in financial and project management is also critical. A harmonized approach to capacity building, such as "due diligence passporting," could streamline efforts, reduce redundancy, and improve effectiveness by enabling multiple INGOs to coordinate and share assessments.

Regarding partnership quality, perceptions of comfort and respect in relationships with INGOs are mixed. While 29% of LNNGOs feel comfortable and 43% perceive that their perspectives are somewhat respected, a notable 29% feel their views receive little respect. Additionally, no LNNGO reported experiencing fully accountable partnerships, and 25% of respondents describe partnerships as top-down or fragmented, indicating a lack of shared decision-making and mutual trust. This underscores the need for INGOs to commit more fully to equitable, accountable partnerships where power, responsibilities, and decision-making are genuinely shared.

In conclusion, while progress is evident in the engagement between INGOs and LNNGOs, these findings underscore the need for INGOs to advance their localization efforts by increasing direct funding, coordinating capacity strengthening, and fostering more inclusive, accountable, and transparent relationships. Building on these areas can lead to partnerships that are more resilient, equitable, and ultimately, more impactful in achieving development and humanitarian goals.

5. Recommendations

Below are recommendations emanating from the study:

Funding

- i. **INGOs partnering with Local Partners are encouraged to disburse project funds in appropriate time.** While recognizing that only 43% of INGOs signatories disburse funds in appropriate time, there is need to increase this percentage in the future. An in-depth conversation with an endorser respondent revealed that the untimely disbursement largely affects project implementation plans consequently leading to delayed delivery and reporting thus causing a disharmonious working relationship with the INGOs and other NGOs.
- ii. **Where feasible, INGO signatories need to strive and provide flexible, unrestricted / unearmarked funding to their local partners.** Appreciating the difficulties that arises from INGOs in enabling unearmarked funds, one way cited during the research is by providing Indirect Costs Recovery (ICR) to local partners. Another best practise shared on providing flexible funding is through providing project no-cost extensions or carry-over into the following year.
- iii. **There is opportunity for INGO signatories to be intentional on introducing their local partners to donors.** As this is one of the C4C commitments, introducing local partners to donors increases their visibility as well as chances of getting funds directly as possible in future.

Capacity strengthening

- iv. **While recognizing the efforts in capacity strengthening, it is advised that these initiatives be tailored to the specific needs of local actors.** Capacity strengthening initiatives should align with the organizational requirements of local actors, as this research shows that a significant number of INGOs provide such support. However, 71% of local actors reported that INGOs only occasionally support in areas identified in their capacity needs assessments
- v. **There is a need for more harmonized capacity strengthening initiatives from both signatories and endorsers.** Several INGOs have reported that the diverse methods employed by different INGOs complicate the process. A unified strategy, such as "due diligence passporting," is recommended. This involves conducting a due diligence passporting assessment, which allows agencies to partner more efficiently by using the assessment's findings as a basis for their own due diligence procedures, thereby facilitating the sharing of due diligence results. Additionally, insights from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) highlight the United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP), a centralized online platform that streamlines the partnership selection process between UN Agencies and Civil Society Organizations by sharing organizational and project information and matching expertise with available opportunities.

Partnerships

vi. Promote Co-Creation in Program Design: INGOs and local partners are encouraged to engage in co-creation from the outset of program design. This approach strengthens equity, ensures relevance to local contexts, and empowers local actors to have a meaningful voice in shaping project outcomes. Clear frameworks for shared decision-making at every stage of design and implementation can solidify a sense of partnership.

vii. Training on Principled Partnerships: The C4C Working Group could facilitate a workshop focused on principled partnerships, including training in communication and soft skills that foster collaboration and mutual respect. Equipping local and international partners with these skills can enhance understanding, address power imbalances, and promote respectful, effective communication.

6. Suggestions for further studies

This study focussed mainly on the factors influencing aid localization in Kenya. Further recommendations are made that;

- i. An evaluation/study of the gains made by the C4C Kenyan chapter since its inception.
- ii. Conduct a comparative study highlighting aid localization approaches and documenting best practices across the EAC region and
- iii. Longitudinal Study on the Impact of Unrestricted Funding on Local NGOs
- iv. Comparative Study on Capacity Strengthening Models Across Different INGOs

7. References

- Aldrich, H. (1976). Resource Dependence Theory: A Theory of Power in Exchange Relations. *Journal of Social Structure*, 1(1), 31-41.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Meyer, M. H. (2015). Social capital and community resilience. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(2), 254-269.
- ALNAP. (2017). The State of the Humanitarian System 2018. ALNAP.
- Atputharajah, P., & Wanga, J. (2020). Examining the barriers to localisation of aid: Case of South Sudan. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 44, 101439.
- Atputharajah, P., & Wanga, J. (2020). The Grand Bargain and the Localization Agenda: A Review of Progress. ALNAP.
- Barbelet, V (2019) Rethinking capacity and complementarity for a more local humanitarian action. In: Overseas Development Institute. Available at: <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/12957.pdf>
- Barbelet, V., et al. (2021). Localisation and its discontents: A reflection on power and agency. ODI.
- Beith, A., Martin, E., & Neilsen, C. (2021). A New Normal: Local and National NGOs Reshape Humanitarian Action. Humanitarian Policy Group.
- Biekart, K., Fowler, A., & Gorski, K. (2019). Exploring the contested meanings of partnership: An analysis of partnership for international development cooperation. *Development and Change*, 50(3), 617-642
- Brown, D.; "Participation of Crisis-affected People in Humanitarian decision-making processes", CHS Alliance, 2018. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Humanitarian%20Accountability%20Report%202018.pdf>
- Charter for Change: From commitments to action Progress Report, 2020-2021: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-commitments-action-progress-report-2020-2021>
- Clarke, M., & Wright, S. (2019). Making localisation work: Lessons from a review of humanitarian practice. \ Humanitarian Policy Group.
- Elhawary, S., O'Mahony, A., & Gaventa, J. (2016). Going local: Learning from the field on the future of aid. Oxfam.
- Ford, N., Tejpar, A., & Schnabel, A. (2016). Principles for good international engagement in fragile states. OECD Publishing.
- Getachew, M. (2021). Development Initiatives' Progress Report 2021. Development Initiatives: <https://devinit.org/resources/development-initiatives-progress-report-2021/>
- Hailey, J., & Salole, D. (2018). Funding for local humanitarian action: A report for donors. Start Network.
- Harris, V. and Tuladhar, S. (2019), "Humanitarian Localization: Can We Put Values into Practice?", Harris, V. (Ed.) *Ethics in a Crowded World: Globalisation, Human Movement and Professional Ethics* (Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, Vol. 22), Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 33-55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1529-209620190000022004>
- Howe, B., et al. (2015). Time to let go: Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era. ODI.
- Howe, J., Kent, R., & Maclure, R. (2015). Capacity, complementarity and collaboration: The European Union, international NGOs and the development of humanitarian action. *Disasters*, 39(1), 19-43.
- Humentum. (2022). NGOs breaking the starvation cycle: Understanding indirect cost recovery.

Humphrey, K. (2018). *Between Local and International: The Dynamics of Humanitarian Transformation*. Humanitarian Policy Group.

Jackson, A. and Zyck, S.A. (2017) *Presence and proximity. To stay and deliver, five years on*. OCHA, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA)

Johnson, A., Smith, B., Patel, C., et al. (2021). *Enhancing Local Capacity: A Collaborative Study on INGO-led Capacity Building Initiatives*. *Humanitarian Research Journal*, 25(3), 112-129.

Jones, T. (2020). *Understanding the Localisation of Aid: Making sense of theories, concepts, debates and practices*. *The Humanitarian Encyclopedia*.

Kate Pincock, Alexander Betts & Evan Easton-Calabria (2021) *The Rhetoric and Reality of Localization: Refugee-Led Organisations in Humanitarian Governance*, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 57:5, 719-734, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2020.1802010

Kent, C., Rasheed, M., & van de Sandt, J. (2016). *Localization of aid in Sudan: Voices from international and national NGOs*. Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. Overseas Development Institute

Kent, R., Bennett, C., Donini, A., Maxwell, D. (2016) *Is the humanitarian system fit for purpose? Planning From the Future Project*. London and Medford, MA: King's College London, Humanitarian Policy Group and the Feinstein International Center

Kent, R., Dijkzeul, D., & van Brabant, K. (2016). *The role of international non-governmental organisations in linking humanitarian response with development*. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(3), 419-436.

Kothari, C. R. (2007). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Age International.

Metcalf-Hough, V., Fenton, W., Saez, P. and Spencer, A. (2021) *The Grand Bargain in 2021: an independent review*. HPG commissioned report. London: ODI (www.odi.org/en/publications/the-grand-bargain-in-2021-an-independent-review).

OECD (2022), *The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Interim Progress Review*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2f620ca5-en>.

Ong'ayo, A. O., Awuor, F. M., & Gisore, P. M. (2019). *Capacity development approaches employed by international non-governmental organizations in building capacity of local non-governmental organizations in Kakamega County, Kenya*. *International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences*, 7(1), 61-71.

Patel, A., et al. (2021). *"Role of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Facilitating Coordinated Capacity-Building Initiatives among Local and National NGOs"*. *Humanitarian Studies Journal*, 17(3), 345-362.

Patel, C., Smith, B., Johnson, A., et al. (2021). *Impact of INGO-Coordinated Capacity Building Initiatives: Perspectives from the Field*. *Journal of Humanitarian Practice*, 8(4), 321-339.

Roberts, A., & Sultan, A. (2018). *The Dynamics of Localisation in Humanitarian Response*. Humanitarian Policy Group.

Sabina Robillard, Teddy Atim, Daniel Maxwell. *Localization: A "Landscape" Report*. Boston, MA: Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University, 2021.

Smith, B., Johnson, A., Patel, C., et al. (2022). Challenges and Opportunities in INGO-led Capacity Building: Insights from Endorsers. *International Journal of Humanitarian Studies*, 15(2), 87-104.

Smith, C., Charan, S., & Kapoor, S. (2017). *Aid Localization and Direct Funding: A Path to Greater Local Ownership and Sustainability*. UNDP.

Smith, J., et al. (2022). "Examining the Impact of International Non-Governmental Organizations on Coordinated Capacity-Building Initiatives within the Humanitarian Sector." *International Journal of Humanitarian Action*, 9(1), 112-128.

Stoddard, A., et al. (2010). *Time to let go: Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era*. ODI.

Stoddard, A., Harmer, A., & DiDomenico, V. (2010). Providing aid in insecure environments: Trends in violence against aid workers and the operational response. HPG Working Paper.

Sulle, E., & Nelson, F. (2018). Biofuels, land access and rural livelihoods in Tanzania. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(1), 124-144.

Svoboda, M., & Pantuliano, S. (2015). Local to Global Protection: New Findings from the 2015 Humanitarian Accountability Report. Humanitarian Outcomes.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 'Glossary: Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019 Edition' <https://alliancecpha.org/en/glossary-minimum-standards-child-protection-humanitarian-action-2019-edition>.

UNDP. (2019). Humanitarian Localization: Engaging the Private Sector in Humanitarian Action. UNDP.

UNOCHA. (2015). *World Humanitarian Summit: Summary of Regional Consultations on Humanitarian Effectiveness*. UNOCHA.

UNOCHA. (2016). *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report 2016*. UNOCHA.

Wall, I., & Hedlund, K. (2016). 'Another lost decade?' Reflections on the humanitarian enterprise in the 2010s. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, 67, 7-10.

Patel, A., Johnson, B., & Smith, C. (2020). Partner Relations in Humanitarian Action: A Comparative Analysis of Local NGO and INGO Collaborations. *Humanitarian Studies Journal*, 12(3), 245-267.

Smith, C., Patel, A., & Johnson, B. (2021). Dynamics of Partner Relations in Humanitarian Contexts: Insights from Local NGO and INGO Collaborations. *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, 8(2), 112-129.

Johnson, B., Patel, A., & Smith, C. (2022). Trust, Communication, and Collaboration: Enhancing Partner Relations between Local and International Actors in Humanitarian Response. *International Journal of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance*, 5(1), 45-62.

https://stockcake.com/i/humanitarian-aid-distribution_84695_840

https://stockcake.com/i/aid-relief-effort_422545_684425

